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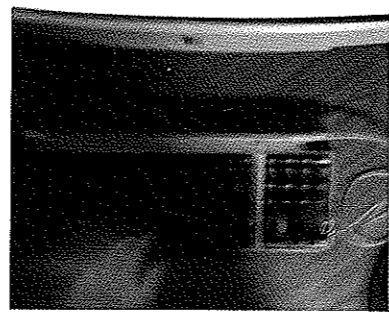
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ISBN-13: 978-1-85984-554-7
ISBN-10: 1-85984-554-1
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The New Spirit of Capitalism

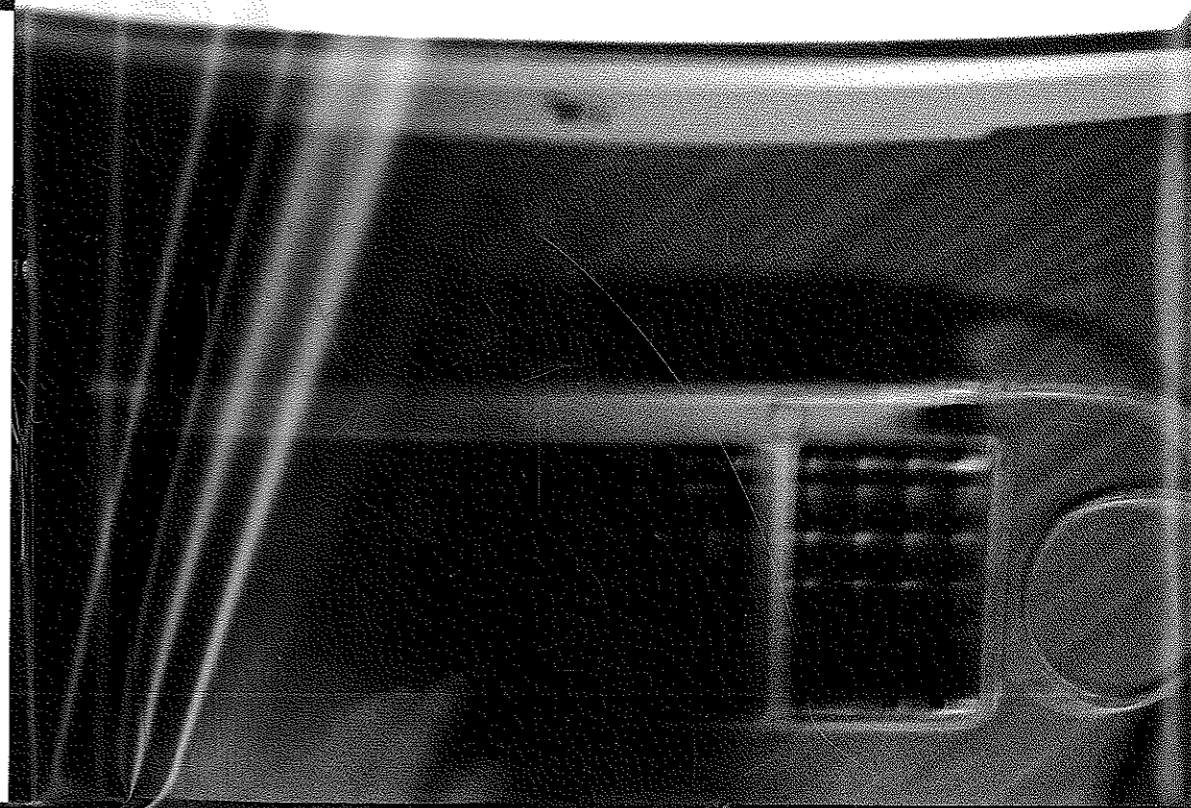


Luc Boltanski & Eve Chiapello

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The New Spirit of Capitalism



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The subject of this book is the *ideological changes that have accompanied recent transformations in capitalism*. It suggests an interpretation of the dynamic that runs from the years following the events of May 1968, when the critique of capitalism was expressed loud and clear, to the 1980s when, with critique silenced, the organizational forms on which the functioning of capitalism rests were profoundly altered, right up to the faltering search for new critical foundations in the second half of the 1990s. It is not merely descriptive, but proposes, by way of this historical example, a more general theoretical framework for understanding the way in which the ideologies associated with economic activity are altered. We stipulate that the term 'ideology' is to be construed here not in the reductionist sense to which it has often been reduced in the Marxist vulgate – that is to say, a moralizing discourse, intended to conceal material interests, which is constantly contradicted by practice – but as developed, for example, in the work of Louis Dumont: a set of shared beliefs, inscribed in institutions, bound up with actions, and hence anchored in reality.

We shall perhaps be criticized for tackling a transformation of global scope on the basis of a local example: France in the last thirty years. We certainly do not believe that the French case single-handedly encapsulates all the transformations of capitalism. However, far from being convinced by the approximations and broad brushstrokes that make up the ordinary run of discourses on globalization, we have sought to establish the model of change presented here on the basis of analyses which are pragmatic in character – that is to say, capable of taking account of the ways in which people engage in action, their justifications, and the meaning they give to their actions. Yet the influence of national political conjunctures and traditions on the orientation of economic practices, and the ideological forms of expression accompanying them, remains so strong that such an undertaking remains practically unrealizable at a global or even continental level, essentially for lack of time and resources. No doubt this is why general approaches are often led to assign preponderant importance to explanatory factors – typically of a technological, macroeconomic or demographic kind – which are treated as forces

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external to the human beings and nations that experience them, in the way one endures a storm. For this historical neo-Darwinism, 'mutations' are imposed on us in much the same way as they are imposed on species: we must adapt or die. But human beings do not only endure history; they make it. And we wanted to see them at work.

We are not claiming that what has occurred in France is a paradigm for the rest of the world, or that the models we have established on the basis of the French situation possess a universal validity as such. Nevertheless, we have good reason to believe that rather similar processes have marked the evolution of the ideologies accompanying the redeployment of capitalism in the other developed countries, in accordance with modalities that stem in each instance from the specificities of political and social history, which only detailed regional analyses can bring out with the requisite precision.

We have sought to clarify *the relations that were established between capitalism and its critiques* in order to interpret certain phenomena in the ideological sphere over recent decades: the waning of critique at a time when capitalism was undergoing significant restructuring whose social impact could not go unnoticed; the new enthusiasm for enterprise, orchestrated by Socialist governments, during the 1980s and the depressive repercussions of the 1990s; the difficulties faced by attempts to reconstruct critique today on new bases and – for now – its fairly limited mobilizing power, at a time when sources of indignation are not wanting; the profound transformation in managerial discourse and justifications of the development of capitalism since the mid-1970s; and the emergence of new representations of society, of novel ways of putting people and things to the test and, therewith, of new ways of succeeding or failing.

To carry out this work, the notion of *spirit of capitalism* rapidly became essential for us, since (as we shall see) it makes it possible to articulate the two central concepts on which our analyses are based – *capitalism and critique* – in a dynamic relation. Below we present the different concepts on which our construction is founded, as well as the springs of the model we have developed to account for ideological transformations as regards capitalism over the last thirty years, but which seem to us to possess a wider significance than the French situation studied in isolation.

THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

A minimal definition of capitalism

Of the different characterizations of capitalism (or, today frequently, capitalisms) over the last century and a half, we shall employ the minimal formula stressing an *imperative to unlimited accumulation of capital by formally peaceful means*. The constant reintroduction of capital into the economic circuit with a view

to deriving a profit – that is to say, increasing the capital, which will in turn be reinvested – is the basic mark of capitalism, endowing it with the dynamic and transformative power that have fascinated even the most hostile of observers.

Capital accumulation does not consist in amassing riches – that is to say, objects desired for their use-value, their ostentatious function, or as signs of power. The concrete forms of wealth (property, plant, commodities, money, etc.) have no interest in and of themselves and can even, by dint of their lack of liquidity, represent an obstacle to the only objective that really matters: the constant transformation of capital, plant and various purchases (raw materials, components, services, etc.) into output, of output into money, and of money into new investments.¹

This detachment of capital from material forms of wealth gives it a genuinely abstract character, which helps make accumulation an interminable process. In so far as enrichment is assessed in accounting terms, the profit accumulated in a span of time being calculated as the difference between the balance-sheets of two different periods,² there exists no limit, no possible satiation,³ contrary to when wealth is directed towards consumer needs, including luxuries.

No doubt there is another reason for the insatiable character of the capitalist process, underlined by Heilbroner.⁴ Because capital is constantly reinvested and can expand only in circulation, the capitalist's ability to recover his outlay with a profit is under constant threat, particularly as a result of the actions of other capitalists with whom he competes for consumers' spending power. This dynamic creates constant anxiety, and offers the capitalist a very powerful self-preservation motive for continuing the accumulation process interminably.

The rivalry between traders seeking to make a profit, however, does not necessarily yield a market in the classical sense, where the conflict between a multiplicity of agents taking decentralized decisions is resolved by transactions disclosing equilibrium prices. In the minimal definition employed here, capitalism is to be distinguished from market self-regulation based upon conventions and institutions, particularly of a legal and political character, aimed at ensuring equal terms between traders (pure, perfect competition), transparency, symmetry of information, a central bank guaranteeing a stable exchange rate for credit money, and so on. Capitalism is indeed based on transactions and contracts, but these contracts can only sustain discreet arrangements to the advantage of the parties, or contain *ad hoc* clauses, without publicity or competition. Following Fernand Braudel, we shall therefore distinguish between capitalism and the market economy. On the one hand, the market economy was constructed 'step by step', and predates the appearance of capitalism's norm of unlimited accumulation.⁵ On the other hand, capitalist accumulation cedes to market regulation only when more direct routes to profit are closed to it. Accordingly, recognition of the beneficent powers of

the market, and acceptance of the rules and constraints on which its 'harmonious' operation depends (free trade, prohibition of cartels and monopolies, etc.), may be regarded as pertaining to a form of self-limitation by capitalism.⁶

In the framework of the minimal definition of capitalism employed here, the capitalist is, in theory, anyone who possesses a surplus and invests it to make a profit that will increase the initial surplus. The archetypal example is the shareholder who puts money into a firm and expects a return. But investment does not necessarily take this legal form: think, for example, of investment in rental property, or the purchase of Treasury bonds. Small shareholders, savers who do not want their 'money to lie idle' but 'to make a little bit on it' – as popular parlance has it – thus belong to the group of capitalists by the same token as the big property-owners who come more readily to mind under this description. In its broadest sense, the capitalist group thus encompasses all those who possess a property income⁷ – a group, however, that constitutes a minority only beyond a certain level of savings. Although it is difficult to estimate, given existing statistics, it can be reckoned that it represents only around 20 per cent of French households, in what is one of the wealthiest countries in the world.⁸ As one can easily imagine, on a world scale the percentage is much lower.

In this essay, we shall nevertheless reserve the term 'capitalists' first and foremost for the main actors responsible for the accumulation and expansion of capital, who directly pressurize firms to make maximum profit. Obviously, their numbers are much smaller. They comprise not only big shareholders, private individuals who are able to affect the running of business single-handedly by virtue of their influence, but also legal entities (represented by a few influential individuals, primarily the directors of firms), which, via their shareholdings, own or control the most substantial portions of global capital (holding companies and multinationals – including banks – through the mechanism of subsidiaries and interests, investment funds, or pension funds). Major employers, the salaried directors of large firms, fund managers, or large shareholders – the influence of such people on the capitalist process, the practices of firms, and the profit rates extracted is beyond doubt, unlike that of the small shareholders mentioned above. Although they constitute a population that is itself characterized by significant asset inequalities, albeit on the basis of a very advantageous situation on average, they deserve to be called capitalists inasmuch as they make the requirement of profit maximization their own, and relay its constraints to the people and legal entities over whom they exercise controlling power. Leaving to one side for the moment the issue of the systemic constraints upon capitalists and, in particular, the question of whether the directors of firms can do anything other than conform to the rules of capitalism, we shall merely note that they do so conform, and that their action is guided largely by the pursuit of substantial profits for their own capital and that entrusted to them.⁹

We shall also characterize capitalism by the wage-earning class. Marx and Weber alike place this form of organizing labour at the centre of their definition of capitalism. We shall consider the wage-earning class independently of the contractual legal forms it can assume. What matters is that part of the population – possessing little or no capital, and to whose benefit the system is not naturally geared – derives income from the sale of its labour (not the sale of the products of its labour); that it does not possess means of production, and hence depends upon the decisions of those who do in order to work (for, by virtue of property rights, the latter can refuse use of these means to them); and, finally, that in the framework of the wage relation, and in exchange for its remuneration, it surrenders all property rights over the fruits of its efforts, which are said to accrue in their entirety to the owners of capital.¹⁰ A second important feature of the wage-earning class is that the wage-earner is theoretically free to refuse to work on the terms offered by the capitalist, just as the latter is free not to offer work on the terms demanded by the worker. The upshot is that, while the relation is unequal in the sense that the worker cannot survive for long without working, it is nevertheless markedly different from forced labour or slavery, and thus always involves a certain amount of voluntary subjection.

In France, as on a world scale, the wage-earning class has gone on expanding throughout the history of capitalism, to the point where today it involves an unprecedented percentage of the working population.¹¹ On the one hand, it gradually replaces self-employed labour, in the front rank of which, historically, was agriculture.¹² On the other hand, the working population has itself greatly expanded as a result of the entry into the wage-earning class of women, who perform work outside the home in growing numbers.¹³

The Necessity of a Spirit for Capitalism

In many respects, capitalism is an absurd system: in it, wage-earners have lost ownership of the fruits of their labour and the possibility of pursuing a working life free of subordination. As for capitalists, they find themselves yoked to an interminable, insatiable process, which is utterly abstract and dissociated from the satisfaction of consumption needs, even of a luxury kind. For two such protagonists, integration into the capitalist process is singularly lacking in justifications.

