



An Investigation on Management as Social Practice: Theoretical and Empirical Findings

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Abstract

Management is a practice of coordinating and governing collective action. Leading this social collaboration and this organizational practice called management, a research question remains: What is the Essence of Management? The literature considers that the modern capitalist system gave rise to management practices. But, both capitalism and management preexisted modern industrial revolution. This historical amalgam creates a misleading belief that management can only be applied within this historical materialism. This fundamental research through sociological and anthropological metasynthesis reveals how Management is a social practice independent of organizations and the economic system while a longitudinal social experimentation reveals how existential reflexivity transforms the management social practice toward an existentialist contribution. The discussion addresses the implication in considering management as a social practice and it's potential for radical humanist transformation.

Keywords: Management, Social practice, Praxeology, Reflexivity, Radical humanism

INTRODUCTION

Since Marx's analysis of the emerging industrial capitalism of the XIXth Century, social sciences have attributed human exploitation and social alienation to the capitalist system (Touraine 1992, Marx 1846, 1848, Mendras and Etienne 1996). But, as historians, like Sée (1926) Braudel (1986, 1979, Dannequin 2006), Beachler (1995), Fouquet and Broadberry (2015), Bourguignon and Morrison (2002), Hugot (2013) have demonstrated that the capitalist system and industries existed centuries prior to the industrial revolution Marx described. Management as conceptualized also pre-existed as "Juré" in the middle ages, and so well before industrial revolution (Favresse 1931) The original approach to Marx's analysis was to reveal how human living condition affected human mind (Touraine 1992, Marx 1846, 1848). According to Marx (1846, 1848), the very capitalist approach is to exploit the economic added value on human labor differences between the wages and the market price of produced goods. This analysis had its merit. But it is well before social sciences discovered a few years later, a systematic approach to organize labor optimizing this added value creation through Taylor's (1911) model for specialized division of labor and Fayol's (1918) administrative practices. In other words, it was not just the capitalist market that created this new form of economic expansion, but it was also embedded in organizational mode of governance. It is much later on, with Barnard's (1938, 1968) understanding of the executive function that the idea that a new form of workers, like top executives and hierarchical managers would be the key to optimize on going new organizational performances that would be required to sustainable economic growth.

Since Marx, critical administrative sciences and critical sociological studies have always attributed human thriving social and economic growth as well as human suffering to the overall capitalist system. It is only recently, that a few critical thinkers have pointed out a form of technical and technocratic management practices to be the source of this human suffering (Audet and al. 2007, Aktouf 2008, Chanlat 1998, 1990, Chanlat and Dufour 1985). Some have even reconciled this technical management malfunction on human impact as the source for a softer management approach which would address a better understanding of human needs through a social management practice (Déry 2010, Audet and al. 2007, Mintzberg 2013, Pitcher 1997, Chanlat 1990, 1998). However, this emerging critical management literature movement never question the capitalist system as the real issue. It rather proposes to adapt management practices to include social and human consideration into organizational management practices (Déry 2010, Chanlat 1998, 1990, Mintzberg 2013). This leaves no surprise to see that, since Marx, the only critical perspective to social radical transformation of this human suffering is to abolish the capitalist system all together. We now know that this radical industrial capitalist abolition did not happen. Instead, this line of historical understanding of the modern human suffering origin lead the capitalist system to allow some wealth distribution to fuel the market's expansion. With this system's adaptation, the industrial capitalist system became since the 1970' a

post-industrial-economic liberalist, globalized and neoliberal economic system intensifying all these human suffering managerial practices (Touraine 1992, Aktouf 2008, Aubert and al. 2007, Chanlat 1998, 1990, Atkinson 2006, 1995). In other words, the industrial capitalist is marginalized leaving the liberated and neoliberal integrated globalized market to take over the economic system sustaining ongoing accelerating growth and technological intensified innovations (de Verlaine 2021).

A general question remains, *how can we still attribute human suffering to the capitalist system in the sociological and administrative sciences critical studies if that system no longer exists as a dominant economic system?* I believe the answer lies on the very concept of management practices. Sociology and Administrative Sciences have contributed to improve management practices for its ability to extract human and technological capabilities into organizational economic production. Management practices has therefore been conceptualized as a *professional socio-technic practice* to govern collective accomplishments in achieving common goals for common good (Déry 2010, 2009. Noël 2009).

In this sense, there is no surprise to state that *Management* is generally known as the **PODC** professional practice of: **Planning, Organizing, Directing** and **Controlling** the collective effort to to achieve planned goals (Déry 2010). Since then, management knowledge and practices have been deepened to be adapted to the changing world of organizations and new social sciences discoveries. Basically, management has been studied as a pragmatic and technical practice to govern modern organizations through submitting social collaboration to the PODC norms.

Management is also known to be applied in new applications other than business administration around the world, independently of cultures and economic sectors. Therefore, management also infiltrates other sectors of society such as artistic processes, psychological self-regulation, political and diplomatic practices, training and sports activities, health practices and even technological designs. The widespread applications of management practices are so extended that it penetrates the linguistic practices to express all kinds of situations and human experiences, such a managing our own nutrition, managing our spiritual lives, managing our relations, managing our time and daily lives, and so on.

The level of expansion for management representation of the world and human activity goes beyond linguistic practices. It involves a set of references to signify a different approach in all sphere of our human existence. In other words, management is not a set of words applied in other fields than organizational administration, it implies a cultural imperialist expansion of this technical paradigmatic reference guiding these managerialist practices in other fields and human existence.

If management has reached all these social activities, beyond the realm of organizational administration, it must be because it means something other than simply administrating activities. However, Administrative Sciences and these other fields of application, do not explicitly explain these transgressions. More so, despite this widespread common use, it has never been explored in terms of fundamental meaning, and implications. This divergent use of management practices without truly addressing the essence of this practice not only manifests a misalignment of its original intent, but it leaves an opportunity to create obscurantism surrounding who really can lead management itself and for what end and purpose. This leads to my research question: *What is the Essence of Management?* Investigating this essence may well contribute to better understand how management practice penetrates so many diverted fields, but also the implications of what these adoptions mean for management..

1. Sociological, Anthropological and Empirical Research Strategy

The research methodology is a qualitative metasynthesis (Cooper 2010, Beaucher and Jutras 2007,) of the management practice as well as an empirical experiential experiment for a potential management social practice innovation. The sociological and anthropological metasynthesis of management practice allows to bring together a global perspective of the management paradigms (Assogba 1982). Once this global perspective is set, there is a qualitative meta-analysis (Laroche and Schmidt 2004, Cooper 2010) of management as a social practice (both in terms pf praxeology and practices) through a long-term social practice innovation experiment.

These three research phases are integrated in a critical realist epistemology perspective (Bhaskar 2008, Vandenberghe 2007, Putnam 1977). In other words, this research acknowledges the coconstruction of social practice in a dialectic dynamic between society's socio-cultural paradigm and the management paradigm. Studying the epistemology and the symbolic meaning of management is taken into a pragmatism, empirical and historical context to reveal a socially constructed phenomenon.

