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Deinstitutionalization as a cumulative process: the role of successive struggles in the case of a “magic mineral”.

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Abstract

Relying on the case of asbestos in France, we study a deinstitutionalization process as a result of successive and cumulative struggles. There are competing interests in specific institutional arrangements. Actors who want to disrupt institutions have to face with other actors who benefit from the existing order. We emphasize the longitudinal role of these struggles and depict deinstitutionalization as a process that is achieved over a long period. Most struggles do not succeed in disrupting a practice but produce residues that slightly change rules, beliefs, cognitive schemes and practices. We explore the longitudinal evolution of discourse from 1920 to 1997 concerning asbestos and analyze the impacts of successive struggles. In that way, we explain changes that are reflected by discourse. Discourse analysis partially relies here on Prospéro, a piece of software devoted to the exploration of texts produced in a contestation context.

The paper attempts to explore the long process that has led to the deinstitutionalization of asbestos in France, first considered as a “magic mineral”. Asbestos is a natural fibre that was already known by the old Greeks. It became increasingly popular in the 19th century during the industrial revolution. Asbestos can resist to heat, chemical damage, and electricity. It also absorbs sounds. Due to these unique insulation properties, its use became generalized. By the mid of the 20th century, asbestos could be found almost everywhere, under different shapes and was possibly mixed with other materials like cement. For example, it was used for concrete, roofing, pipe insulation, clothes and even for cigarettes.

Figure 1 shows the sharp rise in asbestos importation into France, culminating at about 180 000 tons in 1974.

However, this rise should not be understood as an uncontested adoption. Early studies, such as Dr Murray’s post-mortem exam in 1899, pointed out the possible dangers of asbestos. The following studies from the 20s, more systematic and based on larger samples demonstrated the noxiousness of asbestos and in some cases its lethal consequences.

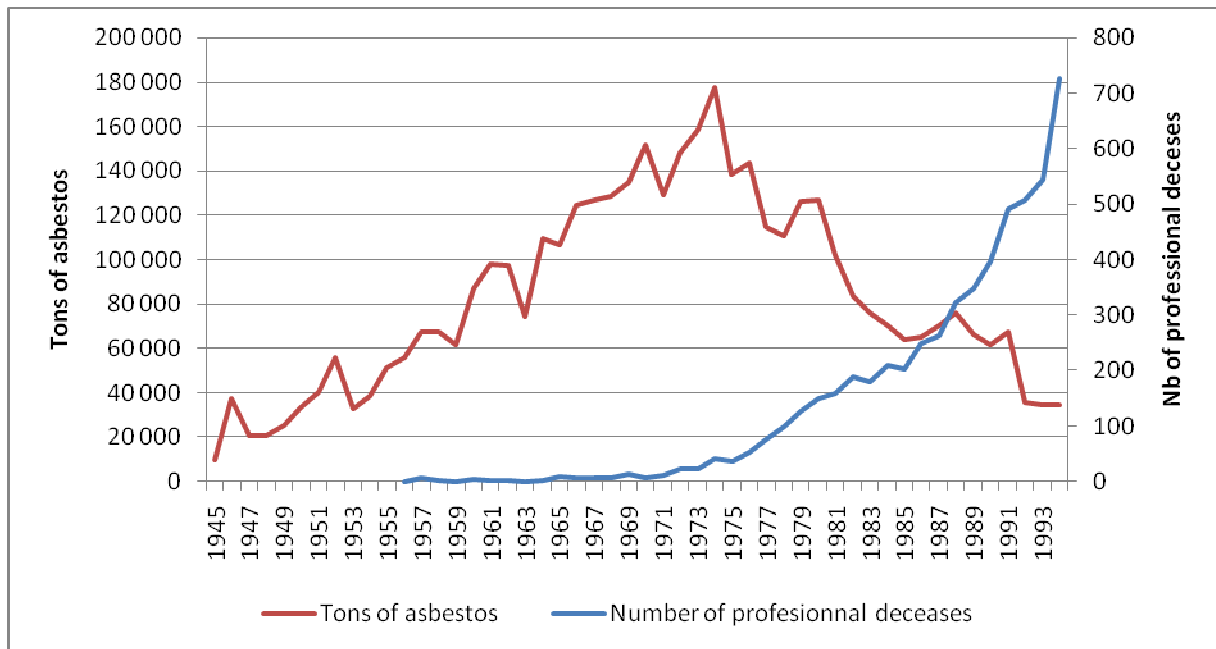


Figure 1 : Importation of asbestos into France

Yet, these successive scientific reports did not put an end to the development of asbestos. On the contrary, its importation increased, and the practices associated with asbestos remained stable, except some slight and progressive changes. This persistence in spite of alarming medical cases is a puzzling phenomenon which is interesting to explore.

It emphasizes the longitudinal dimension of deinstitutionalization. The decline of asbestos only began in the 80s. In 1997, the use of asbestos was totally banned. We argue that this decline and eventually the ban of asbestos are not only due to events that occurred at that time but echoes the past struggles that – even unsuccessful – have induced slight and progressive changes. We attempt to understand to which extent each struggle can lead to regulative, normative and cognitive changes even if these changes are minor and partially integrated into the existing institution.

In this paper, we examine asbestos as an institution, drawing on Scott's "omnibus" definition: "institutions are comprised of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources provide stability and meaning to social life" (Scott 2008, p.48).

Relying on this institutional framework, asbestos appears to be constrained and framed by three pillars, regulative, normative and culturo-cognitive. The issue of stability and persistence is included in the very definition of an institution. The alignment between the three pillars ensures a strong stability, since practices acquire the status of taken-for-granted actions that are also supported by formal systems such as rules, and are endorsed by common values and norms. To that extent, Scott (2008, p.62) argues that "when the pillars are aligned, the strength of their combined forces can be formidable". The study of Caronna (2004) in the US care field is a good illustration.

This definition of institution depicts three main dimensions of institutions to describe their main components. However, little is said here about the process that constitutes institutions. For Bartey and Tolbert (1997, p.99) institutions are "historical accretions of past practices and understandings that set conditions on actions". This definition emphasizes the historical dimension of institutions that draw on past events to constrain present actions.

To study asbestos as a deinstitutionalization case, we focus on the historical dimension of the institution and the process under which practices and understandings in the field are progressively de-accreted. While many studies about institutional change have relied on longitudinal analysis over several decades (amongst others Chung and Luo 2008; Greenwood, Suddaby and Hinings 2002; Hoffman 1999; Leblebici, Salancik, Copay and King 1991; Tolbert and Zucker 1983), studies about institutional disruption or deinstitutionalization have been interested in shorter periods, rather focusing on a crystallised moment that provokes the disruption of a practice. For example Ahmadjian and Robinson (2001) attempt to explain the deinstitutionalization of permanent employment in Japan. For that purpose, they focus on the role of downsizing in Japanese firms in a fairly short period between 1990 and 1997. Little is said about older events that have prepared the basis of change.