Now, albeit to an unequal extent depending upon the direction in which profit is sought (greater, for example, in the case of industrial than commercial or financial profits), capitalist accumulation demands the mobilization of a very large number of people whose prospects of profit are low (especially when their initial capital is small or nonexistent), and each of whom is assigned only minute responsibility – or, at any rate, responsibility that is difficult to assess – in the overall accumulation process. Consequently, when they are not

downright hostile to capitalist practices, they are not particularly motivated to engage in them.

Some people can invoke a material motive for participating – more obviously in the case of wage-earners who need their wages in order to live than in that of large property owners whose activity, above a certain threshold, is no longer bound up with satisfying personal needs. On its own, however, this does not prove much of a spur. Work psychologists have regularly emphasized that pay is insufficient to induce commitment and stimulate enthusiasm for the task, the wage constituting at most a motive for staying in a job, not for getting involved in it.

Similarly, duress is insufficient to overcome actors' hostility or indifference, especially when the commitment demanded of them assumes active engagement, initiative and voluntary sacrifices, as is ever more frequently the case not simply with *cadres* but with all wage-earners. Thus, the hypothesis of 'enforced commitment' under the threat of hunger and unemployment does not seem to us to be very plausible. For if the 'slave' factories that still exist the world over are unlikely to disappear in the short term, reliance on this form of setting people to work seems problematic, if for no other reason than that most of the new ways of profit-making and new occupations invented in the last thirty years, which today generate a substantial portion of global profits, stress what human resources management calls 'workforce participation'.

In fact, the quality of the commitment one can expect depends upon the arguments that can be cited to bring out not only the advantages which participation in capitalist processes might afford on an individual basis, but also the collective benefits, defined in terms of the common good, which it contributes to producing for everyone. We call *the ideology that justifies engagement in capitalism* 'spirit of capitalism'.

This spirit is currently undergoing a significant crisis, demonstrated by growing social confusion and scepticism, to the extent that safeguarding the accumulation process, which is ultimately threatened by any narrowing of its justification to a minimal argument in terms of compulsory submission to economic laws, presupposes the formation of a new, more inspiring ideological corpus. At all events, this is valid for the developed countries, which remain at the core of the accumulation process and reckon on remaining the main suppliers of skilled personnel, whose positive involvement is imperative. Capitalism must be in a position to guarantee these people a minimum of security in sheltered zones – places to live in, have a family, bring up children, and so on – like the residential quarters of the commercial cities of the northern hemisphere, shop windows of capitalist success for new arrivals from the periphery, and hence a crucial element in the global ideological mobilization of the sum total of productive forces.

For Max Weber, the 'spirit of capitalism' refers to the set of ethical motivations which, although their purpose is foreign to capitalist logic, inspire

entrepreneurs in activity conducive to capital accumulation.¹⁴ Given the singular, even transgressive character of the kinds of behaviour demanded by capitalism when compared with the forms of life exhibited in most human societies,¹⁵ Weber was led to defend the idea that the emergence of capitalism presupposed the establishment of a new moral relationship between human beings and their work. This was defined in the manner of a vocation, such that, regardless of its intrinsic interest and qualities, people could devote themselves to it firmly and steadily. According to Weber, it was with the Reformation that the belief became established that people performed their religious duty in the first instance by practising an occupation in the world, in temporal activities, in contrast to the extra-mundane religious life favoured by the Catholic ethos. This new conception made it possible to circumvent the question of the purpose of effort in work (boundless enrichment) at the dawn of capitalism, and thereby overcome the problem of commitment posed by the new economic practices. The conception of work as *Beruf* – a religious vocation demanding fulfilment – furnished a normative support for the merchants and entrepreneurs of nascent capitalism, and gave them good reasons – a 'psychological motivation', as Weber puts it¹⁶ – for devoting themselves tirelessly and conscientiously to their task; for undertaking the pitiless rationalization of their affairs, inextricably bound up with the pursuit of maximum profit; and for pursuing material gain, a sign of success in fulfilling their vocation.¹⁷ It also served them in so far as workers imbued with the same ideal proved obedient, tireless in their work, and – convinced as they were that man must perform his duty where Providence has placed him – did not seek to question the situation in which they found themselves.

We shall leave to one side the important post-Weberian debate, essentially revolving around the actual influence of Protestantism on the development of capitalism and, more generally, of religious beliefs on economic practices, and draw above all from Weber's approach the idea that people need powerful moral reasons for rallying to capitalism.¹⁸

Albert Hirschman reformulates the Weberian question ('[h]ow then does it come about that activity which, in the most favourable case, is barely morally tolerable, becomes a "calling" in the manner practiced by Benjamin Franklin?') as follows: '[h]ow did commercial, banking, and similar money-making pursuits become honorable at some point in the modern age after having stood condemned or despised as greed, love of lucre, and avarice for centuries past?'¹⁹ Rather than appealing to *psychological motives* and the search by new elites for a means of guaranteeing their *personal salvation*, however, Hirschman evokes grounds that touched on the political sphere before impinging upon the economy. Profitable activities had been highly esteemed by elites in the eighteenth century on account of the *sociopolitical benefits* they anticipated from them. In Hirschman's interpretation, the secular thinking of the Enlightenment justifies profit-making activities in terms of society's common good. Hirschman

thus shows how the emergence of practices in tune with the development of capitalism was interpreted as conducive to a mellowing of manners and a perfecting of modes of government. Given the inability of religious morality to quell human passions, the powerlessness of reason to govern human beings, and the difficulty of subjugating the passions by means of sheer repression, there remained the solution of using one passion to counter the others. In this way, lucre, hitherto first-placed in the order of disorders, was awarded the privilege of being selected as the innocuous passion which the task of subjugating aggressive passions henceforth rested upon.²⁰

Weber's works stressed capitalism's need to furnish individual reasons, whereas Hirschman's emphasize justifications in terms of the common good. For our part, we shall employ both dimensions, construing the term 'justification' in a sense that makes it possible to encompass both individual justifications (wherein a person finds grounds for engaging in capitalist enterprise) and general justifications (whereby engagement in capitalist enterprise serves the common good).

The question of the moral justifications of capitalism is not only relevant historically, for shedding light on its origins or, in our day, for arriving at a better understanding of the ways in which the peoples of the periphery (developing countries and former socialist countries) are converted to capitalism. It is also of the utmost importance in Western countries like France, whose population is nevertheless integrated into the capitalist cosmos to an unprecedented extent. In fact, systemic constraints on actors are insufficient on their own to elicit their engagement.²¹ Duress must be internalized and justified; and this is the role sociology has traditionally assigned to socialization and ideologies. Contributing to the reproduction of the social order, they have in particular the effect of enabling people not to find their everyday universe uninhabitable – one of the conditions of a durable world. If, contrary to prognoses regularly heralding its collapse, capitalism has not only survived, but ceaselessly extended its empire, it is because it could rely on a number of shared representations – capable of guiding action – and justifications, which present it as an acceptable and even desirable order of things: the only possible order, or the best of all possible orders. These justifications must be based on arguments that are sufficiently strong to be accepted as self-evident by enough people to check, or overcome, the despair or nihilism which the capitalist order likewise constantly induces – not only in those whom it oppresses but also, on occasion, in those who have responsibility for maintaining it and, via education, transmitting its values.

The spirit of capitalism is precisely the set of beliefs associated with the capitalist order that helps to justify this order and, by legitimating them, to sustain the forms of action and predispositions compatible with it. These justifications, whether general or practical, local or global, expressed in terms of virtue or justice, support the performance of more or less unpleasant tasks

and, more generally, adhesion to a lifestyle conducive to the capitalist order. In this instance, we may indeed speak of a *dominant ideology*, so long as we stop regarding it as a mere subterfuge by the dominant to ensure the consent of the dominated, and acknowledge that a majority of those involved – the strong as well as the weak – rely on these schemas in order to represent to themselves the operation, benefits and constraints of the order in which they find themselves immersed.²²

While, following the Weberian tradition, we put the ideologies on which capitalism rests at the centre of our analyses, we shall employ the notion of the spirit of capitalism in a way that departs from canonical usages. In fact, in Weber the notion of spirit takes its place in an analysis of the 'types of practical rational behaviour', the 'practical incentives to action',²³ which, constitutive of a new *ethos*, made possible a break with traditional practices, generalization of the tendency to calculation, the lifting of moral condemnations of profit, and the switch to the process of unlimited accumulation. Our perspective – intent not upon explaining the genesis of capitalism but on understanding the conditions in which it can once again secure for itself the actors required for profit creation – will be different. We shall set aside the predispositions towards the world required to participate in capitalism as a cosmos – means–end compatibility, practical rationality, aptitude for calculation, autonomization of economic activities, an instrumental relation to nature, and so on – as well as the more general justifications of capitalism produced in the main by economic science, which we shall touch on later. Today, at least among economic actors in the Western world, they pertain to the common skills which, in accordance with institutional constraints imposed as it were from without, are constantly reproduced through processes of familial and educational socialization. They constitute the ideological platform from which historical variations can be observed, even if we cannot exclude the possibility that changes in the spirit of capitalism sometimes involve the metamorphosis of certain of its most enduring aspects. *Our intention is to study observed variations, not to offer an exhaustive description of all the constituents of the spirit of capitalism.* This will lead us to detach the category of spirit of capitalism from the substantial content, in terms of *ethos*, which it is bound up with in Weber, in order to treat it as a form that can contain different things at different points in the development of the modes of organizing firms and processes of extracting capitalist profit. We shall thus seek to integrate some very diverse historical expressions of the spirit of capitalism into a single framework, and pose the question of their transformation. We shall highlight the way in which an existence attuned to the requirements of accumulation must be marked out for a large number of actors to deem it worth the effort of being lived.

We shall, however, remain faithful throughout this historical journey to the methodology of Weberian ideal types in systematizing and underlining what

seems to us to be specific about one epoch by comparison with those that preceded it, and in attaching more importance to variations than constants, but without ignoring the more stable features of capitalism.

Thus, the persistence of capitalism, as a mode of co-ordinating action and a lived world, cannot be understood without considering the ideologies which, in justifying and conferring a meaning on it, help to elicit the good will of those on whom it is based, and ensure their engagement – including in situations where, as is the case with the developed countries, the order they are integrated into appears to rest virtually in its entirety on mechanisms congruent with capitalism.

What the spirit of capitalism is composed of

When it comes to lining up reasons for being in favour of capitalism, one candidate immediately presents itself: none other than economic science. From the first half of the nineteenth century down to the present, have not those in charge of capitalist institutions initially looked to economic science, and particularly its dominant currents – classical and neo-classical – for justifications? The strength of the arguments they found there stemmed precisely from the fact that they were presented as non-ideological, not directly dictated by moral motives, even if they involved reference to end results generally conformable to an ideal of justice for the best and of well-being for the greatest number. As Louis Dumont has shown, the development of economic science, whether classical economics or Marxism, contributed to constructing a representation of the world that is radically novel compared with traditional thinking, marking 'the radical separation of the economic aspects of the social fabric and their constitution as an autonomous domain'.²⁴ This made it possible to impart substance to the belief that the economy is an autonomous sphere, independent of ideology and morality, which obeys positive laws, ignoring the fact that such a conviction was itself the product of an ideological endeavour, and that it could have been formed only by incorporating – and then partially masking by scientific discourse – justifications whereby the positive laws of economics are in the service of the common good.²⁵

In particular, the view that the pursuit of individual interests serves the general interest has been the object of an enormous, incessant labour, which has been taken up and extended throughout the history of classical economics. This separation between morality and economics, and the incorporation into economics in the same gesture of a consequentialist ethics,²⁶ based upon the calculation of utilities, made it possible to supply a moral sanction for economic activities solely by dint of the fact that they are profitable.²⁷ If we may be allowed a rapid summary, for the purposes of explaining the development of the history of economic theory which interests us here more clearly, it can be said that the incorporation of utilitarianism into economics made it

possible to regard it as self-evident that 'whatever served the individual served society. By logical analogy, whatever created a profit (and thereby served the individual capitalist) also served society.'²⁸ In this perspective, regardless of the beneficiary, increased wealth is the sole criterion of the common good.²⁹ In its everyday usage, and the public pronouncements of the agents mainly responsible for explaining economic activities – heads of firms, politicians, journalists, and so on – this vulgate makes it possible to combine individual (or local) profit and overall benefit, in a way that is at once sufficiently tight and sufficiently vague to circumvent demands for justification of the activities that contribute to accumulation. It regards it as self-evident that the specific – but not readily calculable – moral cost (devotion to the passion for material gain) of establishing an acquisitive society (a cost that still preoccupied Adam Smith) is amply offset by the quantifiable benefits of accumulation (material goods, health, etc.). It also allows it to be argued that the overall increase in wealth, regardless of the beneficiary, is a criterion of the common good, as is attested on a daily basis by the presentation of the health of a country's firms, measured by their profit rate, their level of activity and growth, as a criterion for measuring social well-being.³⁰ This enormous social labour, performed in order to establish individual material advancement as a – if not the – criterion of social well-being, has allowed capitalism to wrest unprecedented legitimacy, for its designs and mainspring were thus legitimated simultaneously.