The methodology strategy aims at answering the research question: *What is the Essence of Management?* The objective is to explore the ontological essence of management as a social practice. In doing so, it will allow to understand management as a social practice instead of a professional or organizational practice. This will create a distance between the management paradigm hegemony to transform management practices in line with humanist values.

1.1 Research Methodology Structure

The three components of the research structure reinforce the triangulation in findings’ validity. Therefore, the empirical investigation of the experienced management practices follows the sociological and anthropological analysis of the management praxeology metasynthesis.

The metasynthesis and empirical investigation of social practices are both encountered through the critical realism perspective (Hooker 1987, Lektorski 2013, Maunier 2019). This means that, not only it focuses on meaningful regulated and emerging practices, but also focusses on the recurrent and emerging meaning of these practices. These two sets of investigation reveal how management realm of praxeology conquers all spheres of human life. The critical perspective will question the impact of management as a dominant praxeology. The critical realism questions how this management imperialism impacts human condition.

1.2 Experiential Experimental Research Method

The experiential experimental research methodology is fundamentally an in-depth long-term action-research process. Action-Research (AR) methodology’s epistemological perspective allows to reflect on the human experience in action while creating explicit knowledge on social practices and finding innovative alternatives. It is embedded in the existentialist and humanist paradigm in Dewey (1960), Kolb (1984) and Lewin (1951) tradition stating that humans can learn, change and emancipate themselves (Reason and Bradbury 2008, Goyette and Lessard-Hébert 1987). It is a critical realist epistemological posture since reality is considered through the lived experience. The researcher is in collaboration with practitioners and their beneficiaries and stakeholders (Barbaut 2021, Lessard 2017). The AR is therefore not only collaborative, but the researcher is part of the social group collaborating in the research process. The results are commonly shared, discussed and interpreted in a collaborative effort to understand the social practice phenomenon and innovate (Barbaut 2021, Lessard 2017, Reason and Bradbury 2008, Goyette and Lessard-Hébert 1987). The AR structure is based in a cycle or a spiral of cycle process (Figure 1)

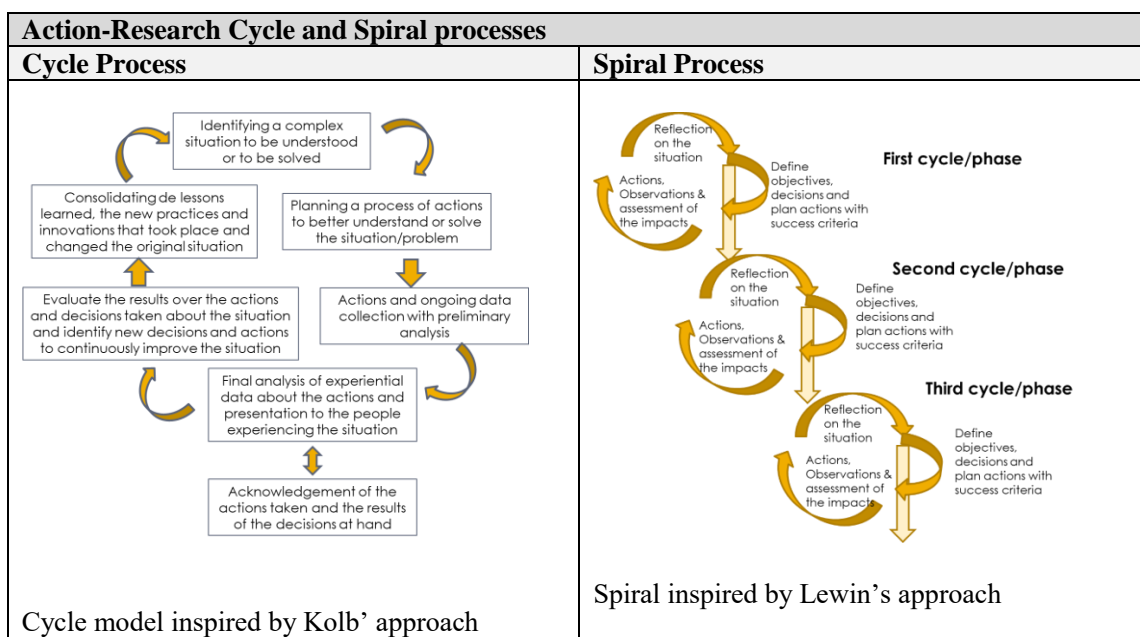


Figure 1: Action-Research: cycle and spiral processes

This research used both the cycle and spiral processes. The empirical investigation was conducted in three major cycles: 1) an exploratory cycle in 2001-2002 with top executive practitioners; 2) a sustained spiral of cycles over 16 years conducted with 1200 management university students and management practitioners and 3) a meta-analysis of comparative analysis with other experiential research findings (Cooper 2010) on professional praxeological improvement and innovation across different fields including management, social workers, nurses, and psychologists.

The first AR cycle began with an experiential investigation in 2001-2002. This cycle was requested by top executives to enable them to perform their duties. The AR approach was conducted in a collaborative coaching practice with a diverse group of 20 top executives in various large Canadian and American firms.

The second 16-year (2005 to 2021) longitudinal experimentation was conducted in collaboration with 1200 management students looking in better understand the meaning of their management competency development curriculum in relation to their executive practices. This objective was systematically addressed through an innovative pedagogical practice to include: existential reflexive praxeology in all of the 115 courses in 60 different subject matter, in graduate and undergraduate programs.

The principal method is an action-research approach to implement praxeological reflexivity on management social practice and observe the long-term effect of such a reflexive practice on the Ontic-Being’s (commonly understood as consciously aware being of its existence) overall wellbeing and human emancipation. This empirical experiment’s focus is to better understand how management is existentially experienced consciously and unconsciously social practice as Ontic-being-in-this-world.

The experiential experiment had to adopt a Grounded Theory inductive approach to build on critical discoveries (Morse and al. 2009, Locke 2001, Glaser and Strauss 1967, Locke 2001). To do so, each major finding from each AR cycle were brought into the following cycles to challenge the findings and built on them. The Grounded Theory process allows to keep the findings free of theoretical preconception and therefore better understand the cumulative impact of the critical cycle discoveries.

The longitudinal empirical experiential experiment investigation takes its foundation in the existentialist literature to sustain humanist social innovation. It aims at deconstructing the Ontic-Being-In-this-world (consciously aware being of its existence) by going from ongoing unconscious practices through reflexive (thoughtful) actions and eventually through conscious voluntary reflexive existential practices.

1.3 Social Practice Theoretical Conceptual Framework

Social Practice Theory follows two mainstreams in theoretical literature (Dubuisson-Quellier, 2016, 2021, 2014, 2013, Reckwitz 2002, Feldman 2011). There is the structuralist theoretical tradition dominated by a functionalist determinist perspective on social practices. Inspired from the transcendental idealist epistemological tradition, actions are defined by social structures, traditions, routines pre-existent and conditioning chains of events (Bhaskar 2008, Vandenberghe 2007, Hooker 1987). Scientific investigation seeks to reveal these governing laws emerging from observable repetitive actions (Lektorski 2013, Vandenberghe 2007).

