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Editorial

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A NOUVEAU SUR L'ALLIANCE NISSAN-RENAULT

Avec un résultat net de 2,5 milliards d'euros pour l'année 2003, Renault a une nouvelle fois largement bénéficié de l'alliance avec son partenaire japonais Nissan. La rapidité du redressement de Nissan contraste avec les difficultés que rencontre encore DaimlerChrysler avec Mitsubishi, ou encore avec la longue période d'intégration de Mazda dans la stratégie industrielle de Ford (près de vingt cinq ans).

A quoi tient un tel redressement ? A l'efficacité remarquable de la direction assumée par le charismatique et médiatique Carlos Ghosn (voir son interview par notre ami Koïchi Shimokawa dans le présent numéro de la Lettre du GERPISA) et son équipe restreinte venue de chez Renault ? Sans nier l'influence parfois majeure des personnalités managériales, on conviendra que cet argument ne saurait convaincre a priori un chercheur en sciences humaines et sociales qui tend, au delà de la singularité et de la personnalité individuelle, à rechercher des fondements collectifs aux schémas explicatifs.

Quelle pérennité pour l'alliance Nissan-Renault?

A la renégociation d'un nouveau compromis de gouvernement au sein du constructeur japonais ? Cet outil conceptuel reste à travailler (voir la contribution de Tommaso Pardi) mais on perçoit bien comment, en quelques mois, un nouveau compromis se reconstruit par des actions spectaculaires comme l'annonce de la fermeture d'usines ou la remise en question des relations d'approvisionnement au sein du groupe (keiretsu) de Nissan, ou par des dimensions plus tacites comme la redéfinition du rôle des différentes hiérarchies au sein de l'entreprise (notamment la séparation du design et de l'ingénierie).

Une autre question a trait à la pérennité du redressement de Nissan et à celle du couple Renault-Nissan. Si le constructeur japonais a pu, de façon opportuniste, tirer profit des petentiali tés offertes en période de changement, on sait que

AGAIN ON THE NISSAN-RENAULT ALLIANCE

Renault's net FY 2003 earnings of €2.5 billion are yet another indication of the significant benefits that it has derived from its alliance with Nissan. The speed with which the Japanese partner's balance sheet has improved provides a stark contrast with the difficulties that DaimlerChrysler is still facing with Mitsubishi, and with the very long period of time (nearly 25 years) Mazda needed before it could be truly integrated into Ford's industrial strategy.

So how should the Franco-Japanese group's recovery be explained? By the remarkable efficiency which it is being managed by the charismatic and media-friendly Carlos Ghosn (whose interview with our friend Koïchi Shimokawa can be read in the current *Lettre du GERPISA* newsletter) and his inner circle of Renault advisors? Without denying the occasionally very strong influence that top managers can have on this sort of process, it remains that in and of themselves arguments of this nature are not likely to be very convincing to social sciences researchers who tend to look past individual singularities and personalities and seek the collective foundations driving such explanatory schemas.

What about the fact that a new company governance compromise has been renegotiated within Nissan? Work still needs to be done on this conceptual tool (see the article that Tommaso Pardi has written on this topic) but it is already clear how a new compromise is being built, within just a few months, by means of some quite spectacular actions including announced plant closures; a reconfiguration of the Nissan group's current (*keiretsu*) supplier relationships; and more tacit phenomena such as redesigning the roles of the various reporting lines found within the company (such as the separation of Styling and Engineering).

Another issue is the ongoing attempt to bolster both Nissan and the Renault-Nissan tandem. Notwithstanding the Japanese carmaker's highly opportunistic ability to take advantage of the potentialities it has uncovered l'industrie automobile est toujours marquée par des retournements très rapides qui relèvent de facteurs plus conjoncturels que structurels.

Le lancement des nouveaux modèles de Nissan et Renault développés sur une plate-forme commune va apporter des éléments de réponse. Par son orientation sloaniste, le constructeur japonais pourrait être celui qui tire le mieux son épingle du jeu. A l'inverse la stratégie de profit orientée vers l'innovation de Renault pourrait en être pénalisée. Après l'échec de ses tentatives de renouveler le haut-de-gamme (Aventime), on peut s'interroger sur la capacité de la firme française de participer à l'invention d'un nouveau modèle productif (du type « innovation, volume et diversité ») avec son allié japonais.

Le constructeur français se doit d'innover pour maintenir un certain équilibre face à son partenaire de poids. Force est de reconnaître que l'histoire de l'industrie automobile n'est pas très fournie d'exemples – mais plutôt de contre-exemples – où de telles alliances stratégiques perdurent en maintenant les deux partenaires dans une position relativement symétrique. Inventer une telle configuration serait en soi une innovation majeure.

during the current period of change, it remains that one of the automobile industry's main characteristics is the extreme rapidity with which its market conditions can turn around - something that derives more from temporary cyclical factors than from structural ones.

The launch of new Nissan and Renault models developed on shared platforms will provide us with a few elements of response. With its Sloanist orientation, the Japanese carmaker may well be the one that benefits most from this event. Inversely, Renault's innovation-oriented profit strategy could suffer as a result. After the French firm's failed attempts to renew its top-of-the-range line (with products like the *Aventime*), questions must be raised about its ability to participate alongside its Japanese partner in the invention of a new productive model (such as "Innovation, volume and diversity"). Renault is really going to have to innovate more if it wants to maintain a balanced relationship with its partner, who is, after all, far from a lightweight just making up the numbers. There is little question but that the automobile industry lacks many examples (and is, to the contrary, quite full of counter-examples) where strategic alliances of this sort have been able to survive with the two partners maintaining relatively symmetrical positions. Inventing such a configuration would already constitute a radical innovation.