Our analysis is based on a series of "struggles" from the 50s that have lead to the deinstitutionalization of asbestos. In particular, we conduct a systematic analysis of texts that have been produced around the issue of asbestos between 1970 and 1997. Before, little has been said about asbestos, except scientific or technical reports. We use a lexicometric program – Prospéro – that is particularly adapted for the study of struggles (Chateauraynaud 2003; Chateauraynaud and Torny 1999). We show how different successive struggles have

impacted the asbestos institution, exploring the temporal dynamics between the regulative, normative and cognitive pillars. We emphasize the concept of *residues* that we describe as the remains of a struggle. They constitute a potential basis for change and put forward the significant role of any struggle, whether it is successful or not.

Institutional dynamics and deinstitutionalization

Oliver (1992, p.564) defined deinstitutionalization as “the delegitimation of an established organizational practice or procedure as a result of organizational challenges to or the failure of organizations to reproduce previously legitimated or taken-for-granted organizational actions”. This study emphasizes deinstitutionalization as a process that is longitudinally achieved through a series of struggles. We underline the dynamic dimension of institutions and shed light on agency and struggles implied in the logics of change opposed to the logics of persistence.

The issue of change in institutional literature has been increasingly studied these last years and has mainly crystallized around the analysis of institutionalization process and the institutional entrepreneur (amongst others: Barley and Tolbert 1997; Holm 1995; Lanzara and Patriotta 2007; Maguire, Hardy and Lawrence 2004; Perkmann and Spicer 2008). However, little is known about how institutional practices change or disappear (Greenwood et al. 2002; Oliver 1992). Similarly, the temporal effects of institutional mechanisms has been underestimated, and has rarely been systematically analyzed (Lawrence, Winn and Jennings 2001). It is yet a fundamental question to further explore the logics underlying stability and change.

Up till now main researches about change and disruption in institutions have emphasized the role of *jolts* (Meyer, Brooks and Goes 1990) that destabilize established practices in three ways, technological, social and regulatory (Greenwood et al. 2002). Jolts catalyze the evolution of the field and precipitate its change. As instance, Maguire’s and Hardy’s research (2009) underline the role of the publication of *Silent Hill* as a jolt to change practices dealing with DDT. However, we agree with Munir (2005) on the fact that institutional change cannot be attributed to a single event – a jolt. Instead, change is the effect of a social construction of events that are collectively assimilated, sorted out and theorized. To that extent, the effect of a jolt is rather due to the crystallization of past events that have been socially constructed.

Oliver's study (1992) also emphasizes deinstitutionalization as a process that is achieved over time.

Institutional struggles and *residues*

With this focus on processual dimension of institutions, the efforts of actors to purposively act upon institutions, or *institutional work*, as it has been coined by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) are directly connected to deinstitutionalization process. We assume that institutional work is dynamic and inscribed in a momentum - that is an energy associated with a common inspiration. Jansen (2004) distinguishes *statis-based momentum* and *change-based momentum*. In both cases, actors' efforts are inscribed in a specific path and course of actions. Actions are temporarily situated. They are both embedded in a specific history and also inspire upcoming actions. To that extent, institutional work, at a particular time, echoes the history of the field.

The dynamism underlying deinstitutionalization and institutional work is not only temporal but refers to struggles between actors. In highly institutionalized fields, specific practices are taken for granted and are extremely resistant to change. Many actors are yet engaged into efforts to influence institutions (DiMaggio 1988; Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Oliver 1991; Oliver 1992) which is a concrete manifestation of agency. Though institutions generate order, there are still conflicts and contradictions (Powell and DiMaggio 1991) and actors compete around divergent interests. Institutional work is thus inscribed in institutional struggles. These struggles are rarely the opposition between equal forces. As it is shown by Bourdieu (1977), actors are differently endowed with capital, which generates sources of power, and defines different hierarchical positions amongst the actors of the field. The actors in favour of institutional change compete with those who aim at maintaining the existing institution. These struggles are asymmetrical, and in highly institutionalized fields, defenders of maintenance can have a significant power, and legitimacy – for example the role of elite agencies in effecting institutional ends (Lawrence et al. 2001). An important issue is to determine who benefits from specific institutional arrangements. To that extent, even if the political side of institutional change has mainly been eluded, the study of deinstitutionalization is more consistent if it is considered as an ongoing series of asymmetrical struggles, with competing practices aiming either at change or maintenance. These struggles, in spite of asymmetry, are not purely vain and can be productive. Even if an action for change is unsuccessful, it leaves a *residue*. We can define it as a set of values, beliefs, and practices defended by institutional

actors that have emerged from the institutional struggle and that has been incorporated into the existing institution. These residues can participate to change and to a progressive delegitimation of a practice when they are cumulated.

There has been no study of the longitudinal role of these residues in the deinstitutionalization process. This question is yet crucial, since it documents the role of successive struggles. In that case, deinstitutionalization would be neither a radical nor incremental change but a longitudinal process in which residues play a latent and cumulative role. The reality is not only constituted by what is manifested but also by its dormant dimensions. Different or even antagonist logics can be merged in a single complex reality (Morin 1990). Using Morin's terminology, our goal is then the understanding of the dialogic between persistence and change as they are expressed in successive struggles in deinstitutionalization process.

The case of asbestos in France

To study a series of struggles and the successive residues which have been produced, we analyze the case of asbestos in France. This case illustrates an exemplary deinstitutionalization process. From a “magical mineral” to the “the public enemy number one”, asbestos has been progressively considered as a lethal substance and has been forbidden. Asbestos is a world controversy, but the study of the French case in particular is interesting for two main reasons. The controversy in France has brought major social struggles and has generated a large coalition of opponents and defenders of asbestos. Second, it is noticeable for the length of the conflict (asbestos is forbidden in France only in 1997, instead of the 80's for most other industrialized countries). Actors implied in the struggles are extremely diversified and evolve from 1920 to 1997.

From 1906 to 1945, few researchers (especially from the USA and from Great Britain) had studied and questioned the link between cancers and exposition to asbestos. Workers, exposed to asbestos, were not well organized and didn't have information. Industrials (mainly represented by St-Gobain and Externit in France) supported by politics tried to maintain the asbestos practice and were not really threatened by the results of these studies. Their first reactions were “no-reactions”. However doubt, as a cognitive residue, can be perceived as a consequence of the institutional work in the field.

In 1945, asbestosis is officially recognized as an industrial disease by the French authority. And the official recognition is a regulative residue as a first step in the awareness of political actors.