The alternative theoretical tradition follows the critical realist perspective where both empirical experiences and knowledge of these events coconstruct reality (Vandenberghe 2007, Hooker 1987). Critical perspective comes in to review, from a critical perspective, the knowledge which explains these experiences reveal social structure and dynamics. The critical realism therefore allows to unveil new form of social production and transformation through collective subjective and reflexive actions (Elder-Vass 2007).

The conceptual framework governing this research combines both traditions, to reveal a critical realist finding. In other words, it is essential to better understand management praxeology as a predetermined structurationist performative frame of reference for organizations and civil society (Figure 2), while investigating empirical experience of daily practices.

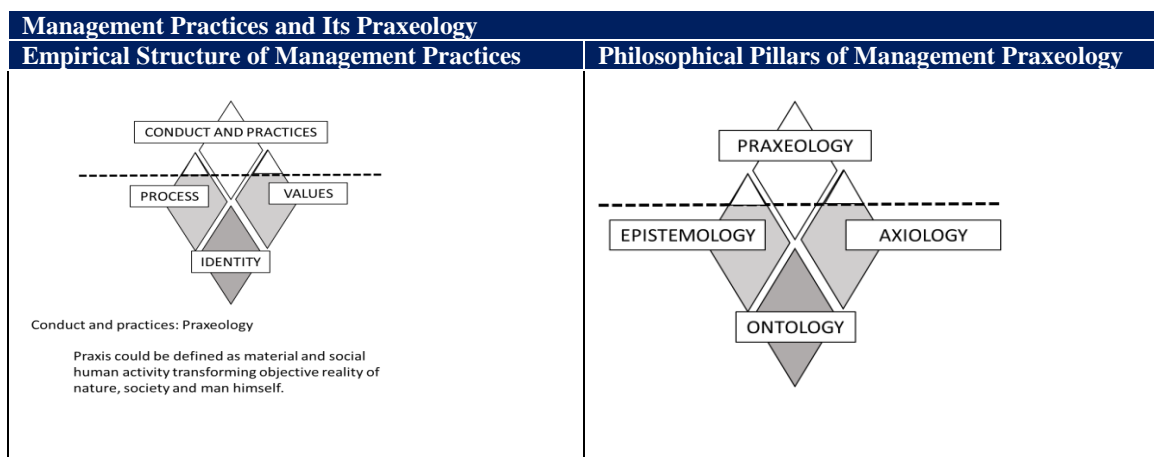


Figure 2: Management practices and its Praxeology (Bédard 1999, p.16 and p.26)

Bédard’s (1999) conceptual framework captures the correspondence between the practice’s praxeology as the theoretical/conceptualized knowledge of that practice.

1.4 Sociological Metasynthesis Conceptual Framework

The sociological metasynthesis has to focus on the Organizational Theory and Organizational behavior literatures addressing management as a social structure and dynamics of the management rational and teleological praxeology. It looks at its historical emergence as a legitimate body of knowledge and actions in the social world and it’s the underlying norms, rules and founding principles.

The management paradigm presents the social structuration of praxeology. This praxeology is the overall legitimate knowledge over normative praxis. It is a praxeological paradigm, as a frame of reference. The praxeological paradigm refers to the Theory of Practice structurationist epistemological tradition. Based on different sociological models, I built through grounded theory process a conceptual framework to analyze a praxeology

paradigm (Figure 3). It therefore refers to the fundamental social structure determining recurrent meaningful actions, as reproduced practices (Giddens 1979, 1984, 1994, Bourdieu 1979, 1986, 2000, Touraine 1992, Addi 2002).

Praxeology Paradigm	
<p>A. Normative dimension:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General orientations/function 2. Political function 3. Social function 4. Economic function 5. Technologic function 6. Aimed end result 7. Norms 8. Rules 9. Knowledge base 10. Knowledge development 11. Legitimacy foundations 12. Social Structure <p>B. Process dimension:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategies 2. Tactics 3. Operations 4. Means 5. Resources 6. Modalities 7. Know-How-to-do 	<p>C. Shared representation dimension:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Know-How-To-Be 2. Representation of a person 3. Representation of Nature 4. Representation of the environment 5. Value system 6. Belief system 7. Interest/political system 8. Overall meaning of human activity

Figure 3: Praxeology Paradigm

The sociological paradigm conceptual framework for this sociological metasynthesis is based on a combination of a socio-cultural paradigm (Assogba 1982, Addi 2002) and a managerial practice paradigm inspired from the educational paradigm structured in Assogba (1982) theoretical model analysis (Figure 4). The socio-cultural paradigm is the frame of reference a society creates and maintains to determine the legitimate praxeology paradigms. In other words, a society dictates what to perceive and how to perceive, guiding the praxeological paradigm to define what to do and how to do.

Socio-Cultural Paradigm	
1. System of representation	The way society represents and symbolizes reality
2. System of social relations	The way society represents a person in relation with others and the world, including nature and its social environment
3. System of social values	Social priorities based on value-interests of society, including aspirations, needs and satisfaction
4. System of know-hows	Individual and collective work and contribution and the technics required to achieve them
5. Cultural model of society	Overall meaning of human activity

Figure 4: Socio-cultural Paradigm (Assogba 1982)

The socio-cultural paradigm refers to the fundamental principal that a social practice is cocreating society. It therefore becomes a social phenomenon understood within a historical, cultural and political context. Even more, in sociological perspective, the social practice is contributing to the social, cultural and political structure of society itself. The metasynthesis therefore focuses on the relation between these practices and the social structure of society, not so much on the individual, nor the people reproducing these practices. In other words, management as a social practices’ observable in social relations between actions, intent and impacts. It is not observable through direct external observation of individual actions. This is the reason why we need praxeological reflexivity to observe these hidden relations between actions.

The sociological analysis of this management praxeology is therefore embedded in this transcendental idealist functionalist tradition. The general conceptual frame of reference of management as the PODC is modeled as normative praxeology and the philosophical pillars (Figure 4) of empirical praxeology as portrayed in recent research (de Verlainne 2022, Bédard 1999, 1995, 2008, Pitcher 1997). But this praxeological model is founded on empirical structure of management practices as presented in the management studies (Bédard 2008, 1999, Pitcher 1997, Mintzberg 1999, de Verlainne 2022).

1.5 Anthropological Metasynthesis Conceptual Framework

The anthropological metasynthesis takes a critical perspective to the sociological tradition to look at the human condition (Topinard 1876) under the management praxis (Addi 2002). This analysis brings a critical perspective

over management praxeology to look at management praxis's impact on human experiences submitted to management paradigm. The anthropological frame of reference (Figure 5) offers a critical perspective on social practices. It is in fact, the preferred frame of reference in management studies to illustrate forgotten human experience dimensions of the dominant management praxeology paradigm (Mintzberg 2013, Chanlat 1998, Aktouf 2008). In other words, instead of looking at the fundamental determined social structure, it looks at the actual experience of practices (Mazur and Deroy-André 2012). It focusses on the social representations and the meaning these representation offers to these practices. It also looks at the human experiential impact of these practices on the people experiencing them.