Nouvelles du programme – Programme News

AN AGENDA FOR A NEW GERPISA WORKING GROUP: EXPLORING THE NOTION OF COMPROMISE OF GOVERNANCE

Tommaso Pardi

- First part -

In the last *Lettre du Gerpisa*, Sigfrido Ramirez has proposed a preliminary agenda for a new working group to explore the complex relationship which lies historically between large private (but also state owned) companies in the car sector and their social and political environments, with a particular attention to the role of the state and its agencies[1]. The aim of this article is to pursue the discussion by focusing on one of the core notions of the productive model framework developed by Gerpisa: the compromise of governance. The text relies on the work done last year by Tommaso Pardi and Cédric Lomba on this notion and presented at the last international colloquium[2]. Ideally, it should fit within the second research cluster amongst the five introduced by Ramirez, which is the one intended "to theoretically discuss the way to complement the socio-economic aspects of the productive model with its socio-political and cultural dimensions".

Our intention is to suggest here that it would be in the interest of this new group to take in charge the theoretical and empirical development of this notion for at least three reasons. First, because this notion has been so far largely neglected by the research carried on by the network despite its critical presence at the core of the framework. Second, because we believe that by putting this notion at the forefront of its agenda, this new group will be able to take advantage of the theoretical value and of the capital of knowledge represented by the research produced by the Gerpisa in these last ten years, without compromising its ambition of exploring new fields of research and different theoretical perspectives. Third, because the questions raised by a serious empirical and theoretical work on the notion of governance compromise appear to us as strictly related to the questions of research put forward by the new international ESEMK programme, offering therefore to this new group the opportunity to contribute actively to the intellectual development of the network without losing the originality of its own purpose.

As we know, one of the main conditions for a productive model to exist and to be viable is the achievement of a compromise of governance between the actors of the firm on the means employed to solve the two fundamental uncertainties of market and labour. In this sense the notion of governance compromise is supposed to play a major role within the theoretical framework of the productive models, representing in principle a strong answer to the question raised by Ramirez: how to complement the socio-economic aspects of the productive model with its socio-political and cultural dimension. Nevertheless, despite the fact that R. Boyer and

1. Ramirez S., "An agenda for a new working group: from the analysis of the state to the political and cultural embeddeness of the productive models", in *GERPISA Lettre,* 174.
2. Lomba C., "Les modèles productifs dans la sidérurgie belge: la construction de compromis autour des politiques d'investissements (1970-1987) and Pardi T., " Marges d'action et contraintes: genèse et dynamique d'un compromis de gouvernement d'entreprise dans un transplant Toyota en Grande-Bretagne", CD-ROM 11th GERPISA colloquium, 2003.

M. Freyssenet have always insisted on the emerging nature of the productive models, implying therefore a dynamic interrelation between the decision making at different corporate levels and the social, political and historical logic of the governance compromise in each of the companies studied, this idea has been seldom developed in the research produced by the network[3]. Even in the definition of the actual productive models so far identified, one has to recognise that the notion of governance compromise does not appear to be truly developed in all its aspects, being most of the time reduced to a simple variable, depending historically on the degree of industrial conflict between workers and companies.

There are of course many reasons which explain retrospectively why Gerpisa did not go any further in exploring the potential of this notion: for example, the strong historical impact produced by the late 1970s industrial conflicts on the trajectories of many western carmakers, which had to be fully taken in account by the first international programme of Gerpisa; the relative easiness of access to the information and the sources detailing the nature and the evolution of the compromise between workers, unions and companies, which was not a secondary factor once it is considered the effort made by Gerpisa to achieve an effective international comparison in the analysis of the different carmakers; the fact that the task of deconstructing the concept of lean production tackled by the first international programme drew a lot of attention to issues related to the shop-floor, where most of the debate of the time was focused on; and finally, it should not be forgotten that the notion of governance compromise emerged quite late in the intellectual evolution of the productive model framework, which meant that the formalisation of the concept in the 1998-2000 publications came ex-post, without having really framed the research process.

These elements led in the end Gerpisa to leave largely aside the others dimensions of the notion of governance compromise: from the issues concerning the control of the company and its multilevel governance, to the questions related to the relationship with other companies (being them competitors, suppliers or distributors), with the state (either at the international, national or local scale) and with the consumers (either individually or as associations). Moreover, even on the axe company-workers, the direction taken by the employment relationship group led by J-P. Durand all along the first international programme was more in the line traced by the classic works of Burawoy and Friedmann, than in the perspective opened by Boyer and Freyssenet toward the notion of governance compromise. The emphasis being on how the workers had to fit within the system imposed by the management under the new models of the employment relationship, and on how the Japanese factories, the Japanese transplants and their western counterparts were in reality very sophisticated prisons exerting an hegemonic control over their employees. A position which made almost impossible for most of the researchers involved in this group to consider the shop-floor dynamics of the late 1980s and early 1990s in terms of governance compromise.

3. These few exceptions are of course in the space of more than ten years of collective research many and valuable, but it is not our purpose here to enter into a detailed analysis of the past GERPISA production.

It is true that Gerpisa with its second, and even more with its third international programme, Cockeas, has moved away from the shop-floor to explore more deeply the others dimensions of the firm and its socio-political environment. The growing importance of finance raised the question of the control of the firm as shareholders were increasing their influence over companies, and the challenge of modularisation shifted the focus from the production of value to the management and the control of the value chain, as carmakers and suppliers were transforming their strategic relationship. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the fact that the notion of governance compromise was placed once again at the core of the argument (to the point that the final report of Cockeas[4] sustained that one of the main reasons for the renewed competitiveness of the European carmakers was the relative stability of their governance compromises, page 90), nothing, or very little, was said on how these compromises were shaped and evolved, how they worked and which were their inner logics, how they influenced the decision making of the companies and how they participated in the definition of their strategic environment.