From the 1950s, evidence concerning problems with asbestos still accumulated: from 1950 to 1960, we can observe a multiplication of studies that showed the link between asbestos and cancers. A part of the profession agreed with these critical studies, whereas the other part claimed that the noxiousness is not significant and can be controlled. Then, as the number of deaths was increasing, trade unions organized themselves against asbestos. Factories were occupied: we can take the example of Amisol in December 1974 (see Appendix 1), which becomes the symbol of the fight against asbestos. The workers' mobilisation aroused doubts among their employers. The asbestos industrial union organized a symposium the 29th and 30th of May 1964. Officially, French industrials could no longer deny that they were aware of the asbestos consequences. This point appeared important when the regulative crisis began in 1990. At the end of the 70s, new actors appeared. The most representative is the "Collectif de Jussieu". It was created in 1977 in Paris to denounce the danger of a passive exposition to asbestos. This organization aimed at representing people working in one of the biggest French University (most of them were professors). The "Collectif de Jussieu" managed to communicate in mass media and succeeded in connecting different movements (its action with Amisol workers was a tipping point in the debate). Meanwhile, the French government support was also declining: for example they decided to control the use of asbestos (with the 1977 decree), which can be considered as a regulative residue.

This context of doubt led defenders of asbestos to contradictions. For example, the union of asbestos industrial claimed in press that there is no danger to work in an office built with asbestos. In the same time, the RATP (Parisian public transport organisation) restored many underground stations to protect workers. These internal contradictions brought a lack of legitimacy amongst the defenders of asbestos. To reduce this dissonance, a new committee is created: the CPA (Asbestos Permanent Committee) in 1982. This committee, gathering industrials, researchers and workers' representatives, had to take decision concerning asbestos in France. Criticisms rapidly appeared. Even if several researchers belonged to this committee, its neutrality was quickly outlined: this committee was financed by the asbestos industrials. In the same time, international pressure grew (France had to apply European directives that were very restrictive concerning asbestos). Conferences, debates were organised by the defenders of maintenance. Suspicion and fear increased among the

population. The creation of the CPA was denounced as a manipulative strategy. From 1978 to 1992, the media remained fairly silent, which explains the fact that most people were not informed about asbestos.

This feeling of trickery led to the last political crisis of asbestos when a group of widows decided to go on trial in 1992. This crisis led to the ban of asbestos in 1997 and it was the final step of the deinstitutionalization process.

The main actors in the field: position and interests

Workers' Unions

Workers represent the biggest group of victims of asbestos. From 1970 to 1997, the position of workers changed considerably. From 1970 to 1977, workers were not aware of the asbestos risks. Unions wanted to protect employment, in spite of the dangers induced by asbestos. Besides, workers' unions are fragmented and sometimes, depending on topics, there are tensions between them.

M. Bailleul, an FO union representative, about the discourse of the CGT union (close to the head office) : *“They explained us that asbestos is not a pain, it is not more dangerous than lead ; asbestos is a tool and a raw material for us... asbestos will be there forever.”*¹

The visit of the “Collectif de Jussieu” in 1976 radically changed their point of view. Even if they were afraid of being unemployed, the question of health at work became central.

“One day, in 1976, Professors from Jussieu have contacted us, Henri [Pézerat] and his colleagues. Of course, we agreed to meet them. Henry immediately realized that we didn't know anything! Directly, he asked: “Do you know that asbestos is dangerous? Do you have lung diseases?” That's it. He didn't know how to explain to us... And... it was terrifying because we realized that something awful would arrive. It's a good thing to know the truth so... I said: “You have to explain to us.” And it was awful... We suddenly realized the atrocity. It was like a nightmare, we had to wake up! Henri asked: “Do you think we have to explain this to everybody?” We were more

¹ June 2000, Interview by C. Leroy in « 1968-1979 : La décennie des grèves ouvrières » (1968-1979 : The decade of working strikes).

*than about 130 people. I replied: "If we don't, nobody will do..."*²(Marie-Jeanne, worker at Amisol)

After the decree of 1977, protest decreased. The law aimed at changing practices. However, these changes have not been implemented. Workers weren't aware of the existing dangers of asbestos. Most of them didn't know the law. They were rather concerned about working conditions and the decrease of stress. Information about the risk began to widespread at the end of the 80s. In the 90s, lots of conflicts appeared and asbestos became a central cause. The role of the media was then crucial to spread information, and to depict conflicts.

*"We worked in Renault, the decree of 1977? We didn't hear about it. We had no information about risk and asbestos. This report of a security and health committee was written just after the law... no reference to it ! We didn't know we had to change our habits. Honestly, that wasn't a high-priority for us. Thanks to the media at the end of the 80s, we were informed that there were conflicts about asbestos. Then media helped us to communicate."*³

Pressure groups

Lots of groups were concerned by the struggle against asbestos. The most famous is the "*Collectif de Jussieu*". This group represents the professors of Jussieu University in Paris. Its most famous member was the Professor H. Pezerat. The role of this group is to federate actors. The visit of the Professor H. Pezerat at Amisol was the starting point of a new form of debate and mobilization. This group succeeded in mobilizing very different actors such as unions, environmental groups or citizens' groups.

After the 1977 decree, that ratifies the controlled use of asbestos, the mobilization of the *Collectif de Jussieu* decreased. This decrease is due to the shared belief that the government had finally decided to solve the problem (and especially progressively ban asbestos).

² Annie Thébaud-Mony, 2007. « travailler peut nuire gravement à votre santé » (Working can be harmful to your health)

³ May 2009, Interview of Pierre Bernardini a CGT Renault Union representative

In 1995, there was a kind of “re-birth” of the group under the name “*Comité Anti Amiante*” (committee against asbestos). This committee campaigned for the conclusive ban of the use of asbestos. One of the main roles of this committee was to collect, centralize and widespread information about asbestos. Thanks to their academic position, they had legitimacy to participate to the debate.

*“Whereas foreign countries (USA, North Europa) have implemented a concrete prevention policy, nothing has been done at Jussieu (neither protection plan nor diagnostics) since the decree of 1978, that banned asbestos flocking in French buildings! This is enough !”*⁴

“Why do we have to act now although the problem has concerned Jussieu since 20 years?

The truth can't be ignored anymore! Asbestos in Jussieu is a real dangee!

Why do we want the removal of asbestos?

It is the only long term decision that can be sustainable!

Can we rapidly solve the problem?