Anthropological Frame of Reference	
1. Regulating social capital	What constitutes social capital and its social justification
2. Regulating habitus	Which interiorized social habitus integrates a social practice
3. Regulating externalities	What is socially accepted as expected and unvalued consequences of social practices
4. Regulating cultural conflicts	What are the cultural social tactics to explain cultural contradictions or alternative value system
5. Regulating symbolism	How are social groups attributing meaning to sustain its social practice
6. Regulating violence	How violence is distributed and applied to maintain its social practice

Figure 5: Anthropological Frame of Reference

An anthropological analysis addresses human dimensions such as the language games (Stern 2004, Wittgenstein 1953, Shatzki 2010, 1996) raising management conception of the world as a dominant reification of human condition. As alternative, anthropological analysis discloses human reflexive subjectivity, lived affect and lived meaning through symbols, language and intents. Management praxis reveals to be a social effort to take control over life contingencies (Chanlat 1998, 1990).

2. Sociological Metasynthesis

A sociological metasynthesis aims at understanding the hidden social structure guiding social actions in a historical context. It therefore requires to establish a recognized historical context first, to be able to situate the social structure in terms of frame of reference for agents. Agents, in a structurationist perspective are not individuals, but rather relations between social entities. These entities can be individuals, social groups, organizations, social network, but also non-human artefacts such as technologies, objects, symbolism. Ultimately, anything that creates meaning in the social realm of reference is an entity taking part of relations, called agents.

2.1 Historical Emergence of Management Praxeology

The concept of Management was born in the XIXth Century as an organizational practice in the emerging industrial production and became a formalized process in the XXth Century with Fayol (1918) concept of administrative processes. Since Barnard (Barnard 1938, 1968, Anderson and Barnard 1939), management has mainly been understood as an executive function in organizations to govern human collaboration in economic production. Nevertheless, management entered all aspects of our lives, including time management, household management, emotional management, self-conduct management. In other words, management as concept has evolved to become more than a governing practice over collective effort as understood in Administrative Sciences (Déry 2010). Not only management transcendence executive function to enter many aspects of our lives, but it also became a socially accepted and expected approach to address self-conduct (De Waele and al. 2001, Lafortune and al. 2009). This being established, it is therefore legitimate to say that management is a widely accepted social practice across cultures and generations. Management allows to integrate a rationalize thought process to suspend reactive and emotional behavior to rather consider through rational and logics, several aspects such as 1) the impact, 2) consequences of possible action to choose, 3) the intended impact the individual, groups and organized collectivity, 4) desires to contribute in people's lives and in the world Weber 1922).

This management practice is adopted in psychology and social psychology to raise the level of responsible individual behavior. It is also a valuable social practice to continue to organize and govern collective actions, whether it is through organizations, but also groups, network or even civil society all together. Taking a leadership role through management social practice implies taking responsibility for the consequences of current decisions, actions in creating the desired vision. The literature is strong in prescribing rational practices to achieve such a responsible management social practice, in all aspects of our lives. This is what society's socio-cultural paradigm aims at (Figure 6). But, it fails to reveal how this self-management is humanly experienced. How can we, as humans, whether it is at the individual or collective level, can accomplish such a mature rationalized self-control to properly choose our behavior (conscious and unconscious), decisions (implicit and explicit) and actions (intellectual,

symbolic or factual). This phenomenological investigation aims at this elementary question: *How is a self-conduct experienced in management social practice?*

Socio-Cultural Paradigm Findings	
1. System of representation	The management guiding paradigm finds its roots mainly in the objective scientific knowledge, preferably, quantitative theoretical modeling of heuristic scheme of reference. In other words, it founds its knowledge on translated scientific knowledge into technical instrument easily applied in any given situations.
2. System of social relations	The management guiding paradigm finds its social relations defined in society, through impartial and objective social contract established in a balanced market.
3. System of social values	The management guiding social value system given by society is based on materialist values, including prestige, financial wealth, measurable performance and a quest for speed, efficiency, effectiveness and excellence.
4. System of know-hows	The society's normative know-hows adopted in management paradigm is adaptive decision process including its contingent implementation.
5. Cultural model of society	Society's cultural model guiding principals in management practices is social hierarchy applied to a mythical meritocracy of self-made man performance in the markets.

Figure 6: Socio-cultural Paradigm Findings

Given the scope and scale of this question, I encountered our investigation in 2007 to start by addressing the complexity of an Ontic-Being as conscious living creature existing in a contingent social world. I rapidly was confronted with the major gap between the inner and outer world of this individual consciousness and the social world's contingency and spontaneous reactions. This is when a more operational investigating question was established as: *how does an Ontic-Being find guidance between its internal complexity of its own existence, while creating order, meaning and vision for the collective action?*

To answer this question, it became obvious that I had to deeply investigate the consciousness process, the relation between the inner world of this consciousness and the relation of consciousness with the social (outer world). This is how reflexive praxeology came to be explored. I had to investigate the consciousness phenomenology, but also the perception's phenomenology which lead us to investigate the meaning of it all in terms of social practice competency development for the individual and collective intentional behavior and self-conduct. The empirical AR grounded theory experiential experiment aimed at this very objective.

2.2 Sociological Metasynthesis of Management as Performative Social Practices

Management has been sociologically studied through Management, the Theory of organization and Organizational Behavior literature which evolved over time. There are two traditions: the technical management practices and the social management practices (Déry 2010). Both of which are practices in organizations.

Looking at the findings (Figure 7), these dominant and alternative management praxeological paradigm findings reveal that it is applied in any domain of human existence to achieve a form of control and empowerment over ones' life. The two paradigms are politically recuperated to negotiate mitigating adaptation from the dominant management paradigm without fundamentally addressing the existentialist critical issues, including ethical and environmental concerns (Avon 2007).

Management Praxeology Paradigms Findings	
Dominant Management Praxeology Paradigm	
Norms	Rationalized sound decisions, aiming at financial and market growth, using the best knowledge to achieve this goal, using social hierarchical organizations, in the name of social process for common good.
Process	Strategically (competitively) applying the PODC practices, while optimizing resource allocations, utilizations, and exploitations through collective collaboration and mobilization in achieving the aims goals (financial and market growth).
Representation	Humans are just like any other resources to be exploited, optimized and submitted to the global goals to be actualized on the markets. The belief system is that the market's response is always objective, truthful and rewards high performance, as a form of meritocracy. The markets liberation and integration is extremely values to create the best competitive performance environment to motivate management practices in achieving excellence. Human activity therefore serves a greater goal to nourish the market's dynamics.
Alternative Management Praxeology Paradigm	
Norms	Universally accessible conscious experience of existence unites humanity. Humanity is responsible and accountable of its relation with nature and human emancipation.
Process	The means to achieve these responsibilities goes through reflexive self-awareness, collaborative effort to create sustainable innovations.
Representation	Humanity and its social relations, and relation with nature should be harmonious and sustainable. Humanity is a powerful, responsible, creative and spiritual species toward nature.