In this sense, we agree with Ramirez that the general conclusions of Cockeas lacked a more problematised analysis of how companies interact with their socio-political environments, rather than just adapting to them. However, apart from this point, our reading is different from his. We do not think in fact that the main reason for this relative theoretical weakness lies in the shortcomings of the productive model approach. On the contrary, we believe that asking the question of the relationship with the state, and more generally with the socio-political and economic environment of the firm, from the perspective opened by Gerpisa, that is to consider the strategic environment and the issues at stake for each firm according to their particular trajectory and configuration, remains a very useful and promising way to develop a complementary point of view to the research already carried out by Fligstein and Freeland on this matter (to cite two authors mentioned by Ramirez). Nevertheless, in order to advance in this direction, there is the need to make the notion of governance compromise truly operative. Which does not mean only to explore empirically how governance compromises work and change, but also to increase our knowledge of what is a governance compromise and how should be studied.

An attentive reading of the Cockeas report confirms what M. Freyssenet has said last year in many occasions during the "journées de travail" dedicated to capitalise on the past Gerpisa research: that the notion of governance compromise has been more the result of an intellectual intuition than the product of an explicit program of research, and that it is still now more an hypothesis lying within the core of the framework than a full theorised and operative analytical tool.

To be accurate, the Cockeas report uses the term "compromise" 16 times in 98 pages, often in different contexts and with quite different meanings. For example,

4. "Coordinating Competencies and Knowledge in the European Automobile System", Project Coordinator Lung Y., 2002:http://cockeas.montesquieu.u-bordeaux.fr/CoCKEAS_Final Report.pdf

at page 10, the report mentions the "main compromises" characterising the automobile sector, referring of course to the compromises between workers, unions and companies, but assuming also the existence of "others compromises", which is an hypothesis that does not have so far any theoretical background in the productive model framework. At page 8, this idea is expressed even in a more explicit way: "In any event, and whatever the analysts have said, the automobile industry remains characterised by the need for a multitude of compromises that will help it to organise incentive-based coordination mechanisms for all of its actors". At page 44 the report brings also into the scene the relative stability of the "national social compromises", when discussing the impact of the rhetoric of the "shareholder value". Thirty pages later, despite the fact that the main feature of the European governance compromises during the 1990s seems to be their relative stability, it is said that these compromises "are constantly being renegotiated" during this period by all the actors (page 74). Which does not imply necessary a contradiction, but which is not clearly explained either. At the same time, the report insists on the need for the companies "to develop governance compromises that will help them to implement profit strategies which will be relevant to the economic and social environment in which they find themselves" (page 83), as if these compromises could be somehow managed and fully controlled by the companies and did not depend on the evolution of their institutional environment. In concluding its analysis, the report points to the difference between "old institutional compromises that were built upon a manufacturing logic in a specific historical context (latter half of the 20th-century)", involving "firms, employees and policy-makers" (page 82), and the "new compromises necessary for the implementation of modalities to mobilise and coordinate increasingly complex, interdependent and multidisciplinary types of knowledge and competencies" (page 83), suggesting a clear but undetermined relationship between this notion of "institutional compromises" and the well know concept of systems of regulation developed by the regulation theory during the 1980s. This relationship does not go as far as denying one of the main achievement of Gerpisa, that is the clear identification of the institutional variety of corporate strategies and of productive models regardless of the hypothetical convergence effects exerted by their institutional environments, but tends to reduce this variety to the only fact that this "structural shift" (the passage between the old and the new institutional compromises) develops its logic upon different economic spaces (identified as nations) and upon different actors' strategies (intended as firms' trajectories) (page 85). Which, again, seems to deny any possible interaction between governance compromises and institutional compromises, assuming more or less explicitly that the first must adapt to the latter, as the productive models must fit into their socio-economic environment, while many others passages of the report suggests that in reality this relationship could be much more complex than that.

In the end, many questions arise concerning the theoretical consistency of the notion of compromise as used by the report, and more generally as intended within the network. For instance, which is the difference between main and "secondary" governance compromises? How many compromises do we have within each company? One, as implied by the productive model framework, or a "multitude", as suggested in the report? If we have many, does each of these compromises respond to different logics? And how then do they relate one to each other? Can we identify a sort (or many sorts) of institutional architecture relying them, which would be a kind of meta-governance compromise between the sub-compromises and their logics? And how this architecture would evolve through the time? Even more important, how this complex whole of governance compromises would interact with the "institutional compromises"? And again, how many "institutional compromises" do we have? Finally, is the difference between governance compromises and "institutional compromises" a matter of scale: we are looking at the same historical process responding to a similar logic of interaction (in the sense that they are both process evolving locally), but from different points of view? Or, is this difference a matter of structure: we are looking to structural different phenomena responding the first to a "micro-meso logic" and the second to a "macro logic" of historical evolution?

We believe that answering, or at least exploring, empirically and methodologically this kind of specific questions can be important for the future development of Gerpisa and of its theoretical framework. And if it is true that some of these questions are already present in the programme of research of ESEMK, their formulation and the agenda of research that has been proposed seem for the time being just too "economic oriented" for taking fully into account the dimensions evoked above. For example, the definition of micro, meso and macro levels of analysis is a structural "hierarchisation" which does not raise too much problems in economy, but which has been largely questioned in history, with the emergence of the Italian *microstoria* during the 1980s and the development of the French concepts of *variation d'échelle* and of *approche multiscopique* during the 1990s. From this point of view, we could consider the notion of governance compromise as a possible tool to shift between different scales of analysis without having necessary to change the frame of the analysis between a macro, a meso or a micro level (an hypothesis that we will try do develop in the second part of this paper). Said this, it should be obvious that it is not at all our intention to open here, or anywhere else, a discussion on how the programme has been developed or should be formulated. On the contrary, what we are trying to say is that ESEMK represents a concrete opportunity to continue and to renovate the debate and the positive interaction between disciplines, which has always been part of the Gerpisa network, provided that also historians, sociologists and (why not) anthropologists, take actively part to the definition of the project, and do not confine their contribution to a single package (for example, the employment relationship, as it seems to be the case for the time being). It is from this perspective that we suggest that this new group of research should take seriously in charge the task of developing empirically and theoretically the notion of governance compromise, in order not only to promote and renovate the productive model approach, but also to participate actively to the intellectual evolution of the network, and, whether it is possible, to act as a pole of attraction for others researchers interested on this questions, but not yet part of the network, or aware of what the Gerpisa is already producing on these issues.

