

Dear authors,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the paper. I understand the concerns about the expansion of "causes" as conceptual and operational tools for the researcher in the field of organization studies. I think this is a legitimate problem that deserves the contribution of your paper around the Aristotelian metaphysics of causality. My advice goes into what I think you do not see while immersed in the problems of a paper development. The idea of complex causality is still under development, for example under the label of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), which seems to invigorate the configurational perspective (<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206316679252>). So bringing Aristotle into the picture seems attractive, because it could further elevate the analysis of complex causality.

My first point is about the way you think in the 'first step' of your model, linking "material cause" and "organizational structure"; "formal cause" and norms, values and beliefs, and so on... And the final statement about the per se causes: "As such, any organization could be understood through its structure (material cause), norms (formal cause), agents (efficient cause), and environment (final cause). This gives us a generic framework for evaluating any organization." My attention is immediately drawn to the conception of organization that you imply in the arguments, once you imagine an organization within a positivist framework, as a thing that is already there. So my concern is with another possibility once we are dealing with Aristotelian causes. Because for me it would be more accurate to think of the organization as the final cause. You probably try to simulate the rationality of practitioners, but then you run the risk of being more managerial than Aristotelian. In closing this session, you offer the example of bureaucracy "... characterized not only by a specific material cause (functional, hierarchical, etc.), but also by its formal cause, a set of norms, values, and beliefs, with a particular type of decisions made by its agents (efficient cause), and the particular environment (final cause) to which it tends." But bureaucracy is not an object, it is an ideal type that informs real objects. I wonder if you could try another way to show how the first step of the model might be useful for operationalizing the four causes, for example, the historical emergence of a particular corporation, cooperative etc.

My second point is a misunderstanding of the intertwining of technology and structure when you say "Technology could be seen as a secondary material cause that contributes to the material cause - the structure." I wonder if you are focusing too much on the perspective of the organization, and if you are looking for causes, you have to do it differently, you have to ask yourself if the materiality of technology is not the material or formal cause for the development of a variety of organizations. And the better decision will not be possible to anticipate, because you are not dealing with identical objects. And perhaps this is a difficult problem in translating Aristotelian metaphysics into organizational studies, because you probably imply organizations as beings that share attributes with each other. But the complexity is lost if you go that way, because you will not be able to distinguish the singularities that define the essence of an organization. In a word, you are likely to find organizations that have been shaped by technology, and others that have been less influenced by it.

Finally, I would like to make a comment about what you synthesize in Figure 4. The

analysis is too deterministic, and I don't think Aristotle himself would agree with such an approach, because an organization is a human construct rather than a natural entity. In this sense, I understand that the Aristotelian approach to politics and the state would be more fruitful for the development of your paper and the discussion of complex causality.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to read your paper.