Works of economic science likewise make it possible to argue that, as between two different economic organizations geared to material well-being, capitalist organization is the most efficient. Free enterprise and private property in the means of production in fact introduce competition, or a risk of competition, into the system from the outset. And from the moment it exists, competition, without even having to be pure and perfect, is the surest means for customers to benefit from the best service at the lowest cost. Likewise, although they are orientated towards capital accumulation, capitalists find themselves obliged to satisfy consumers in order to achieve their own ends. Thus it is that, by extension, competitive private enterprise is always deemed more effective and efficient than non-profit-making organizations (but this at the undisclosed price of transforming the art lover, the citizen, the student, children with respect to their teachers, from recipients of social services into ... consumers); and that the privatization and maximum commodification of all services appear to be the socially optimal solution, since they reduce the waste of resources and require anticipation of customers' expectations.³¹

To the themes of utility, general well-being and progress, which have been available for mobilization in virtually unchanged fashion for two centuries, and to the justification in terms of incomparable efficiency when it comes to supplying goods and services, we must obviously add the reference to the emancipatory power of capitalism and political freedom as the collateral of economic freedom. The kinds of arguments advanced here refer to the

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liberation represented by wage-earning by comparison with serfdom, the room for freedom permitted by private property, or the fact that in the modern age political liberties have only ever existed sporadically in any country which was openly and fundamentally anti-capitalist, even if they are not possessed by every capitalist country.³²

Obviously, it would be unrealistic not to include these three central supporting pillars of capitalism – material progress, effectiveness and efficiency in the satisfaction of needs, and a mode of social organization conducive to the exercise of economic freedom compatible with liberal political regimes – in the spirit of capitalism.

But, precisely by virtue of their very general and stable character over time, these reasons³³ do not seem to us to be sufficient to engage ordinary people in the concrete circumstances of life, especially working life, or to equip them with the resources in terms of arguments that allow them to face the condemnation or criticism which might be personally addressed to them on the spot. It is not obviously the case that individual wage-earners genuinely rejoice because their labour serves to increase the nation's GDP, makes it possible to improve the well-being of consumers, or because they are part of a system that creates room for free enterprise, for buying and selling. And this, to put it no higher, is because they find it difficult to make the connection between these general benefits and the living and working conditions they, and those close to them, experience. Unless people become directly wealthy by making the most of the possibilities of free enterprise – something that is reserved for a small minority – or, thanks to a job they willingly chose, achieve sufficient financial comfort to take full advantage of the consumer opportunities offered by capitalism, too many mediations are wanting for the suggestion of engagement to fire their imagination,³⁴ and become embodied in the deeds and gestures of everyday life.

By comparison with what (paraphrasing Weber) might be called professorial capitalism, which trots out neo-liberal dogma from on high, the expressions of the spirit of capitalism of interest to us here must be integrated into descriptions that are sufficiently substantial and detailed, and contain adequate *purchase*, to 'sensitize' those to whom they are addressed. In other words, they must both coincide with people's moral experience of daily life and suggest models of action they can grasp. We shall see how management discourse, which aims to be formal and historical, general and local, which mixes general precepts with paradigmatic examples, today constitutes the form *par excellence* in which the spirit of capitalism is incorporated and received.

This discourse is first and foremost addressed to *cadres*, whose support for capitalism is particularly indispensable for running firms and creating profits. The high level of commitment demanded of them cannot be obtained purely through duress; moreover, less subject to immediate necessity than blue-collar workers, they can mount passive resistance, engage only reluctantly, even

undermine the capitalist order by criticizing it from within. There is also the risk that the offspring of the bourgeoisie, who constitute the quasi-natural breeding ground for the recruitment of *cadres*, will *defect*, to use Hirschman's term,³⁵ heading for occupations that are less integrated into the capitalist mechanism (the liberal professions, arts and sciences, public service), or even partially withdraw from the labour market – especially since they possess various resources (educational, patrimonial and social).

In the first instance, capitalism must therefore perfect its legitimating apparatus with respect to *cadres* or future *cadres*. If, in the ordinary course of working life, a majority of them are persuaded to subscribe to the capitalist system because of financial constraints (notably fear of unemployment, especially if they are in debt and responsible for a family), or the classical mechanisms of sanctions and rewards (money, various benefits, career ambitions, etc.), it is plausible to reckon that the exigencies of justification are particularly developed in periods like the present. Such periods are characterized by strong numerical growth in the category, with the arrival in firms of numerous young *cadres* from the education system, whose motivation is weak and who are in search of normative incentives;³⁶ and, on the other hand, by profound developments compelling experienced *cadres* to retrain – something that is easier if they can give meaning to the changes of direction imposed upon them, and experience them as freely undertaken.

Being simultaneously wage-earners and spokesmen for capitalism, particularly with respect to the other members of firms, *cadres* are, on account of their position, privileged targets of criticism – especially from their subordinates – and are themselves often inclined to lend it an attentive ear. They cannot make do with the material benefits granted them, and must also have arguments to justify their position and, more generally, the selection procedures from which they emerged, or which they themselves employ. One of the constraints on their justification is the preservation of a culturally tolerable distance between their own condition and that of the workers whom they have to manage. (This was demonstrated, for example, at the turn of the 1970s by the reluctance of a number of young engineers from the *grandes écoles*, trained in a more permissive fashion than earlier generations, to supervise unskilled and semi-skilled workers who were assigned highly repetitive tasks and subject to harsh factory discipline.)

The justifications of capitalism that interest us here are thus not so much those referred to above, which capitalists or academic economists might elaborate for external consumption, particularly in the political world, but first and foremost those addressed to *cadres* and engineers. Now, if they are to be effective, the justifications in terms of the common good that they require must be based on localized criteria. Their judgements refer to the firm they work for and the extent to which the decisions taken in its name are defensible as regards their consequences – in the first instance, for the common good of

the wage-earners it employs, and then for the common good of the geographical and political community it forms part of. Unlike liberal dogmas, these localized justifications are subject to alteration, because they must conjugate concerns formulated in terms of justice with practices bound up with historical states of capitalism, and the specific ways of making profit in any particular period. They must at one and the same time stimulate an inclination to act and provide assurance that the actions thus performed are morally acceptable. At any moment in time, the spirit of capitalism is thus expressed in a certainty imparted to *cadres* about the 'right' actions to be performed to make a profit, and the legitimacy of these actions.

Over and above the justifications in terms of the common good they need in order to respond to criticism and explain themselves to others, as Weberian entrepreneurs *cadres*, and especially young *cadres*, require personal reasons for commitment. To make commitment to it worthwhile, to be attractive, capitalism must be capable of being presented to them in the form of activities which, by comparison with alternative opportunities, can be characterized as 'stimulating' – that is to say, very generally, and albeit in different ways in different periods, as containing possibilities for self-realization and room for freedom of action.

However, as we shall see more clearly later, this expectation of *autonomy* comes up against another demand, with which it is often in tension, corresponding this time to an expectation of *security*. In fact, capitalism must also be able to inspire *cadres* with confidence about the prospects of enjoying the well-being it promises them over the long term (as long, if not longer, than the alternative social situations they have abandoned), and of guaranteeing their children access to positions that allow them to preserve the same privileges.

In terms that vary greatly historically, the spirit of capitalism peculiar to each age must thus supply resources to assuage the anxiety provoked by the following three questions:

- How is committed engagement in the processes of accumulation a source of enthusiasm, even for those who will not necessarily be the main beneficiaries of the profits that are made?
- To what extent can those involved in the capitalist universe be assured of a minimum of security for themselves and their children?
- How can participation in capitalist firms be justified in terms of the common good, and how, confronted with accusations of injustice, can the way that it is conducted and managed be defended?

The different historical states of the spirit of capitalism

The changes in the spirit of capitalism that are currently emerging, to which this book is devoted, are certainly not the first. Over and above the kind of archaeological reconstruction to be found in Weber's work of the *ethos* that

inspired the original capitalism, we possess at least two stylized or typological descriptions of the spirit of capitalism. Each of them defines the different components identified above and indicates, for its time, what an inspiring adventure capitalism could represent: how it seemed to be the bearer of solid foundations for building the future, and of responses to expectations of a just society. It is these different combinations of autonomy, security and the common good that we shall now evoke very schematically.

The first description, undertaken at the end of the nineteenth century – in novels as much as the social sciences proper – is focused on the person of the bourgeois entrepreneur and a description of bourgeois values. The image of the entrepreneur, the captain of industry, the conquistador,³⁷ encapsulates the heroic elements of the portrait,³⁸ stressing gambles, speculation, risk, innovation. On a broader scale, for more numerous social categories the capitalist adventure is embodied in the primarily spatial or geographical liberation made possible by the development of the means of communication and wage-labour, which allow the young to emancipate themselves from local communities, from being enslaved to the land and rooted in the family; to escape the village, the ghetto, and traditional forms of personal dependence. In return, the figure of the bourgeois and bourgeois morality afford elements of security in an original combination, combining novel economic propensities (avarice or parsimony, the spirit of saving, a tendency to rationalize daily life in all its aspects, development of capacities for book-keeping, calculation, prediction) with traditional domestic predispositions: the importance attached to the family, lineage, inheritance, the chastity of daughters in order to avoid misalliances and the squandering of capital; the familial or patriarchal nature of relations with employees³⁹ – what will subsequently be denounced as paternalism – whose forms of subordination remained largely personal in firms that were generally small in size; the role accorded charity in relieving the sufferings of the poor.⁴⁰ As for justifications aspiring to greater generality and referring to constructions of the common good, they owed less to economic liberalism, the market,⁴¹ or scientific economics, whose diffusion remained fairly limited, than to a belief in progress, the future, science, technology, and the benefits of industry. A vulgar utilitarianism was employed to justify the sacrifices required by the market in pursuit of progress. Precisely this amalgam of very different, even incompatible propensities and values – thirst for profit and moralism, avarice and charity, scientism and familial traditionalism – which is at the root of the bourgeois self-division François Furet refers to,⁴² underlay what was to be most unanimously and enduringly denounced in the bourgeois spirit: its hypocrisy.

A second characterization of the spirit of capitalism was most fully developed between the 1930s and the 1960s. Here, the emphasis is less on the individual entrepreneur than on the organization. Centred on the development at the beginning of the twentieth century of the large, centralized and

bureaucratized industrial firm, mesmerized by its gigantic size, its heroic figure is the manager.⁴³ Unlike the shareholder seeking to increase his personal wealth, he is preoccupied by the desire endlessly to expand the size of the firm he is responsible for, in order to develop mass production, based on economies of scale, product standardization, the rational organization of work, and new techniques for expanding markets (marketing). Particularly 'exciting' for young graduates were the opportunities offered by organizations for attaining positions of power from which one could change the world and, for a large majority, liberation from need, the fulfilment of desires thanks to mass production and its corollary: mass consumption.

In this version, the security dimension was supplied by a faith in rationality and long-term planning – the priority task for managers – and, above all, by the very gigantism of the organizations, which constituted protective environments not only offering career prospects, but also taking care of everyday life (subsidized accommodation, holiday camps, training bodies), modelled on the army (a type of organization of which IBM represented the paradigm in the 1950s and 1960s).

As for the reference to a common good, it was provided in coming to terms not only with an ideal of industrial order embodied by engineers – belief in progress, hope invested in science and technology, productivity and efficiency – that was even more resonant than in the earlier version; but also with an ideal which might be described as civic in the sense that the stress fell on institutional solidarity, the socialization of production, distribution and consumption, and collaboration between large firms and the state in pursuit of social justice. The existence of salaried managers and the development of categories of technicians, 'organizers'; the construction in France of the category of *cadres*;⁴⁴ the increase in the number of owners constituted by legal entities rather than actual persons; or the limits introduced into ownership of firms with, in particular, the development of rights for wage-earners and the existence of bureaucratic rules restricting employers' prerogatives as regards workforce management – these developments were interpreted as so many indices of a profound change in capitalism, marked by an attenuation of class struggle, a separation between the ownership of capital and control of the firm, which was transferred to the 'technostructure',⁴⁵ and as signs of the appearance of a new capitalism, propelled by a spirit of social justice. We shall have frequent occasion to return to the specificities of this 'second' spirit of capitalism.

Changes in the spirit of capitalism thus proceed in tandem with profound alterations in the living and working conditions, and the expectations – whether for themselves or for their children – of workers, who play a role in the process of capitalist accumulation in firms, without being its privileged beneficiaries. Today, the security supplied by academic qualifications has diminished, retirement pensions are under threat, and careers are no longer guaranteed. The

mobilizing power of the 'second spirit' is in question, while the forms of accumulation have once again been profoundly transformed.

If our analysis is accepted, one probable ideological trend in the current situation can be identified, since it is based upon the system's capacity for survival and restricted to adjustments within the framework of the capitalist regime – from which, following the end of the communist illusion, no feasible exits exist for now – not even in theory. It is the formation in the developed countries of a spirit of capitalism that is more capable of attracting support (and hence also more directed towards justice and social well-being), with a view to seeking to regalanize workers and, at a minimum, the middle class.

The 'first' spirit of capitalism – associated, as we have seen, with the figure of the bourgeois – was in tune with the essentially familial forms of capitalism of an age when gigantic size was very rarely sought after. Owners and employers were personally known to their employees; the fate and life of the firm were closely associated with those of a family. As for the 'second' spirit, which was organized around the central figure of the director (or salaried manager) and *cadres*, it was bound up with a capitalism of large firms, already sufficiently imposing for bureaucratization and the use of an abundant, increasingly academically qualified managerial staff to be a central element. But only some of them (a minority) may be characterized as multinationals. Shareholding became more impersonal, with numerous firms finding themselves detached from the name and destiny of a particular family. The 'third' spirit, in its turn, will have to be isomorphic with a 'globalized' capitalism employing new technologies, to cite only the two aspects most frequently mentioned as characteristic of capitalism today.