The second and conclusive part of this paper will be on the next Lettre du Gerpisa.

QUELQUES REFLEXIONS SUR L'ANALYSE DE LA FINANCIARISATION DANS LE PROJET ESEMK

Gabriel Colletis
(LEREPS-GRES)

Suite aux discussions de la journée d'études du GERPISA du 6 février 2004, voici quelques pistes de réflexion qui pourraient être proposées dans la perspective du travail à conduire sur le lien Financiarisation/ Stratégies dans le cadre du projet ESEMK (WP3). Les questions qui suivent devraient être déclinées sur plusieurs secteurs ou "activités" afin de mettre en évidence la diversité des modèles productifs, diversité éclairée par la perspective particulière de la "financiarisation". Nous suggérons de désigner cette diversité comme relevant de la variété de *modèles "financiers-productifs"*.

Quel est le niveau pertinent de gestion du risque: entreprises ou investisseurs ?

Traditionnellement, on a pu autrefois considérer que les firmes diversifiant leurs activités tendaient à réduire leur risque, et ainsi rassurer d'éventuels apporteurs de capitaux externes.

On observe cependant, depuis un certain temps, que les "marchés financiers" semblent privilégier les "pure players", entreprises très spécialisées sur un marché, voire un produit.
Ces "pure players", souvent, externalisent une partie des fonctions qu'ils assuraient jusque là en interne. Ces fonctions, qualifiées de "périphériques", concernent désormais parfois la production elle-même (ainsi que l'illustre le cas emblématique d'Alcatel ou du moins la rhétorique autour de ce cas suscitée par ses dirigeants).

L'hypothèse que nous proposons de tester est celle d'investisseurs ayant opté pour une stratégie de gestion des risques à leur niveau, et non plus celui des firmes dans lesquelles ils investissent ou plutôt placent leur fonds. La vente ou l'achat de titres d'une entreprise particulière est pour ces investisseurs synonyme de gestion des risques en rapport à une activité particulière (celle dans laquelle le pure player s'est spécialisé). Les actifs des entreprises concernées pourraient-ils alors être considérés comme quasi-liquides ?

Quel lien dominant entre investissement et financement ?

Jusque dans les années 90, la "question financière" pour les entreprises se résumait à celle de la contrainte d'un financement optimal de leurs investissements. Quel mix de financement retenir pour réaliser des investissements déterminés ex-ante ? Certes, le coût des différentes sources de financement était pris en compte (avec l'éventuel effet de levier), mais il s'agissait bien de sélectionner les financements en vue d'investissements à effectuer selon des objectifs multiples (parmi lesquels la rentabilité mais aussi des objectifs de plus long terme à caractère stratégique, tels la position concurrentielle, la compétitivité d'une manière plus générale, etc.).

Aujourd'hui, le lien principal semble être inversé : les entreprises sélectionnent leurs investissements en fonction de normes de rentabilité communes attendues par les investisseurs (parfois désignée comme une "convention") et, au-delà, de critères de "bonne gouvernance". Cette dernière proposition devrait néanmoins être évaluée car sa pertinence devrait être variable d'une firme à l'autre selon la nature et l'intensité de l'ouverture de son capital, et selon également selon le "modèle financier- productif" considéré.

Quelle signification du lien entre croissance externe et ouverture du capital ?

La croissance externe est fréquemment avancée comme un mode de croissance ou de préservation des actifs privilégié (obtention d'une taille critique, survie ou indépendance stratégique). Cependant, ce mode implique le plus souvent de mobiliser des fonds très importants, hors de portée des firmes par financement "classique".
L'ouverture du capital est posée alors comme étant inévitable…et imposerait des contraintes de rentabilité et de valorisation des titres apparemment renforcées. Ces contraintes sont néanmoins d'autant plus "douces" aux managers à accepter que leur propre revenu dépend (stocks options) en partie de ces objectifs ou contraintes résumées dans l'expression "création de valeur actionnariale".

Les managers en question, le plus souvent, n'ayant pas fait leur carrière dans les firmes qu'ils dirigent, l'ouverture du capital, les opérations de croissance externe modifiant la géométrie des firmes concernées, ou encore le changement de leur désignation sociale (nom) sont autant de décisions leur permettant de mieux asseoir leur pouvoir ou autorité.

Croissance externe, ouverture du capital et promotion de l'objectif central de "création de valeur" semblent ainsi constituer une séquence "stylisée" validant en partie la thèse du "capitalisme patrimonial" pour "peu" qu'une partie des salariés se rallie à cet objectif.
Cette séquence ne semble néanmoins pas se vérifier dans les mêmes termes pour toutes les firmes, quel que soit le secteur, ou encore quelle que soit la période…

Pour "conclure", il faut prendre garde aux cloisonnements et hiérarchies habituels. La question du mode de financement des économies, de la diversité de ce mode selon les pays ou de la convergence vers un modèle européen, est assurément de niveau macroéconomique.

Celle de la diversité des modèles "financiers-productifs" peut être posée comme de niveau "intermédiaire" ou mésoéconomique.

Le risque est cependant grand, dès lors, de cloisonner et hiérarchiser les deux niveaux, d'autant qu'ils seraient traités par des équipes ou groupes d'équipes différents travaillant sur des WP distincts. L'issue prévisible risque d'être celle de la "grande synthèse" où la question de la diversité des modèles financiers- productifs serait en quelque sorte "avalée" par celle de niveau "supérieur"…

Un tel scénario de recherche laisserait alors dans l'ombre de nombreuses questions importantes telles que :

✓ le lien qui se joue entre financiarisation et mondialisation entendue comme concurrence entre capitaux nomades (les capitaux industriels sous leur forme d'investissement direct) et antagonisme entre capitaux nomades et capitaux volatiles.