The international context will help us: many European countries banned the use of asbestos and implemented prevention policies for buildings. When there is a potential danger, asbestos is removed. “⁵

The defenders of asbestos

This category gathers actors who want to maintain the asbestos institution. They describe asbestos as a fabulous raw material for the French industry. It is a magic mineral with fabulous economical and physical properties. Indeed, companies didn't want to use resources to develop substitutes. Some solutions had been discovered in the 70' but industrialists neutralized them because of the additional cost they represented for the production. Up to 1978, the “Syndicat de l'amiante” and the “Chambre syndicale de l'amiante” (asbestos producers' unions) didn't want to open the debate around the question of asbestos. The conflict appeared due to the threat that some factories could be closed. To put an end to the controversy and to a risk of strikes, industrialists approved a controlled use of asbestos. Then a real *defensive work* is implemented to counter actors who advocate for the ban of asbestos. This defensive work was embodied by the CPA's actions (the CPA is presented below). This was a “proactive” defensive work. It aims at avoiding new crisis such as the strikes that occurred at the end of the 70s. To do this, they did not hesitate to strictly condemn practices

⁴ November 1994. Tract distributed in Jussieu University by the “Comité anti-Amiante”

⁵ March 1995. Tract distributed in Jussieu University by the “Comité anti-Amiante”

of certain companies. The most typical example is the reaction of the “Syndicat de l’amiante” denouncing the practices at Amisol.

“Since a few years, the head-office of Amisol in Clermont-Ferrand has a scandalous attitude. The profession condemns it and rejects the suspicion that he brings for all of our members. Our institution wants to help the government to find solutions to help the involved workers.”⁶

Arguments developed by the asbestos unions are twofold. First, they explained that cancers (and diseases as a rule) are caused by environmental problems. Second, they presented asbestos as a natural ore.

The producers of asbestos explain that:

- *“Asbestos is a natural ore whose fibres can be found everywhere (in water, in land, in air since the earth appeared) and people has used it since thousands of years.*
- *It is obvious that we can find traces everywhere, even in a source in a pure mountain*
- *It is wrong and defamatory to pretend that wine, obtained thanks to a process that uses asbestos, has more traces of asbestos than the other. It is paradoxically the contrary*
- *Most often, asbestos is irreplaceable. Thanks to asbestos, thousands of lives are saved every year. (fire and thermal isolation)*
- *Up to now, the World Health Organization and famous scientific institutions emphasize that there is no proof for the existence of a risk that can affect the population.”⁷*

In a document produced by the CPA, the dangers of asbestos are surprisingly nuanced:

“You don’t have to be worried in your everyday life. We are always in contact with dangerous elements. That’s why we have to be vigilant. (...) Don’t you think that water, fire, electricity, cars, machines... can be the best or the worst depending on how we use them? We learnt how to use explosives or radioactive elements. It is the same thing for asbestos. Workers and users have to care not being exposed to the asbestos dust: only asbestos dust is dangerous.”⁸

⁶ “A propos de l’amiante” (About Asbestos), press release published by the “Syndicat de l’amiante-ciment” and the “Chambre syndicale de l’amiante” (asbestos producer unions) the 3rd of November 1976

⁷ “A propos de l’amiante” (About Asbestos), press release published by the “Syndicat de l’amiante-ciment” and the “Chambre syndicale de l’amiante” (asbestos producer unions) the 3rd of November 1976

⁸ “Amiante et Santé”(Asbestos and health) published by the “CPA” in 1994.

Companies who are not implied in the market of asbestos are also concerned by the problem. They are directly in touch with asbestos because they are responsible for the health of their employees. Because of the high restoration cost and the competitiveness of asbestos, these actors tried to defend asbestos and thus can be considered as defenders of maintenance and status quo.

Doctors / Medical Research Groups

There are two kinds of doctors concerned by asbestos. The first were the work doctors (doctors who controlled and promote health at work). These doctors communicated in very specialized symposium. Publication of studies was very bountiful. These doctors knew the risks implied in the exposition to asbestos. It seems that they suffered of a lack of consideration from authorities. Moreover, their position as executive in the firm explained their moderate and nuanced involvement.

“I was on the side of the workers against Amisol. I wanted to know the truth about this firm. I saw the horror as a come-back to the Zola’s period clichés. Asbestos dust poisoning was maintained by Amisol. Workers breathed dust 8 hours per day every working day. On the floor, we found heaps of asbestos like heaps of sand. In reality, there wasn’t any precaution. I already knew, because we learnt it at the Medecine University, that it was criminal to do this. I remember conversations with Amisol workers. They explained to me that they preferred working in this “coffin-firm» whatever dangerous it is.”⁹

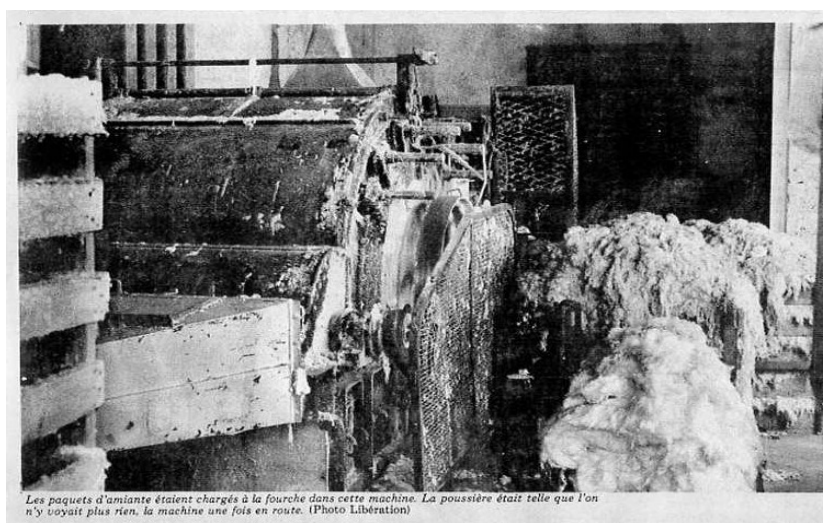


Figure 1: Heaps of asbestos (from Liberation 07/12/1976)

⁹ April 2007. Doctor Laffont Alain. Interview from « Les Luttés des Amisol ».

The second group of doctors is made up of researchers. They belong to research teams or public institutions (like the INSERM, that is the French institute in medical research or the CIRC, a research institution that is specialized in cancer). All researchers agreed on the asbestos toxic properties. Their role in the struggle was to lead scientific research to determine the threshold over which there was an health issue. Famous researchers, such as Professor Bignon, were influential members of the “CPA”. Their implication in the process was widely contested after 1997.

State/ Local Authority: “me-too” actor ?

Since 1996, victims suited the French government because of its responsibility in endangering people’s life. From 1970 to 1977, the government was a passive actor in the debate. Laws and decrees relative to asbestos were rather the result of individuals’ struggles. The 1977 decree is a compromise to calm people down. It is also a way of showing that the French government dealt with the problem of asbestos. The implementation of the CPA is another illustration of a wish of finding a compromise between economic interests and population care.

From 1978 to 1995, laws and decrees adopted in France were the adaptation of European directives. The position of the French government was embodied by the CPA. In 1995, pressures were so important that the ban was unavoidable.

