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FRAMES OF INDUSTRY 4.0: COMPARING COMPANIES AND TRADE UNIONS IN SPAIN AND SWEDEN

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Introdução

The world is transitioning to a new industrial model based on digitisation and process automation, commonly referred to as Industry 4.0. Initially, this concept was linked to the industrial world; however, it is increasingly spreading to society (Ghobakhloo et al., 2021). In addition to technical demands, Industry 4.0 is influenced by social and political issues (institutional factors). It is important to know how organizations such as companies and unions use language to construct and make sense of this concept.

Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

Industry 4.0 is examined from a neo-institutional point of view. We consider it is not just a bundle of technologies but a rationalized myth used by organizations in search of legitimacy. Few works have adopted this more critical perspective concerning Industry 4.0 (Fogaça et al., 2022). The main objective of this article is to study the degree of institutionalization of Industry 4.0 for companies and trade unions in Spain and Sweden.

Fundamentação Teórica

Organisational practices respond to rules, beliefs and other aspects of the diverse environment with which they coexist. Language is essential to institutions' formation and change (Green Jr & Li, 2011). In this sense, a framing analysis can provide meaningful insights into organizational phenomena such as Industry 4.0. Frames can define problems, diagnose their causes and make moral judgments that allow us to suggest solutions (Mendonça & Simões, 2012). The "worlds" proposed by Boltanski and Thévenot (1999) can help us in this type of analysis.

Metodologia

Companies with the highest market capitalization in Spain and Sweden were selected. We have reviewed their annual reports since 2016 for mention of the Industry 4.0 concept. The websites of the major union federations in both countries were examined, and questionnaires were sent to union representatives asking about the impacts of Industry 4.0. The documents obtained were analysed using a framing analysis based on Boltanski's worlds.

Análise dos Resultados

About half of the companies in both countries cited Industry 4.0 or related concepts during the analysed period. Companies in the financial sector still do not use this concept extensively. Companies in Spain and Sweden frame Industry 4.0 from an industrial, market and network perspective in a similar way. Unions focus more on a civic perspective. In Spain, there are more concerns about the negative impacts of Industry 4.0 than in Sweden.

Conclusão

Spain and Sweden have comparable characteristics regarding varieties of capitalism, which was reflected in the similarity in the perspective of Industry 4.0 on the part of companies. They focus on the advantages of Industry 4.0 in relation to efficiency, market and connectivity issues, as well as environmental issues to a lesser extent. Although the unions in both countries emphasize civic issues of the fourth industrial revolution, differences regarding this concept in relation to the unions were evidenced, reflecting the dissimilarity of each country's specific aspects.

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