The way out of the ideological crisis that set in during the second half of the 1930s, with the loss of momentum of the first spirit, could not have been predicted. The same is true of the crisis we are currently experiencing. The need to restore meaning to the accumulation process, and combine it with the requirements of social justice, comes up in particular against the tension between the collective interest of capitalists as a class and their particular interests as atomized operators competing in a market.⁴⁶ No market operator wants to be the first to offer a 'good life' to those he hires, since his production costs would thereby be increased, and he would be at a disadvantage in the competition pitting him against his peers. On the other hand, the capitalist class as a whole has an interest – especially where *cadres* are concerned – in overall measures that make it possible to retain the commitment of those on whom profit creation depends. We may thus reckon that the formation of a third spirit of capitalism, and its embodiment in various mechanisms, will depend largely upon the interest multinationals, which are currently dominant, have in the preservation of a peaceful zone at the centre of the world system, maintained as a breeding ground for *cadres*, where the latter can develop, raise children, and live in security.

The origin of the justifications incorporated into the spirit of capitalism

We have mentioned how important it is for capitalism to be able to rely on a justificatory apparatus attuned to the concrete forms taken by capital accumulation in a given period, which indicates that the spirit of capitalism incorporates schemas other than those inherited from economic theory. These schemas, while they permit defence of the principle of accumulation in abstraction from all historical specificity,⁴⁷ lack sufficient mobilizing power.

But capitalism cannot find any resources within itself with which to justify grounds for commitment and, in particular, to formulate arguments directed towards a demand for justice. In fact, capitalism is doubtless the sole – or at least the main – historical form organizing collective practices to be completely detached from the moral sphere, in the sense that it identifies its purpose in itself (capital accumulation as an end in itself) and not by reference, not simply to a common good, but even to the interests of a collective entity such as a people, a state, or a social class. Justification of capitalism thus assumes reference to constructions of a different order, whence derive requirements that are quite distinct from those imposed by the pursuit of profit.

To maintain its powers of attraction, capitalism therefore has to draw upon resources external to it, beliefs which, at a given moment in time, possess considerable powers of persuasion, striking ideologies, even when they are hostile to it, inscribed in the cultural context in which it is developing. The spirit sustaining the accumulation process at a given point in history is thus imbued with cultural products that are contemporaneous with it and which, for the most part, have been generated to quite different ends than justifying capitalism.⁴⁸

Faced with a demand for justification, capitalism mobilizes 'already-existing' things whose legitimacy is guaranteed, to which it is going to give a new twist by combining them with the exigency of capital accumulation. Accordingly, it is pointless to search for a clear separation between impure ideological constructs, intended to serve capitalist accumulation, and pure, utterly uncompromised ideas, which would make it possible to criticize it. Frequently, the same paradigms find themselves engaged in condemnation and justification of what is condemned.

We can compare the process whereby ideas that were initially alien – even hostile – to capitalism were incorporated into it with the process of acculturation described by Dumont, when he shows how the dominant modern ideology of individualism was diffused by forging compromises with pre-existing cultures. From the encounter and clash between two sets of ideas-values, new representations are born that are a 'a sort of synthesis, which may be more radical or less so, a sort of alloy of the two kinds of ideas and values, the ones being of holistic inspiration, and autochthonous, the others being borrowed from the predominant individualistic configuration'. One remarkable effect of this acculturation is that 'the individualistic representations do not by any means

get diluted or become less pungent as they enter into those combinations. Quite to the contrary, they become more adaptable and even stronger through these associations with their contraries.⁴⁹ If we transpose this analysis to the study of capitalism (whose principle of accumulation goes hand in glove with individualistic modernity), we shall see how the spirit that drives it possesses two aspects, one 'turned inside', as Dumont puts it – that is to say, in this context, turned towards the accumulation process, which is legitimated – and the other turned towards the ideologies with which it is imbued, which furnish it with precisely what capitalism lacks: reasons for participating in the accumulation process that are rooted in quotidian reality, and attuned to the values and concerns of those who need to be actively involved.⁵⁰

In Dumont's analysis, the members of a holistic culture confronted with an individualistic culture find themselves under challenge, and feel the need to defend themselves, justify themselves, in the face of what seems to them like a critique and a challenge to their identity. In other respects, however, they can be attracted by the new values, and the prospects of individual liberation and equality afforded by these values. Out of this process of attraction–resistance–search for self-justification, new compromise representations are generated.

The same observations may be made about the spirit of capitalism. It is transformed to respond to the need for justification by people who are engaged in the capitalist accumulation process at a given moment, but whose values and representations, inherited as a cultural legacy, are still associated with earlier forms of accumulation – with traditional society in the case of the birth of the 'first spirit', or with a previous spirit in the case of the transition to subsequent spirits of capitalism. What is at stake is making the new forms of accumulation attractive to them (the *exciting* dimension of any spirit), while taking account of their need to justify themselves (by relying on reference to a common good), and erecting defences against those features of the new capitalist mechanisms that they perceive as threatening the survival of their social identity (the security dimension).

In many respects, the 'second spirit' of capitalism, constructed at the same time as the supremacy of the large industrial firm became established, has characteristics that would have been disowned by neither communism nor fascism, which were nevertheless the most powerful movements critical of capitalism at the time when this 'second spirit' began to be instituted.⁵¹ Economic *dirigisme*, a common aspiration, was to be implemented by the welfare state and its planning bodies. Mechanisms for consistent control of the allocation of value added between capital and labour were put in place with national accounting,⁵² which is consistent with Marxist analyses. As for the hierarchical *modus operandi* in force in large, planned firms, it would long retain the stamp of a compromise with traditional domestic values – something that could only serve to reassure traditionalist reaction. Respect and

deference in return for welfare and assistance formed part of the hierarchical contract in its traditional forms – much more so than wages in exchange for work, which encapsulates the liberal, Anglo-American manner of conceiving the employment relation. In this way, the principle of boundless accumulation found some points of convergence with its enemies, and the resulting compromise guaranteed capitalism its survival by offering hesitant populations the opportunity to participate in it more enthusiastically.

Cities as normative supports for constructing justifications

Inasmuch as they are subject to an imperative of justification, social arrangements tend to incorporate reference to a kind of very general convention directed towards a common good, and claiming universal validity, which has been modelled on the concept of the *city*.⁵³ Capitalism is no exception to this rule. What we have called the spirit of capitalism necessarily contains reference to such conventions, at least in those of its dimensions that are directed towards justice. In other words, considered from a pragmatic point of view, the spirit of capitalism assumes reference to two different logical levels. The first contains an agent capable of actions conducive to profit creation, whereas the second contains an agent equipped with a greater degree of reflexivity, who judges the actions of the first in the name of universal principles. These two agents obviously denote the same actor, described as capable of engaging in operations of increasing generality. Without this competence, it would in fact be impossible for actors to understand the critiques directed at capitalism in so far as it is profit-orientated, or to construct justifications to foil such critiques.

In view of the central character of the concept of the city here, we are now going to go back over the work where the model of cities was presented. The concept of the city is orientated towards the question of justice. It is intended to be modelled on the kind of operations that actors engage in during disputes with one another, when they are faced with a demand for justification. This demand for justification is inextricably linked to the possibility of critique. The justification is necessary to back up the critique, or to answer it when it condemns the unjust character of some specific situation.

To characterize what is meant by justice here, and in order to give ourselves the opportunity to compare seemingly very different disputes with one and the same notion, we shall say that disputes over justice always have as their object the ranking of *status* in a situation.

To explain what we understand by status, let us take a trivial example – for instance, the problem of distributing the food between those who are present at a meal. The issue of the order in which the dish is offered to guests is unavoidable, and has to be settled publicly. Unless the significance of this sequence is neutralized by the introduction of a rule adjusting the temporal order to a spatial order (everyone serves themselves in turn, ‘without any fuss’), the temporal

sequence lends itself to being interpreted as an order of precedence according to the comparative status of the persons, as in serving the elderly first and children last. But observance of this order can present tricky problems, and give rise to disputes when several different principles of ranking order are in opposition. If the sequence is to run smoothly, the guests must therefore be in agreement about the comparative status of people as disclosed by the order they are served in.⁵⁴ Yet this agreement on status presupposes a more fundamental agreement on a *principle of equivalence*, by recourse to which the status of those present can be established. Even if the principle of equivalence is not explicitly mentioned, it must be sufficiently clear and present in everyone’s mind for the episode to unfold naturally. These principles of equivalence are designated by the term *principes supérieurs communs*, borrowed from Rousseau.

These principles of status cannot emerge from a local, contingent arrangement. Their legitimacy depends upon their robustness – that is to say, their capacity for validity in an a priori unlimited number of particular situations, bringing together beings with the most varied qualities. That is why the principles of equivalence that have a claim to validity in a society at a given point in time are orientated, in some sense by their very structure, towards universal validity.

If, at a given point in time, a multiplicity of legitimate forms of status exists, their number is nevertheless not unlimited. Six logics of justification, six ‘cities’, have been identified in contemporary society. To define them, the work we are basing ourselves on here shuttled between two types of sources. On the one hand, there were empirical data collected by fieldwork on conflicts and disputes; supplying a corpus of arguments and situational mechanisms, this guided intuition towards the kind of justifications often used in everyday life. On the other hand, there were constructions, systematically developed in political philosophy, which possess a high level of logical coherence; this allows them to be put to profitable use in the task of modelling shared competence.⁵⁵

In the *inspirational city*, high status pertains to the saint who achieves a state of grace, or the artist who receives inspiration. It reveals itself in the clean body prepared by asceticism, whose inspired manifestations (holiness, creativity, artistic sense, authenticity, etc.) constitute the privileged form of expression. In the *domestic city*, high status depends upon people’s seniority in a chain of personal dependencies. In a system of subordination established on a domestic model, the political bond between beings is conceived as a generalization of the generational link, combining tradition and proximity. The ‘great man’ is the elder, the ancestor, the father, to whom respect and fidelity are due, and who vouchsafes protection and support. In the *reputational city*, high status depends exclusively on the opinion of others – that is to say, on the number of people who confer their trust and esteem. The ‘great man’ in the *civic city* is the representative of a collective whose general will he expresses. In the *commercial city*, the ‘great man’ is he who enriches himself by supplying highly

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MANAGEMENT DISCOURSE IN THE 1990s

Our intention here is to bring out the profound transformation in the spirit of capitalism over the last thirty years: the abandonment of the specific ideological features characteristic of its second embodiment, and the emergence of a new image of firms and economic processes. The aim of this transformation was to provide those whose commitment is indispensable for the expansion of capitalism – the successors to *cadres* – with self-evident reasons for the ‘right actions’ (markedly different, as we shall see, from the recommendations made in the 1960s); a discourse legitimating these actions; encouraging prospects for individual development; the chance for people to project themselves into a future that was restructured in line with the new rules of the game; and the suggestion of new modes of reproduction for the children of the bourgeoisie, and upward social mobility for others.

I. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

Management literature as prescription for capitalism

In order to carry out this project, we shall use management literature addressed to *cadres*.¹ This literature, whose main objective is to inform *cadres* of the latest developments in running firms and managing human beings, emerges as one of the main sites in which the spirit of capitalism is inscribed.

As the dominant ideology, the spirit of capitalism theoretically has the ability to permeate the whole set of mental representations specific to a given era, infiltrating political and trade-union discourse, and furnishing legitimate representations and conceptual schemas to journalists and researchers, to the point where its presence is simultaneously diffuse and general. From among its possible expressions, we have selected management literature as a medium offering the most direct access to the representations associated with the spirit of capitalism in a given era. Within this literature we have, moreover, restricted ourselves to non-technical writings that aim to offer general new managerial mechanisms of a sort to inspire a firm’s operations as a whole. We have

therefore excluded specialist literature dealing only, for example, with marketing, production management or accounting, in order to concern ourselves with what might be called 'management in general', whose boundaries with the discipline of entrepreneurial policy and strategy on the one hand, and human resources management on the other, are sometimes very tenuous.

Following the example of the spirit of capitalism, which presents two faces – one turned towards capital accumulation, the other towards legitimating principles – management literature can be read on two different levels. We certainly find in it a source of new methods of profit-making and novel recommendations to managers for creating firms that are more efficient and more competitive. But management literature is not purely technical. It is not composed only of practical recipes for improving the productivity of organizations as one improves the performance of a machine. It simultaneously has a high moral tone, if only because it is a normative literature stating what should be the case, not what is the case. Consequently, we may legitimately pose the question of the realism of this literature, and hence how believable it is when it comes to what 'really' happens in firms. And it is true that, although they are usually packed with numerous examples and based on case studies, management texts cannot replace survey materials, whether monographs on firms or statistical surveys. They make no claim to be exhaustive. Their orientation is not constative, but prescriptive. In the manner of edifying books or manuals of moral instruction, they practise the *exemplum*, select the cases employed according to their demonstrative power – what is to be done as opposed to what is not to be done – and take from reality only such of its aspects as confirm the orientation to which they wish to give some impetus. But it is precisely in so far as they constitute one of the main vehicles for the diffusion and popularization of normative models in the world of enterprise that they are of interest to us here.