Figure 7: Management Praxeology Paradigms Findings

A social practice to be legitimate and adopted has to be recognized and socially valued. Given the fact that not only Management is a form of rationalized action as a systematic approach to pragmatism and self-conduct, Management is socially valued and recognized around the world. In fact, post-secondary educations and diplomas based on Management practice and knowledge, there are also professional and job positions to focus on organizationally based management practice. Management social and professional status exists and is highly respected as such. It became a socio-cultural prestigious capital. Finally, management is believed to be an acquired social status, and therefore presented as a meritocratic social status creating a sense of social class consciousness. All these characteristics makes management a legitimate, valued and powerful norm for social practice.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus reveals how the socio-cultural paradigm infiltrates the praxeological paradigm through an infraconscious and infralinguistic dimension creating an ontological complicity of the acting agent in voluntarily contributing to the social structure (Martuccelli 1999, Dave 2007). This means that the acting Ontic-Being is somewhat semiconscious of the social reproduction through social practice. The Ontic-Being adopts a positive predisposition to conform life style through legitimate historical social practices asserting its social insertion. It is therefore through this ontological predisposition in actualizing social practices within these habitus that social transformation can occur (Martuccelli 1999, Bourdieu 1979 Latour and Guilhot 2007).

So far, the alternative management praxeology paradigm proposed through Administrative Sciences maintains the dominant technical management paradigm within the materialist modern promise (Atkinson 1995, 2006). It only offers complementary human dimensions in social management practices to take human dimensions into consideration while actualizing its ideological and symbolic materialist socio-cultural modern paradigm (Déry 2010, Bolstanki and Thevenot 1991).

3. Anthropological Metasynthesis

An anthropological analysis aims at structuring factual acts and describing its process through an ethnographic set of data. It then inductively analysis its possible significant for the practitioners and for community of practice. The anthropological meaning is established by comparison to other human activity in other cultural references.

3.1 Management as human experience: an ethnographic description

There are very little anthropological studies of Management as such other than the managers' daily tasks. Mintzberg (1968) was the first to investigate the empirical experience of business leaders' accomplishments. It revealed three major form of management conduct: 1) ongoing discussions, including a great majority focusing on listening others; 2) taking decisions and 3) getting into regular social interactions. This flow of ongoing activity leaves very little space for reflexivity on the situation and the contingencies to reframe ongoing operations.

Management as a social practice is therefore consciously absorbed in doing ongoing repetitive, recursive tasks while adapting it to marginal contingencies. Any unexpected challenges are delegated to those specialized in those form of challenges in the name of division and specialized labor and level of responsibilities.

3.2 The Human Impact of Management Practices: and anthropological interpretation

An anthropological interpretation of the ethnographic set of studies reveals a humanity absent to itself. The metasynthesis findings reveal that management is a social practice objectifies humans to do things, whether these actions mean something or not (Figure 8). The meaning is taken away from the individual and reintegrated at a large collective effort scale. Even when it is believed to allow the human activity to embrace the whole productive process, such as professional work, it still becomes repetitive, recursive meaningless contingent actions. Ultimately, individuals can only access meaning through collective recognition of their accomplishments. But, this recognition is extremely rare and therefore becomes transient even for those who receive it.

Metasynthesis Anthropological Findings	
1. Regulating social capital	Management social capital is social hierarchical status in terms of both economic and formal knowledge recognized credit. This credit is based on symbolic value in the hierarchy of materialist value .
2. Regulating habitus	Management habitus is first and foremost self-objectification as a resource available to the collective exploitation exchanged in the markets. Obedience is the most important social norm to conform to as the best habitus.
3. Regulating externalities	Any expected and unexpected consequences of extreme and intensive exploitation is not part of the excellence equation. It is denied any considerations for as long as it does not affect the market's dynamics.
4. Regulating cultural conflicts	Belief conflicts are dominated by the neoliberalist value system. Any alternative cultural system is marginalized and socially devalued.
5. Regulating symbolism	The most valuable symbolic regulation is any form of demonstration of power over others, social hierarchy status in respect to the exploitation capability over others.
6. Regulating violence	Legal authority, totalitarian leading decision of those in hierarchical power is the most valuable violence monopoly. Any alternative violent expression, including manifestation, counter-power critical perspective is considered marginal, and socially excluded of consideration for the common good. Therefore, social order at all cost is the highest value.

Figure 8: Metasynthesis Anthropological Findings

This meaningless human intensive activity leaves critical management studies to call for an anthropological reaffirmation of management meaningful practices (Chanlat 1990, 1998). But, since management practice externalizes the meaning of its stakes to the markets, it never humanly accesses that signification other than a materialist form of reward.

4. Empirical Experimentation of Reflexive Praxeology over Management Practices

The empirical experiential experiments on management social practice focused on the fundamental professional practice which is reflexive praxeology (Lafortune and al 2009, De Waele and al. 2001, St-Arnaud 2003). Not only this particular angle of social practice is interesting for management as commonly known for executive functions in organization, but it is a commonly adopted social practice in all realms of professional conduct. The question was, could this particular transdisciplinary social practice could initiate a management social practice innovation?

The empirical research results are presented in respect to the three incremental longitudinal grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Morse and al. 2009) strategy and AR processes (Reason and Bradbury 2008). These results' interpretations therefore correspond to the grounded theory meta-analysis process to deepen these discoveries understanding.

4.1 First AR cycle results

The 2001-2002 first Action-Research cycle lead to one basic discovery. This first AR cycle approach was to accompany the executive to identify their personal challenge to address in their executive positions and find means to reach new goals through their individual challenges. The main discovery was that the issues were not related to their respective organizations, executive objectives or even human resources management, or even their private lives. The common issues were their personal ontological individuation and existential challenges. Ultimately, they all had to find meaning to their existence, and the role their executive function could offer in finding some value to their individual existence within a holistic experience of their lives. In other words, professional and organizational technical and social management practices did not offer existential answers to their human ontic-being-in-this-world need for meaning. They were left to find deeper meaning to their existence.

4.2 Second AR spiral of cycles results

The 16-year long experiential spiral of cycle experimental research intended to address this existential quest for meaning. The findings lead to four fundamental discoveries:

- 1) The reflexive praxeology is not intuitive, it has to be taught through a collaborative AR process;
- 2) The reflexive praxeology competency raises a profound self-awareness in professional and personal ongoing social practices;
- 3) The reflexive praxeology reveals to the practitioner, a form of distancing from previous thoughtless professional practice as an assimilated preprogram over perception on reality, oneself and the relations with others;
- 4) A long-term practice of reflexive praxeology becomes a praxeological reflexivity capability over the meaning of one-self existence.
- 5) Ultimately, long term managerial (in terms of PODC ongoing implementation) of reflexive praxeology practice initiated an existential critical thinking over life experiences.