✓ le possible, mais partiel pour le moins, glissement d'un capitalisme de cœur financier à un capitalisme de marchés financiers (observable peut-être dans des activités comme celle liées aux nouvelles technologies mais beaucoup moins, comme je l'ai fait observer lors de la séance du 6 février, dans l'automobile).

L'unique solution pour éviter ce "piège" est "d'ouvrir" les séances de travail et l'écriture, et de travailler entre équipes participant à des groupes de travail (Workpackage) différents d'ESEMK *les espaces intermédiaires* comme ceux qui relèvent, à titre d'illustration, des deux questions précédentes. Il est probable que cette remarque de méthode s'applique à d'autres WP entre eux…

Interview

CARLOS GHOSN
PRESIDENT OF NISSAN MOTOR

Koichi Shimokawa

First publication: Nikkan Jidosha Shimbun (Daily Automotive Newspaper) October 4, 2003

The Truth about Nissan/Renault

Carlos Ghosn, the president of Nissan Motor has been introduced through a variety of media including interviews and autobiographies. The author interviewed Mr. Ghosn with his unique insight developed from his extensive history of interviewing leaders of automobile manufacturers. This interview encompasses a wide range of topics including the correlation between the TQM activities that played a significant role in Renault's revitalization and the NRP (Nissan Revitalization Plan), Mr. Ghosn's assessment on Nissan's potential, the synergy (multiplier) effect between Nissan and Renault, the alliance management of both companies, purchasing system reform at Nissan, Nissan's brand management (BI) and Mr. Ghosn's future vision with China. He frankly and clearly answered these questions.

Q: How do TQM activities that played such a crucial role in Renault's revitalization in the 90s and Nissan's reform correlate?

A: Frankly speaking, there is no direct correlation between Renault's TQM and Nissan's reform. Renault's TQM was based on the basic rational management principles, however, the value of TQM is not in its principles, but rather depends on how to implement it. Many companies both in and out of France are struggling with a variety of management theories, which are not so useful in terms of management effectiveness. Management effectiveness solely depends on "the implementation." In other words, it is imperative to implement effectively with focus and motivation. French companies are always advocating principles, theories, and French people are strong in them. However, the challenge is how to implement them. For Nissan, too, the challenge was the implementation rather than the theory itself. In this sense, Renault's TQM activities did not particularly link with Nissan's revitalization.

Q: You established the strategic leadership at Nissan and provided employees with clear goals. I believe that Nissan was not fully capitalized and the potential played a certain role in the process of revitalization. What do you think about this?

To Operate at Nissan's Full Potential

A: First of all, potential is very subjective rather than objective. I was confident that Nissan had sufficient potential at the beginning stages of NRP. However, it is not easy to measure potential quantitatively. We try to attain our limits and only then we can know our full potential. I was certain that Nissan has been not capitalized 100% and that is why I deployed the new "Nissan 180" after achieving NRP.

Q: You came on board because of the alliance between Nissan and Renault. How much synergy effect did you expect and how much of it has been realized?

A: At the beginning, I tried to quantify synergy effects of both companies and publicly disclosed the goals. However, the publicized number did not include the potential synergy effect. What I know for sure is that some synergy effects can be quantified easily but others are harder. We did not take time trying to measure the hard-to-quantify synergy effects. We knew our directional approach was correct and we did not see much benefit quantifying them.

Specifically, Renault reentered the Mexican market utilizing Nissan's presence. In this scenario, it is easy to measure the synergy effect based on the number of automobiles sold and the profit generated per sale. Contrary, in terms of collective purchasing, the more we purchase from a single supplier, the more economy of scale is influenced. It takes so much effort to measure the effect and the quantified outcome would not hold anything so significant. That is why we do not go out of our way quantifying it. We also know that many benefits, reduced man-hours, reduced purchasing costs and improvement of production flexibility, can be realized by standardizing platforms of the two companies but quantifying it will not provide any special meaning. What I am expecting now is the purchasing power and then, platform standardization. Sales are another area of expectation but I cannot see any significant reason for measuring the outcomes.

Q: When I interviewed Mr. Duane, Executive Vice President of Renault, he said that mutual respect is important for the difference of corporate cultures between Renault and Nissan. How do you plan to develop this principle in the future? How do you plan to realize the mutual equality, namely share weight based on the partnering advantage?

Respect for Identity

A: Respect for different identities and corporate management styles is the foundation for the alliance between Nissan and Renault. Renault does not intervene in Nissan's management or vise versa. If the two parties do not agree on a given theme, we send the matter to the alliance board for thorough discussions. And if an agreement still cannot be reached, the matter will be terminated. This does not cause any problem. I do not have any intention to pursue any strategy that generates conflicts of interest or a no win-win situation. We try to optimize our performance by respecting different BI and corporate management styles. This is what we mean by respect.

Q: Among all the "Ghosn reforms," the purchasing system reform had the most impact. You realized significant cost reductions without lowering the suppliers' competitiveness while diminishing the number of suppliers. This was a stunning move to many people. The public applauded it as "Ghosn Magic." How was this possible? How do you evaluate the new purchasing system?

A: I did not use any magic, actually. I was never against business affiliations but the problem was that Nissan's business dealings among affiliations were not well managed. I believe that business affiliations can be rather efficient as long as proper management is in place. However, this management was not working well for Nissan.

So, here is what I figured. Correcting troubled management among affiliations would take far more time than transforming it. A manufacturer can only obtain suppliers that are compatible to the level of its dynamics. With proper management, we will be able to attract powerful suppliers. We transformed our system so that it meets the needs of powerful suppliers. We encourage more aggressive competition as we value long-term relationships, and we try to join hands with global suppliers more actively. Furthermore, we attempt to bring in stricter disciplinary rules to the decision-making process for purchasing by establishing a purchasing department. There is no magic in this. Everything is very basic and commonly understood.