As a public literature intended to elicit support for the precepts it states and the engagement of a large number of actors – first and foremost *cadres*, whose zeal and conviction are decisive in the smooth running of firms – management literature cannot be exclusively orientated towards the pursuit of profit. It must also justify the way profit is obtained, give *cadres* arguments with which to resist the criticisms that are bound to arise if they seek to implement its abundant recommendations, and to answer the demands for justification they will face from their subordinates or in other social arenas. Management literature must therefore demonstrate how the prescribed way of making profit might be desirable, interesting, exciting, innovative or commendable. It cannot stop at economic motives and incentives. It must also be based on normative aims, taking into account not only personal aspirations to security and autonomy, but also the way these aspirations can be attached to a more general orientation to the common good. Were it not for this, it would be impossible to understand why the transmission of operational modes for organizing firms is, in the work of

some authors, glorified by a lyrical, even heroic style, or defended by numerous, heteroclit references to noble and ancient sources such as Buddhism, the Bible and Plato, or to contemporary moral philosophy (Habermas in particular).

It is likewise important for our subject to recall that the birth of management literature coincided, at the beginning of the century,² with the emergence of the new social body of salaried managers and administrators (later referred to by the term 'manager' or, in France, *cadre*). The operational management of large firms was progressively transferred to them, as owners withdrew to the role of shareholders, except where they themselves became salaried senior management.³ From the outset management was thus intended for those who, following the crisis of the 1930s, were to become the new heroes of the economy and the principal addressees of the second spirit of capitalism. Management, which is presented as the systematization of practices within firms and their inscription in general rules of behaviour, gradually enabled a professionalization of supervision. Regarded as one of the founding fathers of the discipline, Henri Fayol wanted to perfect an 'administrative doctrine' that made it possible on the one hand to claim that management was a profession with its own rules, thus consummating the break with leadership whose legitimacy derived from ownership, and on the other to pave the way for a professional education. It is not surprising that *cadres* recognized their own aspirations in this eulogy to professionalism and competence (against the legitimacy of patrimony that was the reference-point for the first spirit of capitalism), as in the importance assigned to education. Hence the second spirit of capitalism finds its most natural expression in management literature. Consequently, it is reasonable to suppose that such literature will likewise register changes and a trend towards other representations, or at least that it will echo the breakdown of the spirit of which it was the main vehicle.

Our choice is, moreover, consistent with that of Werner Sombart or Max Weber. Sombart refers to the books of Leon Battista Alberti, whom he considers the perfect exemplar of the bourgeois of the *Quattrocento*, on 'family government'.⁴ And Weber supplies a preliminary description of the spirit of capitalism by citing the writings of Benjamin Franklin ('Necessary Hints to Those That Would Be Rich', 'Advice to a Young Tradesman', 'Memoirs').⁵ These texts and the management literature we use belong to one and the same literary genre: works of advice and edification concerning the conduct of business (or the family economy).

The choices of Weber and Sombart are also explained by the impact of the works they used, and this refers us today to the question of the impact of management literature on practice. Granted that realism is not a major feature of the texts studied – since their aim is to state what should be, not what is – it is nevertheless of some relevance to know to what extent they are read, are influential, and are thereby able to influence practices in the way intended by their authors. Failing this, they would not constitute an adequate object for

studying the establishment of a new dominant ideology. To do things properly, we would have to know the figures for the diffusion, reading, and utilization in teaching of the texts concerned. In the absence of institutional sources, however, this represents an extremely onerous task. We have skirted round this problem by not choosing a limited number of texts, like our illustrious predecessors, but constructing corpora with many more authors, which afford a representative panorama of the writings of a given period. Moreover, a reading of these texts discloses a high degree of homogeneity in the discourse and, in each of the periods considered, its general organization around a limited number of themes – to the extent that it might be wondered, faced with the marginal variation in the texts, whether such a profusion of texts is justified. This is doubtless the best indication of their ideological character with a vocation to become dominant. Their ideas are taken up, repeated, conveyed by various examples, pass nimbly from one relay to another (from one management journal to the next, from one author or editor to another, from management literature to the professional press for *cadres*, from the written word to lessons and specialist radio broadcasts). The upshot is that it is extremely difficult to attribute paternity of these bodies of rhetoric to authorial authorities. Their differences, which are often minimal, have the effect of offering various actors different ways of getting a handle on the orientations the authors seek to communicate, and identifying with them. As is no doubt the case with any body of texts that is performative in intent, particularly when the number and diversity of persons to be convinced are great, variation on a few mandatory themes constitutes a condition for effectively transmitting a message that can be broadcast only by being adjusted appropriately.

We have therefore constituted two corpora comprising sixty texts each. The first corpus appeared in the 1960s (1959–69), the second in the 1990s (1989–94); and both deal, in whole or part, with the question of *cadres*, even if the latter are sometimes referred to by different terms (*manager*, *directeur*, *chef*, *dirigeant*, etc.). For each of the periods under consideration, these two corpora make it possible to bring out a typical image of what was recommended to firms as regards the type of *cadre* to employ, the way they should ideally be treated, and the kind of work that might appropriately be asked of them. Appendix 1 sets out the characteristics of the texts analysed, while Appendix 2 presents a bibliography of each corpus. The corpora thus constructed (more than a thousand pages) have been processed in two phases. In the first instance, we submitted them to a traditional analysis based on an extensive reading that aimed at an initial location of their authors' concerns, the solutions they proposed to the problems of their period, the image they offered of the inherited forms they declared to be outdated, and the various arguments advanced to effect the conversion of their readers. In a second phase, we used the analytical software Prospero@ (see Appendix 3) to corroborate our hypotheses and confirm, by means of specific indicators running through the body of texts, that our analysis did indeed reflect

the general state of the corpus (not a personal bias with respect to certain themes that risked exaggerating their importance), and hence the general state of management literature in the relevant years.

The option adopted is basically comparative. Emphasis has been placed on the differences between the two corpora, whereas constants have been paid less attention.⁶ Dumont observed that the comparative method is the most effective one in the study of ideologies, especially when they pertain to the world the analyst is immersed in, and their salient elements are difficult to identify without an external point of comparison.⁷ Here that point will be provided by historical distance. Besides, the image of their era reflected by the 1960s texts is decidedly different from what the 1990s texts have to say about it. Once again, we should not ask this kind of literature to afford us a balanced panorama of the past, since its aim is to suggest improvements, and hence to break up some of the mechanisms derived from established practices. It selects, and consequently magnifies, the factors it is rebelling against, ignoring features that might be more enduring and no less important.

Analysing a change that is in the process of being effected, and in some respects remains embryonic, exposes one to the risk of being accused of naivety, even of complicity with one's object. It is true that in its modern forms – social evolutionism, prediction, futurology – prophecy has often been a powerful tool of mobilization and action. It can help to bring about what it describes (the self-fulfilling prophecy) or, in the case of certain prophecies of calamity, support reactionary opposition to reforms.⁸ From this viewpoint, one unmasks the 'ideological' character (in the sense of illusion, even deception) of some analysis of change, where those who promote it are simply taking their own desires or anxieties for reality. Positivist versions of this challenge often rely on a statistical description of reality. Descriptions of change are supposedly based on an illusion that takes the part for the whole and extrapolates from deliberately selected, unrepresentative cases, to impose a vision of the future for which serious empirical study of the current reality offers not the slightest confirmation.

Thus, it will perhaps be objected that what we describe on the basis of management literature greatly exaggerates features that only marginally affect the operation of firms. The series of indicators assembled in Chapter 4, however, shows that there has already been considerable implementation of the mechanisms described in the literature. Moreover, it will be seen there that we do not possess all the requisite statistical data to bring out the relevant changes. The apparatus of statistical description rests, in fact, on equivalents that are homologous to those used in the established tests on which social selection mainly depended in the previous state. Hence – structurally, as it were – it does not constitute the most adequate tool for recording and counting the new forms of test, particularly when they are established gradually, under the impact of micro-displacements.

In addition, there is a mass of historical examples of descriptions of change that cannot, a posteriori, be said to have been without foundation, even though they were based on fragmentary, partial evidence – which furnished reasons for discrediting them in the name of factual realism. Thus, as Pierre Ansart has shown, Proudhon, spokesman for the artisans – who were a large majority in mid-nineteenth-century France – was statistically right against Marx, whose proletarian utopia seemed to be grounded in circumstances that were not prevalent at the time.⁹ Criticizing Peter Laslett for slighting the role played by the English East India Company and the Bank of England prior to the eighteenth century, Fernand Braudel writes as follows:

[t]hese are familiar arguments: every time the volume of a leading sector is compared to the total volume of the whole economy, the larger picture reduces the exception to more modest or even insignificant proportions. I am not entirely convinced. The important things are those that have consequences and when these consequences amount to the modernizing of the economy, the 'business model' of the future, the accelerated pace of capital formation and the dawn of colonization, we should think more than once about them.¹⁰

When it is read for the purpose of deriving ideal types of the spirit of capitalism in the two periods, one of the striking features of management literature is a persistent concern with mobilizing and motivating personnel, especially *cadres*. 'How can we give work in firms some meaning?' is one of the central questions for the two generations, albeit in different ways. This signal fact is all we need to confirm us in our choice of sources for identifying transformations in the spirit of capitalism.

Texts focused on the mobilization of *cadres*

In the 1960s, what concerned our authors was motivating *cadres*, whereas in the 1990s, knowing how to engage them is treated as only one particular instance of the problems involved in mobilizing all employees.

In the 1960s, there were various grounds for anxiety about the engagement of *cadres*. People wondered how the finest offspring of the bourgeoisie were to be enrolled in the service of capitalism: for example, the directors of business schools expressed concern over the 'weak attraction of business to elites', states Marvin Bower, director of the consultancy firm McKinsey and former president of the Harvard Business School (Bower, 1966). There was also a desire to obtain their unqualified positive involvement,ⁱ or to avoid

i 'You can buy someone's time, you can buy their physical presence in a given place, you can even buy a certain number of muscular movements an hour or a day. But you cannot buy loyalty – the devotion of hearts and minds. These things have to be earned', explains Fernand Borne (1966).

people of 'talent' and 'great value' resigning to go to other firms that satisfied their aspirations better. A majority of the management texts dealing with *cadres* in the 1960s seeks solutions to involving the personnel whom 'the value of firms' consists in. It is said that their aspirations are not satisfied,ⁱⁱ that they 'expect more from their work', that 'through their work they want to play a useful role in society, to develop, to progress', and that 'the question is whether firms, with their traditional managerial style, are responding properly to these aspirations, and whether *cadres* feel that they can make a success of their life and not waste it' (Froissart, 1969). The pervasiveness in the texts of the time of works on motivation by the human relations school (with such mascot authors as Maslow, Herzberg or McClelland) bears witness to this general concern.

Thirty years later, it seems that the problems have not changed much ('[e]very organization is in competition for its most essential resource: qualified, knowledgeable people': Drucker, 1992). But the problems of mobilization have increased as a result of redundancies or restructurings that are painful for the workforce.ⁱⁱⁱ

In both periods, it is recognized that profit is not a very inspiring goal.^{iv} *Cadres* initially, in the 1960s, and then the workforce as a whole in the 1990s, wanted 'genuine reasons' for engaged commitment. 'If it is to attract high-caliber men from the colleges and graduate schools – let alone develop them into productive executives – every business leader must somehow demonstrate that his company and others *do* contribute to society – that business does more than just make money', we can read in Bower's work of 1966. In 1990, it is noted that '[i]n contrast to previous generations, [people] feel that a salary alone is small compensation if they have a sense that their work isn't contributing to the greater good' (Waterman, 1990). Thus, the firm must be 'a site for creating meaning, for shared goals, where everyone can simultaneously develop their personal autonomy and contribute to the collective project' (Genelot, 1992). For 'as Jean Giono said, "the main thing isn't to live, but to have a reason for living"'. However, he added: "and that isn't easy"' (Bellenger, 1992).

ii 'The role they want to play exceeds what they are offered. ... This factual discrepancy, perhaps this time lag between declaration and aspiration, this ambiguity and discrepancy would appear to explain the discomfort of their current situation. ... Hence the difficulties currently being experienced by management: *cadres* are a problem' (Aumont, 1963).

iii 'The attempt to reduce the workforce through productivity increases, the outsourcing of jobs and the relocation of manpower lead to a social fragmentation of economic actors and the risk of a rupture in the traditional socio-affective relationship between a firm and its wage-earners' (HEC, 1994).

iv 'The same strategies executed unwisely and without concern for the organizational and human consequences will not produce continuing business benefits – especially if people withhold effort and commitment for fear of being displaced or to hedge their own bets against change' (Moss Kanter, 1992).

v 'It no longer goes without saying, for example, that the workforce conceives profit as the legitimate goal of the organization' (Blake and Mouton, 1964).

Thus giving a meaning to wage-labour, a spirit to capitalism, does indeed constitute an important concern on the part of management authors. We shall now examine what they proposed by way of response in each period.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MANAGEMENT PROBLEMATIC FROM THE 1960S TO THE 1990S

To bring out the changes in the spirit of capitalism over the last thirty years, we shall tackle the following points for each period in turn: (a) What problems do the authors pose? These indicate the way that problems are broached and analysed in a given period, and the implicit *a priori*s that underly them. (b) What responses and solutions do they offer? (c) What aspects of the situation they are dealing with do they reject? In fact, the imposition of a new managerial norm is nearly always accompanied by criticism of a prior state of capitalism and a previous way of making profit, both of which must be abandoned to make way for a new model. We shall thus see that the management texts of the 1960s explicitly or implicitly criticize familial capitalism, whereas the principal foil of the 1990s texts is large, hierarchized, planned organizations. Criticism of the old *savoir faire* and habits, which are presented as outmoded, is the way in which the relation between past and present functions in this literature bereft of historical memory.

The 1960s: Pleas for target management

In the management literature of the 1960s, two problems are tackled as a matter of priority: on the one hand, *strong dissatisfaction on the part of cadres*, and on the other, *managerial problems bound up with the giant size of firms*.