The “Comité permanent Amiante » (CPA) : the institutional compromise.

The « *Comité Permanent Amiante* » is a committee created in 1992 by the French government. From 1992 to 1995, this committee was composed by researchers, unions, asbestos manufacturers, and political representatives. The aim of this committee is to question and control the use of asbestos in France. The functioning of this institution is an example of *defensive work* (Maguire & Hardy, 2009). Indeed, this committee promoted the maintenance of the institution as defined by the decree published in 1977. It was a central actor in the

debate in France. However, the CPA aroused suspicion and was accused of privileging economic interests.

« Jussieu had knowledge but Amisol was the proof. The meeting between these two came like a bombshell. This was the reason why owners had to stem the tide. So they created the CPA... They created this committee to have doctors and unions under control. "Asbestos, they said, it isn't good, but there won't be any problem as long as some precautions are taken." And... the science faith... it's...cultural for workers... so we trusted them... »¹⁰(Josette)

Media

The role of media in the asbestos crisis is very important (Henry 2007). The explanatory study shows that there is a silent period from 1977 to 1992. Before 1992, the problem of asbestos is technical and very specific. Indeed, victims of asbestos mostly were workers. The only articles about asbestos were in specialized magazines. Specialized magazines dealt with the technical characteristics and the properties of asbestos. There wasn't a collective problematization of the problem.

“In other words, we can't find any questions defined as particularly appalling or simply debatable. We weren't able, before 1992, to find in the media a mobilization that led to a public visibility.”¹¹

“At the beginning of the 90s, I wanted that 2 of my journalists spent 4 months (2 months per journalist) to find something about asbestos. I told them, do what you want but find something. Search, I give you the means to do it! There is something... It is impossible... It was after the Chernobyl crisis... I knew that there were things... We had to find what. So... they did fieldwork... And...They flunked... They came back and explained: « there is nothing, we don't find anything..., there is nothing, there is nothing... »”¹²

¹⁰ June 2000, Interview by C. Leroy in « 1968-1979 : La décennie des grèves ouvrières » (1968-1979 : The decade of working strikes).

¹¹ E. Henry p226 du silence au scandale

¹² April 1998, Interview of the news editor of “Sciences et Avenir” (Sciences and Future) by E. Henry in “Du silence au scandale. Des difficultés des médias d'information à se saisir de la question de l'amiante ».

However, a few media dealt with asbestos struggles in Amisol, Ferodo or Jussieu. The aim of these articles is to denounce the horror. Media had a tragic approach of the problem. Even if the description wanted to be frightening, the problem stayed at a local level and only involved workers.

“Is there somewhere in France such a dramatic conflict, as heartbreaking as Amisol is ? Can we talk about these workers without feelings? Since 19 months, these workers’ feelings moved from pessimism to hope and their action changed from rebellion to resignation. What kind of words can translate this ignored scandal?”¹³

Between 1992 and 1994, the death of six teachers developed the interest of mass media to asbestos. Then, there was a multiplication of articles about asbestos. TV shows were broadcasted. The new sensational aspect of the asbestos crisis led to a different way of treating the problem. The tone used by journalists is alarming. Journalists emphasized the tragic feature of the crisis. The tone of articles was really accusing. Accusations against authorities and firms were the main points of investigations. The asbestos crisis was depicted as a national scandal in a specific context of mad cow disease and infected blood in France.

Table 1 summarizes the interests and significant actions of the different actors implied in asbestos in France. It is divided into four periods to emphasize their dynamic dimension.

| | 1970-1977 | 1978-1983 | 1983-1992 | 1992-1997 |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Workers’ Unions | Save employment with health protection | No particular demand | No particular demand | Protection and compensation |
| Pressure groups | Health protection | Information | Information | Ban and compensation |
| Doctors / Medical Research Groups | Control and Protection | Research | Research (thresholds) | Ban |
| Companies | End of crisis | End of crisis | Compromise | Low regulation |

¹³ Liberation, 07/12/76. “Amisol, la plus longue grève”(Amisol, the lengtest strike)

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------|--|---|
| | Economic interests | No spread of scandal | Maintain the use of asbestos | Limit their responsibility |
| State/ Local Authority | Controlled use (end of crisis and economic interests) | Consensus | Avoid new scandal | Ban Limit their responsibility |
| The “Comité permanent Amiante » (CPA) | | | Controlled use Compromise | |
| Media | A few regional cases Workers’ diseases | Silent period | Silent period (some articles in specialized press) | Spread of information |

Table 1: Main actors and evolution of their actions and interests

Method and analysis:

In order to shed light on institutional residues that have been produced by each struggle, we rely on a longitudinal discourse analysis. We have constituted a corpus of texts from press, Government, books, press release, tracts, reports,... These texts represent for different periods, from 1970 to 1997 the evolution of beliefs, norms and values around the asbestos institution.

| | 1970-1977 | 1978-1983 | 1983-1992 | 1992-1997 |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------|---|
| Authors of the texts from the corpus | (20 pages) - Asbestos Union (press release) - Media (press, radio, TV) - Workers’ Union (tract) - CIRC (Public Institution) | (48 pages) - INSERM (public Institution, report) - Asbestos Union (white Paper, press release) - Government (Decree) - Workers’ Union - Professors (letter to the government) | (79 pages) - CPA - Press | (821 pages) - Inserm - Senate - <i>Collectif de Jussieu</i> - Academy of Medicine - CPA - Press |

Table 2: Texts collected for the discourse analysis

For each period, we have attempted to collect the most significant texts that have been produced by the actors in the field. It is of course impossible to collect every document that is related with asbestos. We have rather adopted a pragmatic approach and we have collected texts thanks to an extensive research on the Internet, on press database (factiva) and on secondary literature (Chateauraynaud and Torny 1999; Evrard 2007; Henry 2007; Lenglet 1996; Malye 1996). We have also interviewed actors who have granted us an access to historic documents. It was an opportunity to determine the most influential texts that have been produced at different times. The number of texts depends on each period. Quite obviously, between 1970 and 1977, few texts were produced. During this period, asbestos was not a significant concern. The discussion is centred on scientists, Workers' Unions, and the Asbestos' Union. The press has produced some articles, especially about the *Amisol* affair.

Between 1978 and 1992, as we said earlier the press is fairly silent about asbestos. The texts that are produced are mainly technical and medical. From 1992, there is rapid rise of press articles about asbestos that becomes a public concern. This explains the number of texts that have been collected, which is significantly higher than the other periods.

9 semi-structured interviews with different kinds of actors provide a better understanding of the field and allow us to observe actors who are directly involved in the issues linked with asbestos. These interviews are not integrated in the corpus, in which only texts that have been produced in the field from 1970 to 1997 are taken into account.