I changed every conceivable aspect solely to improve the long-term performance of Nissan. We must grow through friendly rivalry by challenging fierce competition, working with profit-generating suppliers and coping with challenges in the market. I reengineered the system that is functional to accommodate suppliers' needs rather than developing a Nissan's unique supplier system.

Q: Nissan has accomplished NRP a year ahead of schedule and now has the "Nissan 180" within its scope of achievement. Tell me what you see in a relationship between Nissan and Renault in the future. In addition, could you tell me about your view of Nissan BI, which is listed as an important theme of Nissan 180.

A: We are in the middle of internal discussions regarding the post Nissan 180 and the decisions will be announced at the end of the year. The partner relationship between Renault and Nissan will not drastically change though small adjustments may be necessary to accommodate different situations. Some say that the two companies may merge in the future but that is not a possibility. Once two companies merge completely, the value destroyed will exceed the value generated. Our alliance is very unique because of its nature to maintain separate identities, pursue consistent strategies and achieve excellent performance.

Nissan must enhance BI that fundamentally resides in the minds of consumers. An image of "This is how we want to be" must be established internally, and the image needs to be communicated to all parties concerned, the designers, engineers, marketing personnel and production staff. The image needs to be shared with the staff involved in Japan, the US, Mexico, China and Europe. This allows all employees to understand what their company is pursuing from the BI point of view.

Bi, Foundation For Competitive Strength In Price

Once BI influences countless decisions made daily in all aspects of the company, BI will start impacting everything we produce including products, services, communications and advertisements. BI does not merely influence the internal image but it changes the consumer perception toward Nissan.

Another important point is that BI will affect profitability. In other words, BI is the foundation for a competitive edge in price competition. However, it takes time to establish competitiveness. Currently, the price difference is closing in on the competition, which indicates a reinforcement of BI but we are only half way there.

Q: Regarding the Chinese market.

A: Some say that Nissan was left behind in China but it is not too late with accurate decisions. The merger with Dongfeng Motor, to which we have already invested 1 billion dollars, will enable us to catch up with the advance parties at a rapid pace.

Mr. Ghosn's responses were frank and clear to all the questions during this interview. His responses concerning mutual respect in the alliance, his future vision, reform of the parts purchasing system and pursuit of BI were especially interesting.

Mr. Ghosn left a strong impression as an executive of action, even more so than expected, equipped with an executing ability and daring decisiveness. Mr. Ghosn has a keen understanding of a variety of theories and practices, and the meaning of quantification and its limits.

He clearly summarizes his realistic thoughts to simultaneously pursue strategic visions and make prompt decisions as an executive.

Kyushu University, the author's alma mater, awarded Mr. Ghosn with an honorary doctorate and hopes for his further success. The author commented at the end of the session, "When you first came to Nissan, you were mentioned in a revival song called 'There is tomorrow.' I now know very well, that you not only promised tomorrow to Nissan but also strive to bring about a brilliant future." Mr. Ghosn departed with many "thank you" for the author's last comment.

L'actualité du produit

Ugo Puliese

LA PRIUS MONTE AU CRENEAU

Lorsque Toyota a lancé la première génération de Prius fin 1997, le scepticisme était largement partagé chez les experts de l'industrie automobile et chez les concurrents du numéro un japonais. Les faits semblent leur avoir donné raison puisque, en six ans, il ne s'est vendu que 120 000 exemplaires du modèle qui, il est vrai, n'a été exporté vers les Etats-Unis et vers l'Europe qu'à partir de 2000.

Outre ce résultat commercial décevant, il faut ajouter que d'un point de vue environnemental, l'argument des Prius I apparaissait limité : si, comme le répètent les constructeurs européens, les émissions polluantes en ville ne sont plus un problème grâce aux progrès réalisés sur les moteurs thermiques (essence et gazole), il reste à s'attaquer au problème des émissions de CO_2 responsables désignées du réchauffement climatique. Or, les émissions de CO_2 de la Prius I (120 g au kilomètre) s'avèrent supérieures à celles des petites citadines à moteur diésel moderne grâce à la technique de l'injection à haute pression (206 et Clio par exemple). Et la Prius, malgré des dimensions extérieures importantes, n'offrait pas une habitabilité vraiment supérieure à celle des citadines en raison de la place prise par la propulsion électrique et ses batteries (qui viennent s'ajouter à un moteur thermique). Le dernier argument en défaveur de la Prius I était d'ordre économique puisque, en raison de sa double motorisation (essence et électrique), elle coûtait plus cher pour le client et n'était pas rentable pour le constructeur.

Pourtant, l'intérêt d'un véhicule hybride comme la Prius réside dans la disparition du problème d'autonomie présenté par les véhicules à 100 % électriques : le véhicule hybride incorpore son propre générateur, en fait un moteur thermique traditionnel, destiné à la fois à la recharge et à un fonctionnement en mode habituel. Il n'y a donc même pas à se préoccuper de trouver une borne de recharge électrique. Avec la Prius 2, Toyota a retenu la leçon et il propose désormais un modèle conservant les avantages de la première génération mais corrigeant ses inconvénients.

D'abord, le modèle de deuxième génération est légèrement plus gros et plus spacieux que le précédent et il s'insère dans le créneau des berlines moyennes supérieures (du type Laguna) et non plus dans celui des moyennes inférieures (du type Mégane). Son prix est donc comparable à celui d'une berline traditionnelle (Toyota Avensis) et non plus largement au-dessus d'une compacte (Toyota Corolla). D'autre part, de par sa taille, le modèle cadre beaucoup mieux avec la demande de la clientèle américaine, ce qui n'est pas négligeable compte tenu des opportunités qui peuvent être saisies sur ce marché où le diésel n'existe pratiquement pas.

L'autre évolution est d'ordre technique. Son moteur à essence fonctionne pour obtenir le meilleur rendement et non pas la plus forte puissance (il fonctionne comme un moteur stationnaire). Le moteur électrique est quant à lui l'un des plus puissants montés sur une voiture (68 ch).