Cadres, who (it is tirelessly repeated) are what a firm's value consists in, are not happy confined to the roles they play: first, that of technical expert – the typical *cadre* of the period was an engineer – and second, that of management relay, transmitting orders from above and taking up problems from below. They aspire to share decision-making power, to be more autonomous, to understand managerial policies, to be informed of the progress of business. This theme is present in numerous 1960s texts.^v

v 'Recognized in their role as a technical relay, *cadres* demand much more ... they feel unduly inserted into a rigid context: they feel that they are regimented and that they are suffocating ... they often complain about the narrowness of their room for initiative; they find it difficult to tolerate not being extended broad trust' (Aumont, 1963).

'*Cadres* aspire more to "co-management". ... They suffer from not "knowing more about the situations on the basis of which objectives are fixed" and from not having "more real contact with the employer". ... They think that the authority of their [bosses] would remain intact and even be strengthened if, rather than operating mysteriously, they acted in such a way as to elicit from their subordinates the maximum number of "voluntary acts conducive to the execution of decisions taken at the top"' (Bloch-Lainé, 1963).

The history narrated to us refers to the emergence of *cadres* as a new social body accompanying the growth of firms. The separation of ownership and management was a veritable commonplace at the time, but there is still a need to refer to it, whereas the theme would be completely absent thirty years later. This was also because the desire for a detachment from family capitalism had been fulfilled by then, and it was no longer necessary to define what, by comparison with the owner-manager, was the still relatively novel category in postwar France of salaried managers.

In the 1960s, *cadres* have a sense of embodying modernity, but feel cramped – especially the young, more academically qualified among them – by structures that have developed without a change in the centralized, quasi-autocratic managerial mode characteristic of small and medium-sized firms. Managers have simply added further levels of hierarchy, without conceding one iota of power. This analysis explains why the demand for autonomy by *cadres* is often accompanied by a description of the perverse effects of large bureaucratic machines.^{vi}

In addition, large firms inspire fear. They are presented as an enclave threatening freedom in democratic countries. If the rule of the small firm could seem like the realm of freedom, observers ponder the effects of bureaucratization on the distinctive value of the West in contrast to the communist bloc.^{vii} From this point of view, the capitalist firm seems to share the same drawbacks as the collectivized or fascist firm.^{viii}

The solutions to such problems are termed *decentralization*, *meritocracy* and *management by objectives*. The essential goal of the battle conducted by the 1960s

vi 'In large firms, the boss maintains contact with departmental heads, but loses contact with those who carry out orders: his orders follow the hierarchical route; they are communicated and recommunicated many times, and are sometimes distorted in the process – or get held up, at any rate. Since individual initiative is not welcome, orders from on high must be numerous and detailed: paper rules. ... The attitude of the workforce becomes passive. ... The individual is now only a cog in an anonymous whole, subject not to human beings but to regulations' (Borne, 1966).

'Gigantism always entails greater formality in relationships, from regulated formulas to a profusion of printed forms. It is even the case in some departments that individuals are known, represented and handled only via the numbered and encoded punched holes of a rectangle of cardboard. ... At this point, it obviously becomes difficult for them to keep their eyes fixed on the firm's ultimate goal' (Colin, 1964).

vii 'As our business organizations have grown in size, limitations on individual freedom have become a matter of national concern. As John Garner says: "Every thoughtful man today worries about the novel and subtle restraints placed on the individual by modern large-scale organization. ... A modern society is – and must be – characterized by complex organization. It is not a matter of choice. We must cope as best we can with the pressures that large-scale organization places on the individual"' (Bower, 1966).

viii 'But all these methods are merely "techniques" that have little effect if they are not inspired by a "democratic" mentality on the part of managers. Moreover, this serious problem is as prevalent in collectivist-style firms as in capitalist firms' (Borne, 1966).

'These financial, mechanical and productivist mentalities have been reproduced in different doctrines by different political regimes. I do not need to remind you of national socialism, or refer you to Stakhanovism, for you to recognize in Berlin or Moscow what Detroit, with Ford, had already taught' (Devaux, 1959).

authors is to impose these new managerial methods. Management by objectives emerges as an especially effective mechanism for giving *cadres* the autonomy they desire, and for decentralizing decision-making in such a way as to limit the disadvantages of bureaucratic gigantism, since decisions will then be taken close to those concerned. All *cadres* find themselves granted autonomy, but this remains firmly controlled: on the one hand, by job descriptions that permit detailed specification of the margin of autonomy conceded; on the other, by fixing targets for them in line with the firm's general policy. *Cadres* will henceforth be appraised by their realization of these targets – that is to say, by the degree of success in their work, not by kowtowing to superiors. They will be given a certain autonomy in organization, resources will be allocated to them, and they will be monitored on the basis not of each individual decision, but of the overall outcome. Thanks to this ingenious mechanism, employers retain control while implementing the reforms deemed necessary by consultants. *Cadres* thereby gain autonomy, and firms will be able to profit from a workforce that is motivated once again.^{ix}

Management by objectives has the further advantage of furnishing clear and reliable criteria for measuring performance, on which career management can then be based. Promotion will be given to those who meet their targets – that is to say, are effective – and not according to 'subjective criteria' that are deemed unjust. Management literature in the 1960s wants to sound the death knell of arbitrariness in personnel management. This is bound to motivate *cadres*, who will feel that they are being treated fairly.^x

The subsequent extension of management by objectives in large firms, and the wealth of detail and practical advice given by management authors, indicate that the stylized images and models of excellence that feature in management literature cannot be reduced to ideology, in the sense of a merely superficial discourse aiming – in order, for example, to satisfy the expectations of a new public – to present a mode of organization and management in a new light, while concealing its reproduction in identical form. The new managerial norm accompanies a set of measures intended to establish new mechanisms in firms. Even though, at the time these texts were written, such mechanisms were not as prevalent as some of their authors claimed, they were nevertheless in place, to varying degrees, in enough enterprises, and represented a sufficient break with old habits, to make this intense effort to

ix 'There is presumably no business executive who works harder or more effectively than the successful individual proprietor of his own business in a free enterprise economy. He works with zest and determination. ... The payoff comes in accomplishment, not in effort ... the challenge to large-scale enterprise is to create the work situation that puts every executive on his own as much as possible ... the most successful companies achieve this by making every executive responsible and accountable for his own decisions and actions' (Bower, 1966).

x 'The system of sanctions must help to instil a rational order in firms, by ensuring that the fate of the efficient person differs from that of the inefficient one. This difference of treatment plays a key role in creating and maintaining efforts towards good administration, the motivation to manage things well' (Gélinier, 1966).

explain and justify them necessary. As expressed in this literature, the spirit of capitalism is thus in a dialectical relationship with mechanisms whose implementation it accompanies and facilitates.

The operating models and styles that serve as *foils* in the 1960s all pertain, to varying extents, to the *logic of the 'domestic world'*. What is rejected is consideration of 'personal judgements' – an open invitation to nepotism – in decisions about promotion, in favour of 'impersonal judgement' on the basis of results.^{xi} The new appraisal systems equally aim to abolish preferment on grounds of seniority, which rewards only loyalty – domestic value *par excellence* – not efficiency, and also to reduce the (unjust) role played by social relationships in career success.^{xii}

Moreover, it is with these themes that discussion of the 'French case' becomes most specific. The elimination of forms of behaviour pertaining to a domestic logic is an urgent task in old Europe – particularly in France, which is still imbued with a feudal past of allegiances and privileges. Survivals of the Ancien Régime are ubiquitous, and the *coup de grâce* must be administered forthwith, emulating the example of the United States: the latter had the good fortune never to experience such constraints, and had been constructed as a society of equals from the outset. The adoption of American methods, which are more democratic but also more efficient, is felt to be a matter of survival in France, for the power of the United States is such that French authors fear being unable to resist an economic invasion (achieving 'American efficiency', but 'without colonization' [Froissart, 1969]). See also Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber's 1967 work, *Le défi américain*, which is entirely given over to this theme.^{xiii}

xi 'In fact, it is too often the case that judgements of this kind are more a reflection of the idea one has of someone than an assessment of their results. And the great weakness of this formula lies in an absence of performance criteria linked to job responsibilities ... *cadres* are repelled by being treated on the basis of their superiors' opinion of them. They start off by suspecting them of favouritism and end up asking for their results to be measured by more tangible criteria and by quantifiable goals that are plausible and trustworthy' (Patton and Starcher, 1965).

'Potential review is particularly susceptible to the "halo effect" where the boss, sometimes quite unconsciously, overestimates a man's qualities because they have common interests, or "He's always been a good chap"' (Humble, 1968).

xii 'In France, a certain conservatism has long governed the pace of advance according to seniority, loyalty and, it must be said, social relationships (in which birth and class opinions weigh more than character)' (Bleton, 1967).

xiii 'This accounts for the difference in attitude between European and American workers. In a young society like that of the United States, the weight of traditions and "hereditary" privileges is less than in Europe. ... In an old society like Europe, social barriers are important, the persistence of privileges greater, and class conflict deeper' (De Woot, 1968).

'At this level, we observe in most traditional societies a tendency ... to classify human beings in stable categories (social or mandarin castes), to revere stability, to make each person's destiny dependent upon those of his characteristics that are deemed essential, rather than on his practical adaptation to efficient action' (Gélinier, 1966).

'Compared with European businesses, most American companies already have a large element of self-government. Perhaps this is because, as [Clement] Greenwalt indicated, our business methods incorporate in some measure the spirit of the American Revolution as reflected in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. ... In any event, European business practice typically calls for stricter control and more detailed instructions from the top' (Bower, 1966).

In the 1960s, the premium put on merit is coupled in those with the strongest convictions with a critique of academic qualifications when they procure lifelong advantages.^{xiv} It must be noted that on this point at least, the reformists of the period failed, since the criticism has come down to us virtually unchanged.

Even if the point is not always dealt with explicitly in management literature, legitimation of *cadres* has as its negative converse the delegitimation of traditional employers, with criticism of their meanness, authoritarianism and irresponsibility. Especially denigrated are small employers, accused of abusing their property rights, confusing the firm's interests with those of their family, incompetent members of which are put in responsible positions,^{xv} and endangering not only their own firm but society as a whole, by ignoring modern techniques for managing organizations and marketing products. This operation of symbolic separation between salaried *cadres* on the one side and patrimonial employers on the other – in conformity with the diffusion of theories of the firm opposing managers to owners – had, moreover, existed from the category's origin. Following the 1936 strikes, the first unions for *cadres*, derived from engineers' associations, had been compelled to exclude employers from their ranks and recognize the validity of a distinction that had hitherto been irrelevant for them. Management literature in the 1960s thus accompanies the transition from a patrimonial bourgeoisie centred on the personal firm to a bourgeoisie of managers, who are salaried, academically qualified, and integrated into large public or private managements.¹¹

Comparison with the 1990s allows us to clarify this sketch. The 1960s project aimed at the liberation of *cadres* and relaxation of the bureaucracy that developed out of the centralization and growing integration of ever larger firms. The 1990s project was to present itself as a continuation of this process, taking up the themes of anti-bureaucratic struggle and autonomy. Even so, the 1960s proved respectful of the 'profession of boss'. Emancipation of *cadres* occurs against the background of a hierarchy that goes unchallenged. There are recommendations to clarify it,^{xvi} not to add reactionary symbols of

xiv 'In practice, we have seen that employers, lacking objective criteria for assessing the abilities of *cadres*, and obliged to rely on their intuition as to individuals' personal worth, assign undue importance to academic qualifications – as if having one day succeeded in a competition were irrefutable proof of a capacity to hold senior positions in the hierarchy' (Froissart, 1969).

xv 'The unimpressive curriculum vitae of some employers' sons might be caricatured as follows: unexacting study – the father thinks his own case demonstrates that study is not of much use; after completing military service, the son enters Papa's firm and spends two years doing the rounds of the departments – three months in each department to see (like a tourist) what goes on there without assuming any responsibilities; then he is given an ill-defined managerial task (organization, supervision of administration), or – worse still – his father makes him take his place in his office, so as to be directly associated with management problems (whereas the young man lacks the requisite basic experience); given that his duties as a barely competent management assistant afford him free time, he is charged with various tasks representing the firm and ultimately, at the age of 35, unless he has a strong personality, he has been deformed rather than formed' (Gélinier, 1963).

xvi '[It is necessary] to determine *authority relationships* among positions. ... This will ensure that every person knows who his boss is, who his subordinates are, and what type and extent of authority he is subject to and can exercise' (Bower, 1966).

domination to it,^{xvii} to avoid bypassing subordinates by addressing their teams directly.^{xviii} But suppression or circumvention of hierarchy is never recommended. On the contrary, the point is to base it on merit and responsibility, and give it a new legitimacy by stripping it of the domestic ties that render it both inefficient and unjust.

It will likewise be observed that the project of the 1960s was largely realized, since the texts from those years that we have read frequently contain forms of deference and expressions of authority pertaining to the domestic world, which have subsequently disappeared from management literature. The difficulties of extricating oneself from the domestic world, even for advocates of change, once again clearly demonstrate the anchorage of management literature in a reality whose forms are to be transformed (it is not merely a matter of manipulating signs). Moreover, they confer sincerity on the authors in their reformist desire, since they carefully, more or less unconsciously, sift out what it is advisable to preserve, what they are attached to, and what it is important to reject in their domestic heritage.