As for the analysis, it is achieved with Prospéro (Chateauraynaud 2003). This piece of software is particularly well adapted for the study of texts produced in a polemic context. It is possible to compare texts according to the actors who have produced them and the period at which they have been published. In that way, we can expose the existence of residues and the slight and progressive evolution in beliefs and norms. In a different context, but with the same purpose of subsuming meanings that are conveyed by different actors, Boltanski and Chiapello (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005; Chiapello and Boltanski 1999) have compared two corpus of texts with Prospéro and put forward the concept of "projective city".

Prospéro represents an interesting tool to analyse texts. More particularly, it can be used to compare two corpora and to determine the most significant differences between them. These differences are assessed according to the notions that are employed, the actions that are

described, the qualities that are associated with notions and also the tone of the text. Prospéro is focused on meanings rather than on words.

The interest of Prospéro does not rely on the automatic production of scoops that anyway would clearly appear to any skilled observer of a field. Its interest rather relies on its “analytic memory of events” (Chateauraynaud and Torny 1999) and its capacity of comparing different events according to definable properties. Many options allow the researcher to understand the links different lexis, actors, narrators. Prospéro is far from being a fully automated program but constitutes a promising tool to test different hypotheses.

For this study, the main hypothesis that is tested is the formation of residues after each struggle. We want to determine, through a discourse analysis, whether texts reflect normative and cognitive differences after a struggle. We compare four periods that are representative of four distinct momentums in the field. We compare the corpus of the period 1 with the corpus of the period 2, then the corpus of the period 2 with the period 3 and so on. For each comparison, we focus on the changes for:

- Concepts (“fictive being” with Prospéro’s terminology): for example the concept “asbestos” gathers the words “asbestos” but also “magic mineral”, “white gold”, “amphibole”, “chrysotile”, ...
- The categories of concepts (for example scientific rhetoric represents the following phrases: “abstraction”, “analysis”, “experimental approach”, “classification”, “complexity”, “deduction”, ...)
- The categories of action (for example, the category “accuse/critic/complain” represents the following phrases: “accuse”, “condemn”, “contest”, “critic”, “denounce”, ...)
- The categories of markers, that is the way of speaking (for example, the category “orientation to the past” indicates the phrases that tend to express a general tone that makes reference to the past: “at that time”, “last year”, “before”, “in the past”...)
- The categories of qualities, that is the qualities that are associated with concepts (for example the category “medical” refers to “cardiac”, “carcinogenic”, “clinical”, “digestive”, “epidemiologic”, ...)

Results

Table 3 gives a general view of the most significant¹⁴ differences between the four corpora.

¹⁴ The significance is assessed using the highest variation in the occurrences of a category or a concept between two periods for the hundred most used categories or concepts.

| | Period 1: 1970 - 1977 | Variation between the period 1 and the period 2 (1977- 1983) % | | Variation between the period 2 and the period 3 (1983- 1992) % | | Variation between the period 3 and the period 4 (1992 – 1998) % | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------------|---|----------------------|--|------------------------|
| Entities | @asbestos | +265 | Fibre ¹⁵ | +196 | @Companies | +750 | @Cancer |
| | @workers | +158 | Study | +191 | Country | +395 | Exposure |
| | @cancer | +104 | Number | +176 | @Building | +224 | Study |
| | risk | +93 | Companies' doctors | +127 | Technique | +218 | Risk |
| | @state | +72 | Asbestos' Union | -96 | @Population | +138 | @workers |
| | | +72 | Tobacco | -95 | Investigation | +115 | Fibre |
| | | -96 | Dangers | -95 | effect | -100 | attendees |
| Categories of entities | Opinion | +390 | Consequences | +943 | Determinism | +1293 | Trials |
| | Alert and Dangers | +373 | Guarantees | +882 | Removal | +1095 | Epidemiologic |
| | Scientific rhetoric | +344 | Investigation | +275 | Prospective | | approach |
| | Denunciation | +287 | Rhetoric of change | +268 | Market logics | +541 | Working conditions |
| | Statistic reasoning | +244 | Ethic and Moral | +256 | Managerial discourse | +403 | Family relationships |
| | | +177 | Control and precaution | +252 | Physical constraints | +315 | Protests |
| | | +172 | Ecological discourse | +237 | Political sociology | +210 | Duration |
| | | +118 | Statistical reasoning | +145 | Compensation | +192 | Compensation |
| | | +115 | Fault | +96 | Concern | +183 | Judicial logics |
| | | +106 | Logic of threshold | -84 | Working conditions | +167 | Denunciation |
| | | +93 | Prospective | -84 | Epidemiologic | +149 | Statistic reasoning |
| | | -90 | State of conscious | | approach | +141 | State of consciousness |
| | | -89 | Denunciation | | | +115 | Threshold |
| | | | | | | +112 | Guarantee |
| | | | | | | +104 | Scientific rhetoric |
| | | | | | -86 | Macro-economic analysis | |
| | | | | | -78 | Consultation | |

¹⁵ For example, this line should be read as: the word fibre is 295% times as quoted in the period 2 as in the period 1

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Categories of qualities | Important | +416 | Medical | +391 | Bureaucratic | +673 | Biologic |
| | Dangerous | +287 | Stop/close | +84 | Justification | +586 | Ecologic |
| | Excellent | +201 | Complexity | +84 | Adaptability | +329 | Fragility |
| | Accusing | +201 | Observation | -94 | Biological | +277 | Medical |
| | | -71 | Dangerosity | -86 | Medical | +214 | Accusation |
| | | | -81 | Fragility | +197 | Old | |
| | | | | | +169 | Observation | |
| | | | | | +151 | Satisfaction | |
| Categories of action | Know | +330 | Analyse/observe | +391 | Decide/ | +403 | Constraint |
| | Stop/Close | +244 | Prove/validate | +329 | legislate/prescribe | +320 | Accuse |
| | Defend/support | +158 | Predict | +329 | Launch an alert | +228 | Officialise |
| | Accuse | - 82 | Stop/close/suspend | +206 | Manage | +155 | Unveil |
| | Assess | | | +165 | Create | +151 | Build |
| | | | | +130 | Repeat/reproduce | +110 | Define/assess |
| | | | | +108 | Defend/support | -91 | Promise |
| | | | | -70 | Advise | -84 | Renounce |
| | | | -70 | constraint /force | | | |
| Categories of markers | Negation | +373 | Orientation to the | +145 | Maximisation/preferen | +543 | Comparison |
| | Graduation | +115 | future | | ce | +419 | Time situated |
| | Duration | -81 | Closeness | +145 | Previous | +354 | Academism |
| | Current events | -79 | Evidence | +136 | Connectors | +222 | Agenda |
| | | | Conclusive | -80 | Academism | +170 | Hypothesis |
| | | | | -80 | Evidence | +160 | Statistic |
| | | | | -74 | Unveiling | +156 | Causality |
| | | | | | -96 | Maximisation | |

Table 3: Variation between the four corpora

Between 1970 and 1977, the texts mainly denounce the effects of asbestos on workers. For the first time, the use of asbestos is linked with cancer, which creates a Sword of Damocles hanging over the workers' heads. The notion of state is often used, which indicates a wish to implicate the State to bring a solution to a major health and professional issue. The categories of entities refer to denunciation and alert/dangers. This is typical in this period. For the first time, asbestos appear as a massive killer for workers whose working conditions are presented as alarming. This is reinforced by the category "accuse" that is one of the main actions that are expressed in the corpus. The article published by Libération (daily newspaper) is typical. The journalist wrote:

"Is there somewhere in France such a dramatic conflict, as heartbreaking as Amisol is ? Can we talk about these workers without feelings? Since 19 months, these workers' feelings moved from pessimism to hope and their action changed from rebellion to resignation. What kind of words can translate this ignored scandal?"