4.3 Third AR cycle results

This third AR cycle result is an experiential meta-analysis of the previous findings in comparison to other AR findings on professional practice innovation including reflective professional regulation. There are two major discoveries:

- 1) Reflexive praxeology is a learned social practice that can be conducted within two different performative paradigms.

The dominant proposed paradigm through professional training and ethics leads to measurable technical performance end-results. The second paradigm is learned through a professional collaborative coaching process aiming at an existential life-quality experience.

- 2) A long term praxeological reflexivity over existential experience leads to a life changing conscious and knowledgeable mindfulness increasing not only voluntary distancing from dominant ideologies driving professional practices, but it creates life satisfaction over life difficulties while relativizing professional and personnel socially accepted success, failures and accomplishment.

Therefore, this praxeological reflexivity is a conscious awareness raising the experience of affects such as deep sufferings, pleasure, but also the awareness that our very own existence and actions in-this-world impact the world and one-self. In other words, it creates deep existential meaning.

5. Result interpretations

There are two main findings over this extended research. The first one is that management is more than a professional practice executed by organizational administrators. It became a social practice institutionalized in all dimension of human existence. With this level of dominance in overall modern human life across cultures, nations, and every social class, in human experience of public, personal and intimate existence, the dominant management paradigm over heading this social practice offers a powerful and yet dehumanizing technical performance ideological system. The impact of the management paradigm over human existence leads to disempowered individuals over their actions, social impact and responsibility. It ultimately leads to existential meaningless life assessment.

The second main finding is that it is possible to create radical management paradigm shift through incremental mindfulness management social practice innovation. The social practice innovation experiments on reflexive praxeology is so powerful that it creates radical humanist transformation in those who adopts this long-term practice. Over time, it becomes a reflexive praxeology existential capability for one-self, but also within a shared community of practice.

This social practice innovation process through a mindful experienced existential transformation follows three dimensions: 1) Consciousness over self-awareness; 2) innovative management social practice at the inner and outer world boundaries; 3) understanding the management social practice innovation distances from and within the dominant management social practice through critical emerging thinking and meaning.

5.1 Consciousness over Self-Awareness

Bourdieu sets habitus in terms of key categories which are: cultural life styles, professional versus non-professional working life, economic status and educational achievements, Management would be characterized as a:

- 1) Culturally bourgeois;
- 2) Professional approach to working life style;
- 3) Economically high middle social class and above;
- 4) Education achievements at the college degree and above.

In the Bourdieu social class spectrum, management is a highly valued social class practice. It doesn't require to be economically considered rich as such and it doesn't require a high level of general culture (Bourdieu 1979, 1986, 2000). It means that anyone can aspire to practice management, at any level or situation, for as long as it presents some form of rationalized actions through planning, organizing, directing execution and controlling (PODC) based on some objective knowledge.

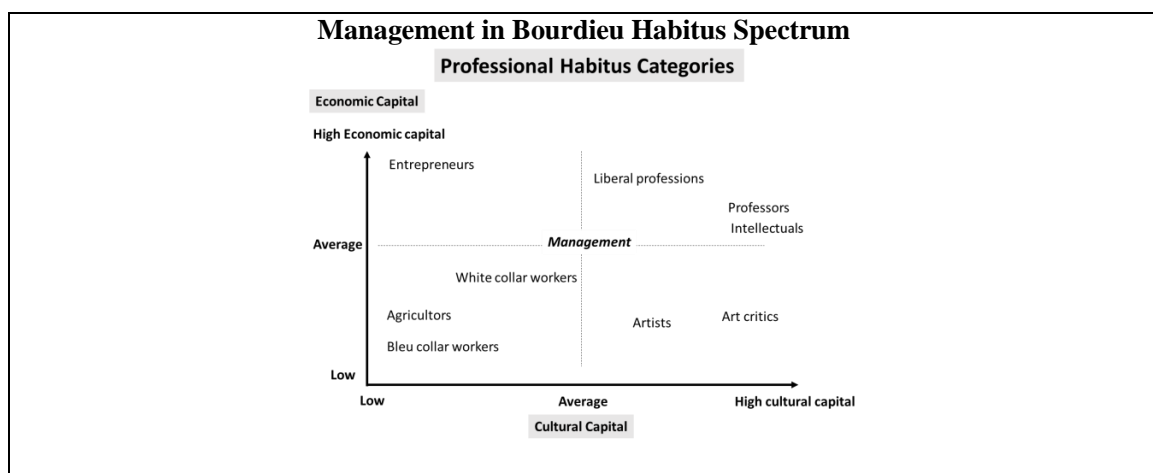


Figure 9: Management in Bourdieu Habitus Spectrum

The essence of management as social practice doesn't leave aside emotions, including compulsive reactivity to situations or belief systems. In fact, these two irrationally considered form of actions are considered threats to dominant technical management practices. Best management practice therefore entails to apply management practices to these two forms of human conduct to rationalize it. This is how Administrative Sciences became interested to management emotions through regulating emotions to achieve minimal reactivity, and to maintain scientific knowledge competencies in all aspects of human life to counter-act on belief systems, also considered doxology with both beliefs and opinions, or first impressions.

The best conclusion for these findings is that the Ontic-Being is individualized, socially dissected to the point that its existence goes through profound experience of painful solitude, dreadfulness. Solitude away from others, away from a Social-Being, away from its ancestry and its descendants as well as away from nature and transcending spiritual experience. Dominant management paradigm extracts existential meanings in exchange for a promised material compensation. It dehumanizes the Ontic-Being-in-This-World.

5.2. Innovative Management Social Practice

The interface between inner and outer world for each Ontic-Being implies the interface with others and the environment. In other words, the conscious Ontic-Being is a social creature living within the Social-Being (de Verlaine 2021). Ultimately, the organized Social-Being becomes a social construct aware of its existence in-this-world. Modernity has rationalized this process of collaboration and collective consciousness through dominant technical management practices. In other words, management is a social practice implicitly or explicitly known to all singular Ontic-Being and therefore becomes an institutionalized social practice embedded in collaborative practices within the Social-Being. Dominant dehumanizing management practices becomes the means to isolate individuals first and rationalize its reintegration into some collective effort to a social life.

The reflexive praxeology allows the mindful Ontic-Being to become aware of its existence within the Social-Being. The rationalized Social-Being from dominant management practices tends to make-believe that it is broken in million individual-rational-objective pieces. Long term praxeological reflexivity allows the Ontic-Being to experience the transparent dialogue and coexistence between oneself and the Social-Being as one and only one Being.

5.3 Understanding the Management Social Practice Innovation

These findings relate to other professional managers study revealing that managers tend to repeat the same decision based on past relative success (Eraly 1988). They also tend to do what they believe would be in the best line of action, and that they believe they feel satisfied with their decisions (Noël 2009, Déry 2010). In fact, Eraly (1988) even explained this aptitude to the lack of effort to properly analyze each and every situation and therefore, repeating past actions is the best legitimate self-conduct, as a mindlessness being.