Il en résulte une optimisation de la consommation de carburant qui, alliée à un Cx record (0,26 au lieu de 0,29 pour la première génération), permet de faire chuter les émissions de CO_2 à 104 g/km (au lieu de 120), un chiffre politiquement plus que correct sur le marché européen.

La Commission européenne insiste en effet pour que la moyenne des émissions des voitures neuves tombe à 120 g (les constructeurs européens se sont engagés sur un niveau de 140 g pour 2008 et semblent déjà peiner pour s'y conformer).

La Prius 2 bénéficiera par ailleurs d'incitations fiscales qui se sont progressivement mises en place aux Etats-Unis et dans certains pays d'Europe et qui permettent de réduire encore le différentiel de prix avec une voiture traditionnelle.

Toyota prend désormais son modèle Prius très au sérieux. Ainsi, la Prius 2 fait désormais l'objet de publicités mettant en avant ses qualités en tant que produit alors que la Prius 1 faisait essentiellement l'objet d'une communication institutionnelle (c'est-à-dire portant sur le savoir-faire de Toyota en général).

Les ventes de la Prius 2, lancée fin 2003, ont si bien démarré que Toyota a revu à la hausse ses objectifs de ventes. Il table désormais sur 76 000 exemplaires vendus dans le monde en 2004, dont la moitié aux Etats-Unis.

Mais derrière la Prius – qui est un modèle exclusivement conçu pour un mode hybride - se profilent d'autres versions de modèles courants de Toyota comme les Crown, Estima et Lexus RX400H qui reprennent une base technique similaire. Ceci devrait permettre à Toyota d'écouler 300 000 véhicules hybrides par an dans le monde à partir de 2005 et de franchir ainsi le seuil de rentabilité pour cette technique. D'ailleurs, Toyota dément depuis 2002 que ses véhicules hybrides ne soient pas rentables. Fidèle à sa philosophie de réduction permanente des coûts, il a en effet probablement tout fait pour limiter les pertes essuyées initialement par le modèle.

A partir de 2006, Nissan proposera sur le marché une Altima hybride en utilisant des groupes de propulsion achetés à Toyota, ce qui accroîtra d'autant les économies d'échelle du premier constructeur japonais.

La Prius constitue un modèle essentiel pour un constructeur qui a toujours brillé sur de nombreux fronts (production, finances, qualité) mais qui reste handicapé par une image terne voire par pas d'image du tout. La Prius lui apporte à la fois une image de pionnier de l'environnement (très utile vis-à-vis des pouvoirs publics et des médias mais pas tellement vis-à-vis des clients) mais, surtout, d'innovateur, à l'image d'Audi, de Citroën ou de Mazda.

La Prius représente par ailleurs une expérience unique pour Toyota en matière de technique électrique qui pourrait se généraliser à l'avenir si l'avènement des véhicules à pile à combustible, prédit ou promis vers 2010-2020, se concrétisait. Toyota réalise en fait un pari sur la situation énergétique de la planète à l'horizon 2010 et pense que, si les ressources venaient à se raréfier pour des raisons d'ordre géologique ou géopolitique, il serait particulièrement bien placé pour en profiter.

Seul Honda a véritablement emboîté le pas à Toyota puisqu'il a également lancé fin 2003 sa deuxième génération de véhicule hybride, la Civic, qui vient succéder au coupé Insight. Honda utilise en fait une technique légèrement différente de celle de Toyota, l'hybride série. Dans ce cas, le moteur électrique joue le rôle d'assistant du moteur thermique alors que sur la Prius, il peut s'y substituer dans des modes de circulation lente. Une autre technique, l'hybride parallèle, où le moteur thermique et un petit moteur électrique d'appoint restent indépendants grâce à une batterie spécifique au second, devrait être utilisée par PSA à la fin de 2004 sur ses petits modèles urbains.

Les constructeurs américains, sauf peut-être Ford qui tient également à se forger une image « verte », restent en retrait par rapport à Toyota car ils savent que les premières années de présence sur ce créneau seront synonymes de déficit. Seul un constructeur tel que Toyota, ayant une forte assise financière et adoptant une vision à long terme des marchés, pouvait tenter l'expérience avec la possibilité pour lui, si le marché des véhicules hybrides se développe réellement, de prendre une longueur d'avance sur tous ses concurrents, y compris européens qui, eux, ne jurent que par le diésel. En janvier 2004, M. Pischetsrieder, président de Volkswagen, a d'ailleurs qualifié de « catastrophe écologique » la fabrication de voitures hybrides pour des raisons de coût et de recyclage des batteries.

Si, avec la Prius 1, on n'a pu voir qu'un modèle de niche, cette fois c'est vers un véritable créneau que l'on pourrait de diriger, celui des voitures politiquement correctes et pour lequel l'offre mondiale reste limitée.

Séminaire – Colloque

CALL FOR PAPERS
International Journal of Automotive Technology and Management (IJATM)

Special Issue on *"Market Strategies and Product Supply in World-Wide Car Manufacture*

Aims and scope

Papers are requested for a special issue of IJATM looking at the interaction between market strategies and pressures and product supply, broadly conceived. The focus should be on some aspect of how market strategy and marketing requirements at the level of the product-line impinge on the selection of production techniques, the organisation of labour, or manufacturing logistics, and/or vice versa. For instance:

In Hal Mather's substantial contribution *Competitive Manufacturing*, for example, the management of product variety, in the form of many product and part configurations, appears as a key problem for the organisation. By contrast, in much of the recent work on the world automotive sector the compatibility of 'every' best manufacturing practice with high variety of this sort is largely taken as granted. Is this an oversimplification?

A company pursuing the luxury end of the car market is liable to employ or subcontract for specific types of manufacturing expertise (e.g. fine blank presswork). Taken overall, however, how different are the core competencies employed in this case from those required for manufacture of a product-line aimed at a volume segment of the market?