Moreover, the discourse in this period is rather argumentative. It puts forward scientific rhetoric and statistic reasoning. To that extent, it expresses what is at stakes with the Amisol struggle. It is important to "know" and to prove what the impacts of asbestos are. The controversy about the threshold for the quantity of asbestos in wine is representative. The need for justifications and proves is typical of subordinated groups who do not benefit from the higher legitimacy of well established actors, such as manufacturers or asbestos' Unions.

The most significant residue of the Amisol case relies on the association between workers, asbestos and death (cancer). These three elements will act as a powerful basis for change, challenging the legitimacy of asbestos. A group of workers from Amisol holds a sign where it is written "doomed to unemployment and to slow death" (see Appendix 1). Even if this sign is small and discreet, the underlying idea has its importance to tackle the stability of the asbestos institution.

In the second column, the variation between period 1 and period 2 indicates that denunciation is no longer significant. Instead, the actions that have considerably increased are "observe/analyze", "prove", "predict". To that extent, individuals' and groups' actions are oriented to a scientific activity. The increase in the use of the word "study" and also the quality "medical" corroborates that tendency. There is also one interesting discursive phenomenon. The word "fibre" is much more used during the second period. To that extent, there is a slight change to maintain the legitimacy of asbestos. Instead of accusing asbestos as

a whole, only some fibers are identified and are accused of being responsible of cancer and other deceases. Asbestos is not necessarily lethal, but some of its fibers are. This distinction is important to justify the ongoing use of asbestos in spite of many deaths.

The increase in the use of categories like “consequences”, or “rhetoric of change” is meaningful. It shows a wish of changing things. Besides, the categories “guarantees” and “investigation” shows an attempt of reassuring people. It is an answer to the first period that develops a feeling of doubt about asbestos. In the second period, asbestos is presented as an issue that can be controlled as long as “precautions” are taken. Asbestos is not necessarily dangerous if it is used properly. To that extent, it is important to investigate on thresholds to minimize potential hazards. This defensive work is proactive. A compromise tends to be found: the dangers of asbestos are recognized but in the same time swept away since they can be controlled. This second struggle led to cognitive and normative residues. The use of asbestos has to be quasi-scientific. It is not dangerous if it is properly used. Investigations can determine the dangerous fibres responsible of deceases. The issue is to determine the good practices to use asbestos that is still an irreplaceable material. With the rhetoric of change, texts are fairly reinsuring and professionals of asbestos can be trusted.

The variations between the period 2 and the period 3 indicate an optimization momentum. The main actions are linked with management: what is the best organization to constrain a proper use of asbestos? The issue of studies and investigations is no longer prevailing (the use of “medical” for example has declined). The most expressed actions are “decide”, “prescribe”, “legislate”, “manage”. This is corroborated by other categories, like “managerial discourse”, “bureaucratic” or “maximisation/preference”. The field is organized around the CPA that appears to be a central entity. They can prescribe the best practices to reconcile both economic interests and protection of workers. Whereas the previous period was projective and tended to foster investigations, the scientific dimension of the field in this period appears secondary. There is rather a determinist dimension: “workers need to do...”, “we should ...” as if everything were known about asbestos.

The CPA appears as a normative organization that gives stability to the field. It bridges economic interests (the category of market logics has almost tripled) with protection of workers.

The CPA also brings a cognitive residue, legitimating the asbestos as long as there is a central entity that can control, prescribe and ensure stability.

The last period is particularly interesting. It shows the re-emergence of concepts that were preeminent in the first period. Asbestos is associated with cancer again. The case of Amisol is used in certain texts like a past echo that conveys the long history of asbestos contestation. The word “study” is much more used. The controllability of asbestos is no longer taken for granted.

This period, like the first one is a period of contestation, which is attested by the multiplication of trials. The main actions expressed in this period are “to constrain” and “to accuse”. What is taken for granted has to be “unveiled”.

Some actors are presented as responsible for the deaths and future deaths provoked by asbestos. In the categories of markers, “causality” has more than doubled.

The logic is now far from being managerial. On the contrary past doubts are reactivated. Ecologic and biologic discourses emerge. Actions are situated in time, such as “today”, “now”, ... which indicates the awareness of the dangers of asbestos and the wish to change things.

Figure 2 represents the dynamics underlying the successive residues that have been produced along the different periods that we have studied. It emphasizes the interrelation between the three pillars.