Giddens (1984) refers to this general behavior as part of the structuration of actions. In this manner, management agent tends to simply reflect other actions, mimic behaviors which is view as socially legitimate and therefore contribute to the social structures of society.

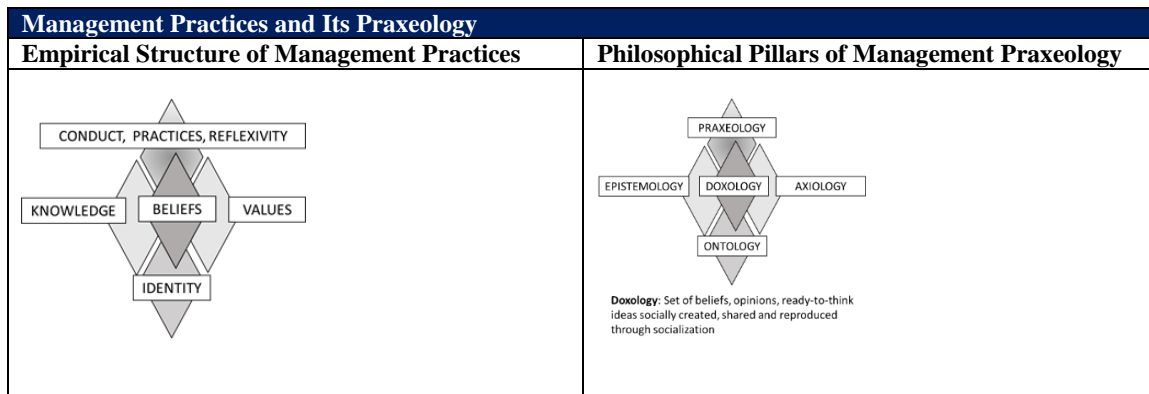


Figure 10: Management practices and its Praxeology

Normally, social innovation practices lead to adapt the normative dominant praxeological paradigm. Like the management critical research, these social innovation practices propose to reflect and include human experiential dimensions into the dominant management paradigm (Déry 2009, 2010). This is how social management body of knowledge propose to consider symbolic, political, psychological and cognitive human dimension to expand on the dominant technical management praxeology performance and socio-cultural hegemony. It appears, that this form of critical management studies as well as any democratic, humanistic value, social responsibility and even ethics and environmental sustainability taken into recurrent situated management practices find their legitimacy by reinforcing the dominant technical management praxeology paradigm as well.

The question remains what kind of social practices can be integrated through situated management practices to emerge as a transcendental critical and humanist alternative praxeology? In other words, instead of addressing directly the pragmatic elements of the dominant management praxeology paradigm, would it be logical to address social practice transformation with social practice innovation? This is how the empirical investigation began in 2005 to address critical posture toward dominant technical management paradigm with social practice innovation.

As explained by the social innovation theoretical model (Assogba 1982), the key social practice innovation had to come from the alternative paradigm. Since the dominant management paradigm is materialist, it appears to be logical to aim at its philosophical opponent, the existentialist paradigm, to create the social practice innovation. The key existentialist social practice is reflexive praxeology. Even though reflectivity is generally taken in dominant performative materialist management paradigm, it is generally applied to improve social action’s intended impact (St-Arnaud 2003, Lescarbeau and al. 2003). The dominant paradigm aims at regulating applied actions and managerial practices to achieve this teleological effective and productive performance (Lescarbeau and al. 2003). Alternatively, reflexive praxeology within the existential humanist paradigm, is aiming at human well-being within the process (de Verlaine 2022).

The experiential empirical investigation had to apply this reflexive praxeology as an innovative existential management social practice within the realm of management socio-cultural paradigm.

6. Research Question Findings: What is the Essence of Management?

According to the present research results, the essence of Management is a social practice leading the human experience of existence within all Ontic-Being relations: to others, to the Social-Being and to One-Self. The dominant management paradigm values and prioritizes dehumanizing form of relations toward technical, instrumental and material end-results. This teleological aim is legitimized as the only social order capable of increasing equitable social justice while improving general life expectancies in materialist relative comfort.

The innovative radical humanist transformation of management paradigm into an existentialist management social practice renegotiate the dehumanizing impact of the dominant management paradigm. It proposes a conscious mindful awareness and an alternative meaning to humanize existential management social practice through reflexive praxeology. It doesn't aim at redefining the materialist potentiality of the dominant management paradigm, but it invites these innovative practitioners to create alternative meaning and means to accomplish materialist dominant management paradigm objective. In other words, this existential management social practice innovation enables individuals, groups and community of practice to create an existentialist paradigm within the modernity promises for humanity.

The present investigation demonstrates how management is a social practice. Through sociological and anthropological metasynthesis along with empirical experiment and meta-analysis bring into evidence that management is socially constructed and practiced in the society's dominant socio-cultural paradigm. It therefore inherited some particular historical and cultural characteristics such as:

- 1) Gather information to delay decisions that could risk social order instability;
- 2) Aiming at Planned objectives, quantified performance results in every and all aspects of human life;
- 3) Routinely act in Organized daily lives;
- 4) Compulsiveness in every actions and reactions as the only means of Direction for progress;
- 5) Rationalizing decisions in response to risk adversity;
- 6) Control, coordinate and control again every aspect of existence.

Bourdieu would characterize these set of conducts as habitus. This means that Management is a programmed social practice responding to a dominant ideological paradigm predetermining individual self-conduct. This habitus finds its legitimacy within the modern socio-cultural paradigm.

The only manner through which programmed habitus can be transformed is to take a voluntary conscious distance over this dominant ideological paradigm. This research has found a window through which such a social practice radical humanist transformation can occur. This window is the ongoing mindful existential reflexive praxeology.

Discussion on Implications of Considering Management as Social Practice

Stating that management is a social practice questions the administrative sciences' insistence to keep it as a reserved professionalized practice. It also allows to reveal the dominance of the technical management praxeological paradigm in all sphere of the socio-cultural paradigm in modern societies. It also allows to better understand how management as a social practice paradigm dehumanizes life experience in all aspects of human life creating collective meaningless existence. Management paradigm did not emerge to answer the meaning of existence. Its main focus since the XIXth Century was to offer the best materialist comfort to human existence. After more than a century of expanding management praxeological paradigm, the results force to admit that it delivered its promise and with it the enlightenment's utopias.

Unfortunately, the modern man delegated, to dominant technical management paradigm, to answer any and all emerging new challenges. This led to instrumentalize human existence toward the only materialist aim it was created for. To take the technological analogy, we can only expect technology and even artificial intelligence to perform and deliver the goods and services it was programmed for. It is unimaginable to expect any technology or computer program to answer human despair and existential suffering other than by offering goods and services that are not meant to meet this particular challenge.