The car industry has been characterised by a number of interesting attempts to evolve different types of work-practice for operatives engaged in assembly work, perhaps most notably in successive experiments in Swedish car manufacture. How sensitive are alternative forms of work-organisation to the particular choice of market?

In their widely read *Natural Capitalism*, Hawkins, Lovins and Lovins argue that environmental concerns are being met in the car industry by the development of hybrid product technologies ('hypercars') combined with the implementation of new best manufacturing practices. Is this definitive?

Papers are welcome which look at the experience of individual product-lines or companies, or develop a comparative theme, or look at the effects of product variety or vertical-quality issues on specific stages of the product supply chain. Studies adopting a case-study methodology or an historical perspective are equally welcome. Papers raising new questions/ speculations or addressing methodological issues are similarly of value.

Studies highlighting unsuspected incompatibilities in selected marketing and manufacturing strategies are particularly welcome, as are studies of the learning experiences of firms and the management of the marketing/ product supply interface.

Contributions on markets/ manufacture/ and the environment are also sought.

Subject coverage

The following are examples of potential topics or questions of direct relevance to this special issue. The list is intended to be indicative of general themes and subject areas, and is not intended to be overly prescriptive or exhaustive:

- ✓ an overview of evidence (global or regional) on convergence/ divergence in the market strategies pursued bythe leading car assemblers and/or niche producers
- ✓ a focused study of changes in the market strategy and product orientation of individual assemblers, and influencing factors, at company or plant level
- ✓ are the manufacturing principles broadly grouped under the heading lean production applicable in all marketing contexts?
- ✓ are the popular benchmarks of world-class manufacturing performance misleading in some marketing contexts?
- ✓ have particular assemblers/plants experienced substantial difficulties in reconciling marketing objectives with selected product supply strategies/ benchmarks?
- ✓ are alternative forms of work organisation best suited to production for minority markets, and is market identity and selection an important factor determining the viability of experimental modes of organising car manufacture and assembly?
- ✓ how significant is market selection and vertical-quality of the assembler's product-line for the organisation of the supply chain in the automotive industry?
- ✓ how significant is market selection and vertical-quality of product for the choice of manufacturing technologies and /or workforce skills in the automotive industry?
- ✓ how significant is market selection and vertical-quality of product for the development of and benefits obtained from (non-price) co-operative ventures?
- ✓ an overview or focused study of the effects of the revolution in information technologies on the management of the product supply/ marketing interface
- ✓ an overview or focused study of the implications of hybrid product technologies for the future organisation of manufacture and assembly processes
- ✓ an assessment of the future impact of environmental concerns on the international car market, and the likely response of producers at plant and product level

Contributions

The special issue welcomes both innovative and practical contributions addressing the proposed, or related, topics (see "subject coverage"). Interdisciplinary cultural exchanges are very welcome!

Highest priority will be given to contributions presenting quantitative or qualitative methods and tools, surveys, or case studies directly related to the real application for manufacturing in the automotive sector. Papers should be preferably based on empirical situations or data, with a rigorous research methodology, comparison with existing literature, accurate presentation and clear reference to bibliographical sources, clear presentation of data and validation.

Due dates

- ✓ The special issue will be published in 2005.
- ✓ *Deadlines for abstract submission (see Submission of papers):* **June 30, 2004**
- ✓ Deadlines for acceptance from guest editor: **July 15, 2004**
- ✓ Deadlines for full paper submission (see Submission of papers): **Oct 30, 2004**
- ✓ Deadlines for final revisions: **Jan 30, 2005**

Submission of abstracts

Abstract should have maximum 200 words text; times new Roman; 12 pt; reporting title, authors and co-authors; address of the referring author (mail, e-mail, telephones). Send the manuscript to the guest editor preferably by e-mail (Word for Windows 95 or updated –doc- or, alternatively Portable Document Format – pdf); otherwise, send 1 copy to the specified address below

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Submission of full Papers

See "notes for intending authors" for preparation (accessible via the Internet URL: www.inderscience.com).
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Centre documentaire

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Livres acquis

BRINKLEY Douglas, *Wheels for the World. Henry Ford, his Company and a Century of Progress 1903-2003*, New York, Viking Penguin, 2003, XXII – 858 p.

CHARRON Elsie and STEWART Paul, *Work and Employment Relations in the Automobile Industry*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 297 p.

LEVINSON William A., *Henry Ford's Lean Vision. Enduring Principles from the First Ford Motor Plant*, New York, Productivity Press, 2002, 358 p.

OLSEN Byron and CABADAS Joseph, *The American Auto Factory*, St Paul (MN-USA), MBI Publishing Company, 2002, 192 p.

Thèses – Mémoires – Rapports reçus

LE GUEHENNEC Christophe, *Organisation japonaise de la production, 20 ans après, quel modèle ?. Le cas des implantations d'entreprises japonaises dans l'industrie française*, thèse de Doctorat de Sciences Économiques, Université de Paris XIII – Paris Nord, décembre 2003, 311 p.

CALENDRIER DES REUNIONS DU RESEAU GERPISA 2004

Vendredi 02 avril 2004 à la MSH (Salle 015)
Autour de la relation salariale (avec le groupe régulation secteur territoire)

Vendredi 07 mai 2004 à la MSH (Salle 015)

Douzième Rencontre Internationale du GERPISA
9, 10 et 11 Juin 2004, Ministère de la Recherche, Paris.

"Comment penser la variete du capitalisme et la diversite des modeles productifs"
"Analysing the Variety of Capitalism and the Diversity of Productive Models"

Comité International de Pilotage : The Gerpisa New Research Agenda
11 Juin 2004, Ministère de la Recherche, Paris. 15h00 à 18h00, salle A
et 12 Juin 2004, (salle à confirmer)

LA LETTRE DU GERPISA

Sommaire du n° 175

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Photo : Micra de Nissan, premier modèle developpé sur une plateforme commune avec Renault

Les manuscrits sont à envoyer avant le 20 du mois
The manuscripts have to be sent before the 20th of the month