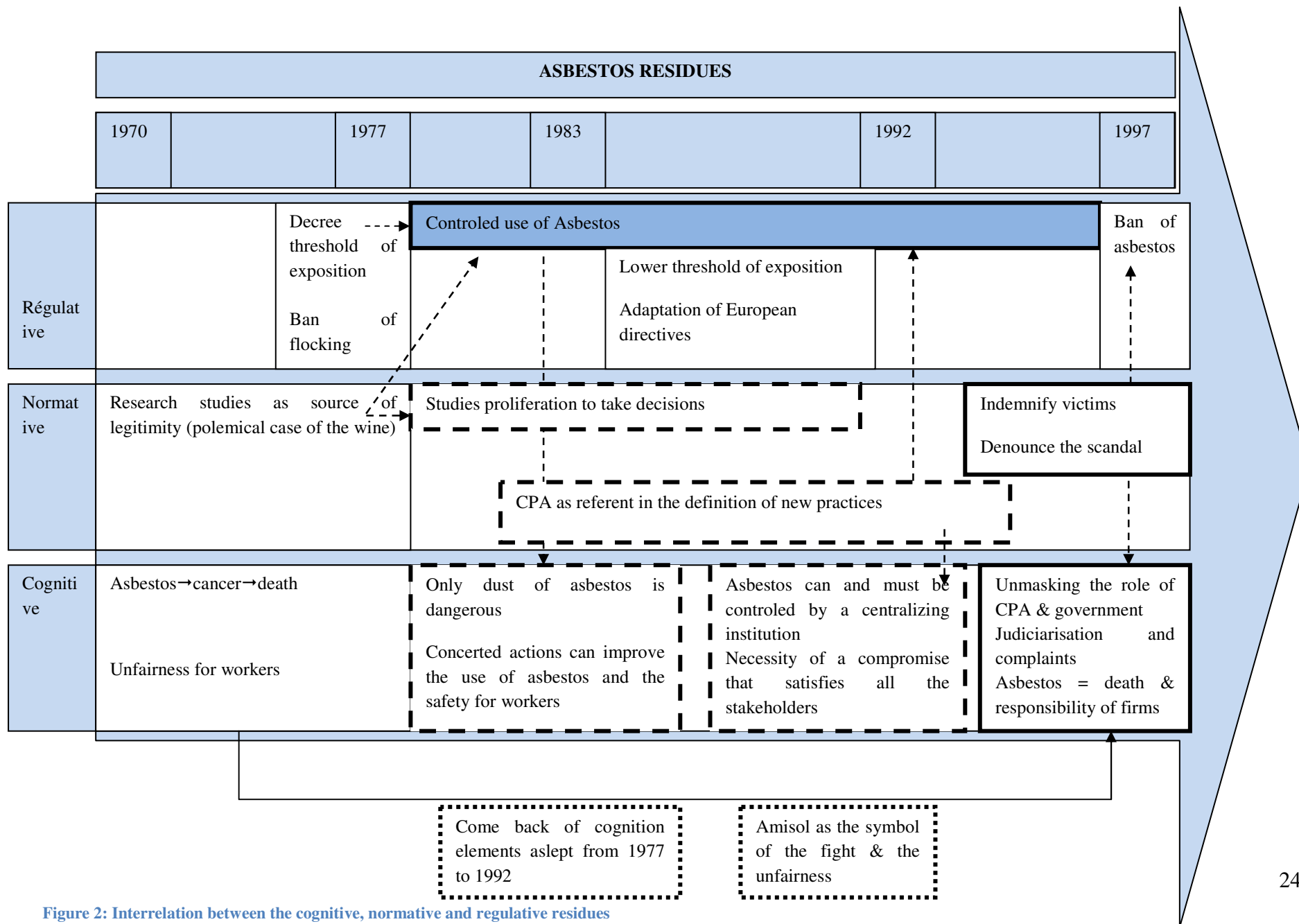


Figure 2: Interrelation between the cognitive, normative and regulative residues

Conclusions

In this paper, we have attempted to understand the residues produced by a succession of struggles and tried to study to which extent these residues participate in a deinstitutionalization process. The notion of struggles is here employed in a wide acceptance. We do not argue that, in a struggle, individuals' actions are opposed to active challengers who always strongly defend their positions. We refer to a vision of struggles that is more subtle. Struggles are enacted in a contestation area where oppositions are not always expressed, but just latent and ready to emerge. Struggles are a part of a dialogic process in which oppositions are permanent. The compromise is never fully achieved, and dormant antagonisms can be expressed in particular situations, especially during crisis.

Our study interestingly shows a manifestation of a dormant antagonism that comes back to public consideration almost twenty years later. In the first period, especially due to the Amisol struggle, asbestos has been associated with workers and death (cancer). It was considered as a harmful material having shameful and unfair consequences for workers who had to choose between unemployment and illness. However, this struggle did not deeply modify the institutional order. The importation of asbestos still increased. Asbestos was used everywhere. However, Amisol left a powerful residue that is fully expressed 20 years later, when asbestos, again, is associated with cancer and dangers. Amisol constitutes a symbolic representation of asbestos' consequences and it is re-used in the texts of the last period.

Besides, Amisol and the debate around drinks and asbestos have induced a slight change into the normative pillar. The use of asbestos need to be legitimated by scientific studies. This residue has caused a series of incremental changes in that direction. To that extent, the appearance of the CPA is fairly natural and expected. It acts as a regulative residue mainly produced by the Asbestos' Union. The CPA – as a formal entity – constraints actors' behaviour in the field. At that time, there is a strong alignment between the three pillars. The CPA constitutes a formal entity that enables the normative and cognitive pillars. Asbestos is not described as dangerous *per se*. Only bad practices are noxious. To that extent, it is important to condition the use of asbestos to investigations and scientific results. This is the area of a controlled use of asbestos. This area is fairly stable, and represents a compromise between different actors.

This area has emerged in the continuation of another residue produced in the second period. The proliferation of studies has led to a scientific use of asbestos and a distinction between asbestos as a whole and its dangerous components like micro-fibres.

The last period could be studied alone to explain the de-institutionalization of asbestos. However, it would have erased the complex dynamics that has prepared the basis of change. In particular, we can see the complex role of residues that may remain dormant at certain times. The concept of residue embodies many antagonisms in a field that should not be underestimated. Cognitive residues act as a source of legitimacy for change at certain times, normative residues can influence practices and beliefs, and regulative residues can act in a facilitative way, empowering certain actors in specific times.

In this paper, we contribute to the analysis of specific aspects of deinstitutionalization. In the institutional literature, this process has been rarely tackled (for exception, we can refer to Maguire and Hardy 2009; Oliver 1992). It is yet a fundamental and specific dimension of institutional life.

More particularly, we analyze institutions and institutional work in a dynamic perspective. This work relies on a longitudinal approach and we assume the temporal effects of actions. We underline the mechanisms of struggles in a field and support the idea that institutional work should be studied without dissociating efforts to change institutions and efforts to maintain them. At a particular time, the institution is made up of complex arrangements and interrelated strategies for persistence and change.

The use of a piece of software, Prospéro, for a longitudinal discourse analysis is also promising. It allows us to proceed to an adaptable analysis of texts, based on statistical comparisons according to actors and times. Prospéro, as a semi-automated program, can provide results based on statistical measures but also entirely configurable to integrate the specificities of each context and also to test many research hypotheses.

As a theoretical contribution, we put forward the notion of institutional residue. It emphasizes the role, and finally the significance of individuals' actions. Most actions are not vain, and contribute to a slight change or to latent conflicts that will be crystallized with a jolt and will contribute, at a particular time, to the precipitation of the institution. Deinstitutionalization is viewed as a cumulative process, constituted with a set of residues, and not a disruption

essentially provoked by a jolt. In that way, we emphasize micro-processes in the institutional dynamics. Some events, like the strike at Amisol, the mobilization of Jussieu, even if they are local and not generalized are quite important in the field. To that extent we underline the role of struggles and actions, even if, most often they seem to have modest impact.

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Appendix



Appendix 1: Doomed to unemployment and to slow death... ("La vie ouvrière" (magazine for workers), 07/20/76)