Revealing how much management practice paradigm has invaded all human experiential existential dimensions, we can only expect a misalignment between what the dominant materialist management can offer to answer existential anguish and loss on meaning. It leaves human aspirations in an abyss of obscurantism for existential meaning, while offering more goods and services, including an escape into a virtual new world. But, we can only wonder to what price this self-alienation can lead.

This research allows to find that it is possible to realign management practices toward a paradigm shift. Management practice, through a powerful long term existentialist praxeological reflexivity can enable a humanist

radical change over human experience and collective collaboration.

This management social practice innovation the current research encountered reveals that Bourdieu is right by stating that an apparent defining habitus through which society preprograms individual actions can be modified and transformed through a changed attitude toward this habitus (Martuccelli 1999, Bourdieu 1979). This new attitude becomes the only approach to take distance from the dominant powerful symbolic system of reference and find intimate, incremental and yet cumulative transformation emerging from this new attitude into sustainable modified habitus. This is how Bourdieu presents the possible radical social transformation over a human life time, or through several generations. But never the less it is a leverage for powerful humanist radical change.

Ultimately, this research reveals how civilizations can be transformed through emerging cumulative and incremental micro changes rather than radical restructuring of society. This is how a radical humanism can quietly revolutionize civilization while radical structuralism can only offer violent revolution to transform society at the risk of causing major chaos and painful rupture (Burrell and Morgan 2006).

CONCLUSION

Our metasynthesis and empirical experimentation findings demonstrate how management, as a social practice, induces a complex praxeology understanding. In other words, management pressures the individual to take on its responsibility for its own self-conduct, actions and consequences. It therefore implies that the individual has to be aware of a complex realm of knowledge over probable contingencies. The dominant technical management paradigm dehumanizes this process.

However, the existential management reflexive praxis helps monitor this praxeology in-this-world. This meets management teleological aims by expecting the individual to practice a self-conduct awareness. This reflexivity allows to self-guide each and every human as conscious Ontic-Being in taking responsibility to achieve its life as a mission, in creating meaning for its own existence, and contribute in a collective effort to achieve well-being as a species.

Our interpretative findings reveal that the meaning over the current collective well-being differs between multiple conflicting visions for humanity and this world. This is how defining the ultimate means to achieve this collective well-being creates major human conflicts.

Management, as a social practice within our current hypermodernist intensified world, entered a new paradigm. Modernist management came from a technical rational and logical path to solve the world's complexity. This complex management is no longer guided by visionary, expert and powerful leaders, but rather a pluralist world of powerful highly diversified visionary and extremely powerful actors.

Ultimately, these complex management actors engage both collaborative and competing conflicting conduct to influence the deepest path of worldwide collective collaborations. If technical dominant management was playing at the organizational level intertwined with the consumer and financial markets as a regulated complex system, technical complex management plays at the global scale level beyond the economic production as such. Rather, businesses and organizations become means through which greater scale programs for humanity are created and delivered. The actionable system in which the complex management plays is driven by not only powerful humans, but also powerful global organizations, markets, nations, and artificial intelligences.

In other words, complex technical management is born in this hypermodernist world where the rules of the game have changed from a local and regional ethical and responsible self-conduct expectancies, into a globalized materialist-rationalized-technical-vision-centered social conduct guided by new disruptive visions of collective well-being. In this line of thoughts, collectivity may no longer be local or regional, but civilizational.

To answer our investigating question: What is the Essence of Management? The findings expose how the experience of mindful self-conduct in management, as social practice, implies the highest responsibility for each and every one as conscious Ontic-Being to any action into this intertwined complex world. This is, at least, what humanity expects from its individuals, but it expects it from the businesses, organizations, Nation-States, markets, but also from its technologies including artificial intelligences. In other words, the level of impact and awareness expected by any form of collective effort forces to admit that their rights to intervene in the social and natural world comes with their ethical and legal responsibilities to act in the collective well-being interest. In this new perspective, complex management meets a new scale of challenge that the modernist technical management did not foresee and is limited to achieve.

Being aware of this frontier between chaos and apparent created order as self-empowerment over disorder and meaningless existence brings management social practice into a level of complexity that the technical management social practice avoided. Technical management social practice has emerged in a modernist and material-realist conception of this world. The hypermodernist management social practice is embedded in a synchronous and asynchronous world creating an intensified level of productivity and massive consumerism of natural resources. The implications of human activity are becoming so unpredictable that complex management can only focus on plausible and probable imaginable consequences. Then again, these types of risks management of human activity achieve a level of risks that are no longer risks as such but rather a time assessment of inevitable

externalities. Complex management does not take these potential risks as alternate possibilities. It takes on these plannable externalities to orchestrate portfolio of technological and political complex innovation projects and programs. In other words, complex management is an accountable social practice for its own consequences and takes a proactive approach for long term plausible and sometimes realistic disasters of long-term human activity. Given the current hypermodernist environment, management, as a social practice, performs in governing complexity. However, this performance is appreciated in the context of foreseeing the upcoming risks and opportunities while the contingent phenomenon to consider come from numerous dimensions: political, economic, technical, financial, cultural, but also, ecological, virtual including artificial intelligences. Administrative Sciences literature on managing complexity has already foreseen this new path of managerial practices development. Furthermore, our findings revealed that complexity goes beyond systemic perspective as such implying paradoxical, semantic and dialectic integrated complexity as well, all in the interface of inner and outer world as humanly experienced.

Notwithstanding, all of these intertwined phenomena go far beyond the collective collaborative organization modernist technical management was developed for. In fact, this level of complexity calls for a new form of social practice reflected in what would be complex management aligning mindful Ontic-Being with the Social-Being. This complex management is fundamentally a collective effort to monitor all of these phenomena. Ultimately, it is a democratized shared power and knowledge to collectively intuitively foresee future externalities of current practices. It therefore requires the Ontic-Being's conscious awareness to consider ethical extremely long-term appreciation of macro implication of current decisions, innovations and actions for future human generations. The civic management goes as far as including considerations for the current human path and its impact on the planet and its natural resources and habitats (de Verlaine 2020).

To answer our research question, I had to point a more experiential operational investigating question which is: how does an Ontic-Being find guidance between its internal complexity of its own existence, while creating order, meaning and vision for the collective action? In this line of question, when I refer to the experience of ethical self-conduct I had to consider the complexity of a person's internal world into the actions, as social practice, impacting the external world. The results revealed the human experience of dealing with the internal and external world alignment or misalignment from one hand and the meaning its social practice takes on into the social world.

Thus, our experiential findings revealed how the human experience of management between the inner and outer worlds is astonishing through long term reflexive praxeology. This feeling comes from a powerful human experience of personal and collective empowerment of triumph over chaos and meaningless abyss of existence in creating order and meaning. In other words, existential management as social practice becomes an approach to organize self-conduct and collectively organized action. The awareness it brings over existence and the technological practices it induces enable self-created existence and collective contribution into-this-world. Management, as a self-defined social practice, democratized the abilities and opportunities for anyone to create meaning for their lives and contributing into-this-world.

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