Thus, for example, Octave Gélinier (1963), future director-general of the consultancy firm Cegos, where he has worked as trainer and engineering consultant since 1947, convinced liberal and tireless advocate in France of management by objectives, devotes several pages to the thorny question of 'making *cadres* redundant'. Ultimately, we are given to understand, it is important to make a *cadre* who has committed a few misappropriations, however minor, redundant, even if that *cadre* is competent and efficient; contrariwise, it is unjust to do the same thing to an 'old servant who has become inefficient'.^{xix} These are two infringements of the principle of efficiency – one in the name of morality, the other in the name of loyalty. Gélinier nevertheless has every opportunity to conceal them afterwards by invoking the risk of demotivating other *cadres* in the firm and, consequently, referring to an efficiency constraint after all: the rhetorical argument that 'ethics pays'. This was to enjoy a vogue with the business ethics movement in the 1990s (in which Gélinier himself took a very active part), and is an indirect way, frequently employed in management texts, of introducing moral references without appearing to impede the profit imperative. What makes this text of Gélinier's strikingly dated is not the nature of the dilemmas faced, which remain

xvii 'The position held in the organization chart is sufficient indication of seniority ranking without such pointless symbols as different office furniture. To minimize these symbols is not to abolish the notion of hierarchical ranks, which is inherent in firms because some functions are more essential than others when it comes to realizing objectives or because some people contribute more than others to fixing these objectives' (Hughes, 1969).

xviii 'Having defined the remit and powers of his subordinates, the head must not interfere in these delegated domains' (Hugonnier, 1964).

xix 'Purely and simply dismissing this old servant, who is one of the firm's founders morally speaking, rejecting him like a tool that has become useless, is to perform a bad deed which, moreover, will create a disastrous climate of insecurity among *cadres*: it is therefore unacceptable' (Gélinier, 1963).

altogether current, but the fact that he devotes several pages to them. Making *cadres* redundant, which still represented a problem for this author, generally appears much more legitimate in management literature today. At the outset shocking, the 'major restructurings' of the 1980s ended up making redundancies accepted as 'normal' acts of management. And if the unemployment of *cadres* is present in the 1990s corpus, the question of redundancy is ignored.

As another indication of the pervasiveness of the domestic world even among those who struggle to be rid of it, we shall cite Louis Allen (1964), who peppers his plea for decentralization with remarks intended to preserve managerial power. Thus, a manager inspires and encourages, but can just as legitimately have recourse to power, and *cadres* must not be led to believe that they can decide everything and comment on everything just because they are permitted to 'participate'.^{xx}

The 1990s: Towards a model of the firm as network

Depending on the angle they are considered from, the questions posed by authors in the 1990s appear different or identical. They are identical inasmuch as they take up the critique of bureaucracy begun in the 1960s and press it to a conclusion: hierarchy is a form of co-ordination to be excluded in that it is based on domination; it is now a question of liberating not only *cadres* but all wage-earners. They are different in so far as new themes, such as competitive pressures and consumer demand, become central.

The rejection in the 1990s of hierarchy (which, following economists of transaction costs, characterizes the 'organization' in so far as it differs from the 'market') is all the more striking in that the readership of the authors concerned basically consists of the *cadres* of large groups and multinationals, which, notwithstanding all their efforts, will have difficulty dispensing with hierarchies. The grounds invoked to justify this anti-hierarchical charge are often moral in character, and partake of a more general refusal of dominant-dominated relations.^{xxi} They are also related to an ineluctable process of social evolution: human beings no longer want to be ordered about, or even to give orders.^{xxii}

xx 'Don't create expectations! Not all decisions require participation. If your team cannot make a logical and rational contribution, do not ask for their ideas. People whose ideas are solicited often infer that their proposals will be automatically accepted and implemented. Do not arouse pointless expectations. Explain clearly how far you can go: it will be worth it' (Allen, 1964).

xxi 'The organization chart and the pyramidal hierarchy ... indicate those who know how to "manage" and those who can and must "manage", as opposed to those who do not know and who cannot. Even with the best will in the world, in such conditions a relationship of mutual contempt is bound to be established between the two categories of people, since those who "do not know how to and cannot" are, in fact, rendered inferior and infantilized from the outset' (Aktouf, 1989).

xxii 'The irresistible tendency towards freedom of choice in all domains fuels, together with a growing individualism, a demand for personal autonomy and its possibility. The era of

For others, a general rise in educational levels explains why hierarchy has become an outdated mode of organization.^{xxiii}

If hierarchy is a favourite target, attacks are equally directed against planning, deemed to be rigid and based on coldly quantitative data that do not take account of the 'true reality'; and, against all instances, associated with authority (employers, bosses, orders, etc.). Pejorative comparisons with the army are sometimes used, preferably containing a reference to non-commissioned officers – objects of repulsion, symbols of authoritarian petty tyrants – whereas in the 1960s the military metaphor, which was very rare, pointed in the direction of the officer serving his country, in line with a theme that was very prevalent in the 1930s to 1950s (see, for example, Lamirand's *Le Rôle social de l'ingénieur*, modelled on Lyautey's *Le Rôle social de l'officier*). Never exclusively critical, the 1990s management authors imagine, as we shall see later, a number of new organizational forms that take the maximum distance from hierarchical principles, promising formal equality and respect for individual liberties.

Another striking feature of the 1990s is that the themes of competition and constant, ever more rapid technological change – already present in the 1960s – assume unprecedented salience. In virtually all the texts, we find advice on implementing the flexible, inventive organization that will be able to 'ride' all 'waves', adapt to all the changes, always have a workforce that is up to date with the most recent knowledge, and secure a permanent technological advantage over competitors. While the objective in the 1960s was to make bureaucracies more flexible, the literature refrained from challenging basic principles – for example, the unity of command so dear to Fayol. In the 1990s, subversion of the hierarchical principle refers instead to a 'big bang', in the words of the veteran guru Peter Drucker who, having been a highly esteemed promoter of management by objectives in the 1960s, now aims to turn organizations 'upside down'. Another key figure in management literature, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, explains to us that it is henceforth necessary to 'teach giants (the multinationals) to dance' (the title of her 1989 bestseller is *When Giants Learn to Dance* [Moss Kanter, 1990]).

This obsessive attention to adaptation, change, 'flexibility', is based upon a series of phenomena that left a deep impression on people's psyches from the end of the 1970s, and which the authors reintroduce, without any scrutiny,

adjutants is over. Not only do subordinates no longer accept authority, but superiors themselves are less and less capable of assuming it precisely when there is a need for more discipline to respond to the complexity of the environment's demands' (Crozier, 1989).

xxiii 'Because the modern organization consists of knowledge specialists, it has to be an organization of equals, of colleagues and associates. No knowledge ranks higher than another; each is judged by its contribution to the common task rather than by any inherent superiority or inferiority. Therefore, the modern organization cannot be an organization of boss and subordinate. It must be organized as a team' (Drucker, 1992).

under the theme of increased competition. However, it is important to recall them, since they are constitutive of the image of the world conveyed by our authors.

In the 1960s, management regarded as self-evident a representation of the world that can be schematically set out as follows: on one side there was the free, capitalist world – Western Europe and the United States, the other countries being largely absent from the picture – and on the other, there were the socialist countries with a planned economy. Within the free world, American domination was overwhelming, and Europe was scarcely emerging from a reconstruction that it was able to complete so rapidly only thanks to American aid. Thus, if we omit Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber's text, which contains a futurology on the economic development of all the world's countries at the dawn of 2000,^{xxiv} we find not a single mention of a country in Africa, Latin America or Asia (not even Japan) in the 1960s corpus. France is the country cited most often, with 51 mentions (which is not surprising, given the character of the corpus), followed by the United States (19), Germany (5), the Soviet Union (3) and Italy (3). The other countries referred to are mentioned only once.

Things are different in the 1990s. On the new map of the world, we find the 'old capitalist countries' confronting the emergence of a third capitalist pole in Asia. First place here goes to Japan, whose success in penetrating the American market provoked genuine shock and fuelled a large number of managerial changes, followed by the four dragons (Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong). In the mid-1980s, it was still possible to think that they would long remain the only newcomers. But although there is no trace of it in our corpus, which stops in 1994, added to them over the course of the 1990s were those Third World countries that abandoned the policy of development via import substitution in favour of competition with the developed countries and exports, thus imitating the successful formula of Japan and the four dragons. (This was the case in Asia to begin with, then Latin America, and, after the Berlin Wall came down, in ex-communist countries seemingly converted to capitalism.) The African continent remains absent from the dominant picture. Thus, in the 1990s corpus, Black Africa and Latin America are just as conspicuous by their absence (a single reference to Brazil). Contrariwise, Asia enters in force with 24 mentions (14 of them for Japan), and the countries of Western Europe have a greater presence: Germany (13),

xxiv 'The *post-industrial* societies will be, in this order: the United States, Japan, Canada, Sweden. That is all. The *advanced industrial* societies that have the potential to become post-industrial include: Western Europe, the Soviet Union, Israel, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Australia and New Zealand. The following nations will become *consumer societies*: Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, Colombia, South Korea, Malaysia, Formosa, and the other countries of Europe. The rest of the world – China, India, most of South America, the Arab countries, and Black Africa – will not even have reached the industrial stage' (Servan-Schreiber, 1967).

Italy (6), Switzerland (5), Spain, Ireland and Sweden (3 each), the other countries being mentioned only once. France with 84 mentions, and the United States with 24, have likewise increased their presence. The Soviet Union (or the countries descended from it) and the ex-Eastern bloc countries have disappeared. The development of the references to countries in the two corpora furnishes a good gauge of 'globalization' (quite relative) in the image management authors construct of it.

The active participants in the capitalist mechanism of competition, so we are told, will soon no longer number some hundreds of millions of people, but several billion.¹² With this image in the forefront, authors from the developed countries make competition a major part of their argument – all the more so because slower growth over the last twenty-five years, and the rise in unemployment, reinforce their conviction that economic development has become more difficult and economic struggle ruthless.

Furthermore, the constant progress in information technology, sound and image (the 'virtual') is frequently invoked, and represents the standard example to which technological development in its entirety supposedly conforms.

The mechanisms proposed by authors in the 1990s to face the challenges they identify comprise an impressive miscellany of managerial innovations. We may nevertheless attempt to articulate them around some key ideas: *lean* firms working as *networks* with a multitude of participants, organizing work in the form of teams or *projects*, intent on customer satisfaction, and a general mobilization of workers thanks to their leaders' *vision*.

We have transposed the term 'lean firm' from 'lean production', which was invented at the start of the 1990s to encapsulate a set of new production methods, partially drawn from observation of Japanese firms – Toyota, in particular.¹³ Among these methods we may cite organizational principles like just-in-time, total quality, the process of continual improvement (Kaizen), autonomous production teams; and a series of tools to implement them, such as quality circles, which represent the oldest of the principles popularized in the West, quality assurance of suppliers, SMED, TPM, KanBan, 5S, proposals for improvement, and so on.¹⁴ The lean, 'streamlined', 'slimmed-down' firm has lost most of its hierarchical grades, retaining between three and five only, and consigning whole layers of hierarchy to unemployment.^{xxv} It has also parted with a large number of operations and tasks by subcontracting anything that does not form part of its core business^{xxvi} – sometimes to former employ-

xxv 'There is a whole arsenal of techniques for streamlining managerial structures. The most frequently employed is "de-layering", which involves simply abolishing one or more hierarchical layers. One also finds, and often in tandem with the first approach, increasing the span of control, which comes down to assigning more people to the management of a smaller number of *cadres*, moving from the traditional ratio of 1 *cadre* for between 6 and 10 employees to a ratio, regarded as acceptable today, of 1 *cadre* for 20 or even 30 employees' (Aubrey, 1993).

xxvi '[Companies] contract out for some services, turning to suppliers that are specialists in that area and reducing the need for the company to manage activities largely unrelated to their

ees who have set up their own firms (hiving off). As for its investments, increasingly it makes them in collaboration with other firms by means of 'alliances' and 'joint ventures'.^{xxvii} So prevalent is this that the standard image of the modern firm today is of a slim core surrounded by a conglomeration of suppliers, subcontractors, service providers, temporary personnel making it possible to vary the workforce according to the level of business, and allied firms. It is then said to operate as a network.^{xxviii}

The workers themselves, we are told, must be organized in small, multi-tasked teams (for they are more skilled, more flexible, more inventive and more autonomous than the specialist departments of the 1960s). Their real employer is the customer, and they have a co-ordinator, not a boss.^{xxix}

The process of transforming the old organization to align it with this model is called *re-engineering* (Hammer and Champy, 1993). In addition, the teams are not exclusively composed of the firm's permanent workforce. In them are also to be found suppliers, clients, consultants and outside experts. And the members of a team do not necessarily operate together physically, for progress in telecommunications allows them to work at a distance.^{xxx} Here again work is said to occur in a *network*, for the firm's boundaries become blurred, with the organization now seeming to comprise nothing more than a mass of more

core business competence; and they convert some service departments into "businesses" that compete with external suppliers to sell their wares both inside and outside the company. Such organizational changes allow post-entrepreneurial companies to do more with less, because their staffs are smaller, their fixed costs are lower' (Moss Kanter, 1990).

xxvii 'Some organizations are turning themselves nearly inside out – buying formerly internal services from outside suppliers, forming strategic alliances and supplier–customer partnerships that bring external relationships inside' (Moss Kanter, 1989).

xxviii 'Organizations are evolving towards a model made up of three series of elements: a permanent central core composed of managerial personnel and possessors of what is called strategic *savoir faire* (i.e. which cannot be delegated outside); a network form of organization, rather than one with the traditional hierarchies; and a series of satellite supplier subsystems (firms or individuals working from a distance), with varying certainty of business (and employment)' (HEC, 1994).

xxix 'An upside-down view of the organization chart will be used, where customers are at the top, those who work with customers are next, and those who work for those who provide service to customers are at the bottom. ... The role of management is to support those who are dealing directly with customers' (Tapscott and Caston, 1993).

'Process teams, consisting of one person or many, don't need bosses; they need *coaches*. ... Traditional bosses design and allocate work. Teams do that for themselves. Traditional bosses have little to do in a reengineered environment. Managers have to switch from supervisory roles to acting as facilitators, as enablers and as people whose jobs are the development of people and their skills so that those people will be able to perform value-adding processes themselves' (Hammer and Champy, 1993).

xxx 'Information and data communications technologies separate the site and moment of production of the face-to-face service from support, preparation and back-office activities. Thus people will work less and less "in the office". Working in the factory on a permanent basis will be a borderline case. Here again there is no reason for the legacy of the industrial and technological age to become permanently established. Plenty of *cadres*, representatives, servicing agents, teachers work far removed from their employer. The "virtual" firm has arrived' (Morin, 1994).

or less enduring contractual links. The development of new products thanks to simultaneous engineering (Midler [1993] refers to 'co-operative' engineering) is the stock example of the ideal team, which by definition is innovative, multiple, open to the outside world, and focused on the customer's desires. Teams are a locus of self-organization and self-monitoring.

Thanks to these new mechanisms, the hierarchical principle is demolished and organizations become *flexible, innovative* and highly *proficient*. Compared with integrated hierarchical organizations, organization in networks, which allows firms to be rid of a costly hierarchy that served merely as a management 'relay', and contributed no 'value added to the customer', is also thought to procure an economic advantage bound up with specialization. The integrated large firm undertakes a very broad set of functions. It cannot improve its performance in all tasks simultaneously. It must therefore keep in-house only those operations where it possesses a competitive advantage – its core business – and outsource the other operations to subcontractors who are better placed to optimize them. It maintains close and enduring ties with these subcontractors, continually negotiating terms and conditions, and exercising control over production (for example, by the regular presence on the subcontractor's premises of personnel from the firm placing the orders). The more rapid circulation of information and innovation facilitated by specialization is bound to be universally profitable. In fact, whereas in the integrated large enterprise each department works exclusively for the firm of which it is a unit, the subcontractor (at least when it is not subject to a single principal) must resolve the various problems posed by the demands of different customers. With the learning effects and transfer of information between different (and potentially) competing firms it induces, this enhances the general level of information and *savoir faire*. In very general terms, these analyses foreground the importance of information as a source of productivity and profit. They therefore present themselves as particularly well suited to an economic universe where the main source of value added is no longer the exploitation of geographically located resources (like mines, or especially fertile land), or the exploitation of a labour force at work, but the ability to take full advantage of the most diverse kinds of knowledge, to interpret and combine them, to make or circulate innovations, and, more generally, to 'manipulate symbols', as Reich puts it (1991).

But the thorny problem of management remains unresolved, for our authors do not abandon the idea that firms still exist. Firms have not been completely dissolved into networks. They develop strategies of competitive struggle opposing them to other multinationals (in those markets where they do not collaborate). All the *self-organized, creative* beings on whom performance now depends must be guided in a direction decided only by a few, but without reverting to the 'hierarchical bosses' of yesteryear. This is where *leaders* and their *visions* come into the picture. Vision has the same virtues as the spirit of

capitalism, for it guarantees the workers' commitment without recourse to compulsion, by making everyone's work meaningful.^{xxxii}

Thanks to this shared *meaning*, to which all subscribe, everyone knows what they must do without having to be told. Firm direction is given without resorting to orders, and employees can continue to organize themselves. Nothing is imposed on them since they subscribe to the project. The key point in this mechanism is the *leader*, who is precisely the one with a capacity for *vision*, who knows how to communicate it and get others to support it.^{xxxiii} This is doubtless the weakest link in the new mechanisms, for everything rests on the shoulders of an exceptional being; and it is not always clear how to train or even recruit such beings, especially in sufficient numbers, since every firm needs them. More broadly, neo-management is filled with exceptional beings: proficient at numerous tasks, constantly educating themselves, adaptable, with a capacity for self-organization and working with very different people. And in the final analysis, we are not told very much about the contribution of firms to the development of such a class of workers: firms are going to become 'learners', skills management is going to become a key issue, and some new professions are conjured into existence, like the 'coach', whose role is to supply personalized support, making it possible for everyone to develop their full potential. In the version that strives hardest to give 'coaches' an institutional position, the latter are responsible for training.^{xxxiv}

Given the set of reforms proposed by management authors, it is hardly surprising that we find *cadres*, as the 1960s conceived them, largely on the way out. The very term *cadre*, which suggests hierarchy and status, is rejected. *Cadres* are now regarded as agents of the very bureaucracies that are to be dismantled. In these discourses, the status of *cadre* is treated, either explicitly or (invariably) implicitly, as an archaism whose rigidity obstructs the developments under way.^{xxxiv}

xxxii 'The richest, most inspiring visions are those that possess meaning, that respond to aspirations' (Bellenger, 1992).

'Vision confers meaning; it points to the future; it transcends short-term objectives by integrating them into a whole. Filling people with enthusiasm, vision is not only a mission, but also a powerful magnet. Like major challenges, vision revitalizes collective capacity' (Crozier and Sérieyx, 1994).

xxxiii 'The leader is the person who is invested in by the group, the person in whom, whether consciously or unconsciously, everyone recognizes themselves. Thanks to his influence, capacity for vision and guidance, he creates an atmosphere that invites everyone to confront new challenges, to have confidence and take the initiative' (Cruellas, 1993).

'Good leaders can inspire others with the power and excitement of their vision and give people a sense of purpose and pride in their work' (Moss Kanter, 1989).

xxxiv 'All the forms of apprenticeship mentioned above must be administered and a training department dependent on a personnel department is not what is required. Thus, a limited number of managers will be responsible for the apprenticeship processes useful for the firm. The responsibility of these manager-trainers is to support employees' development' (Aubrey, 1993).

'The notion of a specific and separate managerial staff in the organization of work is no longer useful. There is no justification for retaining the status of *cadre* in France. In most of the developed countries, such a status does not exist. There are many firms in France where the

A comparison between the uses of the term *cadre* in the two corpora underscores the developments of the last thirty years. Highly esteemed in the 1960s, *cadres* were the main agents of progress. In the management literature of the 1990s, reference to *cadres* is instead combined with criticism of a category deemed obsolete. The word *cadre* is surrounded by a whole set of terms which, employed pejoratively, are used to characterize the old organizational forms, regarded as outmoded. These are terms that convey rigidity and stability, but also self-interest and an attempt to control the future (e.g. structure, functions, career, administration, plans, objectives); and, secondly, terms referring to hierarchy, to statutory power defined as authoritarianism, to obedience (hierarchy, status, the army, subordinates). In the 1960s, the term *cadre* was employed in a sufficiently broad and vague way to point towards a principle of unity that transcended hierarchical divisions by associating executives or directors and middle managers or immediate supervisory staff. The literature of the 1990s, by contrast, alludes to *cadres* only to designate intermediate, subordinate employees (compared with non-commissioned officers in the army), and goes so far – an act of sacrilege inconceivable in the previous period – as to combine *cadres*, supervisors, technicians, white-collar workers, and even blue-collar workers in a single list.

As a substitute for the French term *cadre*, we witness the emergence of *manager*, transferred directly into French. *Manager* is relatively recent in the French-speaking world. In the 1960s, it referred predominantly to the American *cadre*. In other cases, it was translated by *cadre*, *directeur* or *organisateur*, and hence rarely featured as such in the texts. The term *manager* spread and assumed its current meaning in France in the course of the 1980s. Initially used to designate the management *cadres* in the head offices of large firms (in contrast to the mass of ordinary *cadres*), it began to be used at the end of the 1980s to refer to those who display their excellence in team leadership, in handling people, in contrast to engineers focused on technology. Similarly, *management* came to be contrasted with *gestion* (administration), distinguishing effective employment of people's abilities from a rational processing of objects and figures. Authors in the 1990s thus employ the term *manager*, in contrast to *cadre*, to define those qualities of human beings that are most appropriate to the present state of capitalism and the 'uncertain', 'complex' environment firms have been plunged into. *Managers* do not seek to supervise or give orders; they do not await instructions from management before applying them. They have understood that such roles are outmoded. They become 'team leaders', 'catalysts', 'visionaries', 'coaches', 'sources of inspiration'. This last appellation

level of *cadres* is more than half the workforce; in some it even reaches 80 per cent. It is clear that in these firms *cadres* are not paid to lay down how other people must work. Indeed, often they do not supervise anyone, for many *cadres* are secretaries, accountants and technicians' (Aubrey, 1993).

is specific to Hervé Sérieyx (1993). Like other authors in the 1990s, in the absence of a terminology to refer to the new entrepreneurial heroes, he was led to coin an expression of his own. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, for her part, talks about 'business athletes',^{xxxv} Meryem Le Saget about the 'intuitive manager', and Lionel Bellenger about the 'pros'. Other terms, like coach, leader or 'midwife', are adopted by several authors.

Managers can no longer rely on hierarchical legitimacy, or, as in the past, manipulate career expectations, for with the reduction in the height of organizational pyramids, there are far fewer opportunities to 'rise' in-house; and in the framework of their projects, they must get all sorts of people to work over whom they have little formal power. Consequently, they are supposed to assert themselves by means of their 'skills' and 'charisma', define actors thanks to the effectiveness of their 'network of personal relations', which provides them with information and aid, and galvanize people by the power of their 'vision' and their skills as 'midwives' of other people's 'talent' and developers of potential. They derive the authority that makes them 'leaders' from their personal qualities, not from some official position. Moreover, they refuse the 'signs of power' (such as numerous secretaries, private lifts or dining-rooms, lavish offices). The authority they acquire over their teams is bound up with the 'trust' that is placed in them on account of their 'communication' and 'listening' skills, which are exhibited in direct contact with others.

Managers are in fact distinguished from *cadres* in terms of a contrast between creative intuition and cold, calculating administrative rationality. This opposition recycles a thematic initiated, in a wide variety of forms, around the mid-nineteenth century, in a large number of taxonomic contrasts – for example, between forms of intelligence (left brain/right brain) or the sexes;^{xxxvi} between social groups (artists/engineers or financiers);¹⁵ even between countries (France counterposed to Germany in the nineteenth century,¹⁶ the Latin countries contrasted with the Anglo-Saxon countries today, etc.). *Managers* are 'intuitive', 'humanist', 'inspired', 'visionaries', 'generalists' (as opposed to narrow specialists), and 'creative'. The universe of the *manager* is opposed to that of the *cadre* as the reticular is opposed to the categorial. The *manager* is

xxxv 'We don't even have good words to describe the new relationships. "Superiors" and "subordinates" hardly seem accurate, and even "bosses" and "their people" imply more control and ownership than managers today actually possess' (Moss Kanter, 1989).

xxxvi 'When it comes to strategy, the best results are often to be found among people who are by nature right-brained, and who employ what is called an "integrated" process of decision-making – that is to say, one that brings the two hemispheres of the brain into play in balanced fashion' (Sicard, 1994).

'Those in charge are required to be efficient, enterprising, daring; they are expected to decide and realize their objectives, control their results, and succeed. These are dynamic, masculine qualities. But the world is changing rapidly. The firm must anticipate, pinpoint changes, and adapt itself. To do that, it needs a quite different register of skills: attentiveness, intuition, observation, communication, workforce participation, creativity, a sense of service, motivation.... These are instead qualities of openness and receptiveness' (Le Saget, 1994).

network man. His principal quality is his mobility, his ability to move around without letting himself be impeded by boundaries, whether geographical or derived from professional or cultural affiliations, by hierarchical distances, by differences of status, role, origin, group, and to establish personal contact with other actors, who are often far removed socially or spatially.

Besides the *manager* ('project head', 'team co-ordinator' or, according to an older term, the person responsible for a 'profit centre'), we have seen some authors identify another character. This is the 'coach' (when the *manager* is not also charged with this duty), whose task is to develop the skills and potential of the people in an organization. But we also come across a third striking figure in 1990s management: the 'expert'. Experts are necessary, for they possess the information about innovation and the highly specialist knowledge that must be mastered to embark on technological competition. They can be internal to the firm – a full-time researcher, for example, or a specialist in computer systems or in administrative control. They can also be external, belonging to an agency, an independent research centre or a university, and may be consulted on a selective basis. They are not asked to manage teams, for that is the role of the *manager*. In order for each of them to develop their specific skill in the most productive fashion – the *manager*, workforce motivation and the expert, technical performance – management authors completely separate the two profiles. In the 1960s, by contrast, there was still the hope that every competent engineer could be made a *manager* by dint of a good 'management system' (good planning and a good process of target fixing).^{xxxvii}

Among the forms of technical knowledge that are useful for running firms, when it comes to controlling and supervising the human factor *management* is the equivalent of the engineer's science as regards machines and things. But it is important to highlight the way in which 'neo-management' definitely remains 'management' in the sense that we have just defined it. In other words, it still contains control mechanisms, even if they are different from those associated with the second spirit of capitalism.

The history of 'management' can in fact be conceived as involving constant refinement of methods for controlling what occurs in the firm and its environment. For Taylor and Fayol, regarded as the founders of management as a discipline, human beings are the main focus for the implementation of controls (the man-machine coupling in Taylor; general organization in Fayol). Subsequently, with certain subdisciplines of management, the will to control was to be extended beyond machines and workforce. With business strategy, control of markets and competition has developed; with marketing, control

xxxvii 'Traditionally, in the course of his career the young engineer could expect successive promotions – section head, departmental head, and perhaps even director. ... This was how merit was recognized and it was the symbol of success. ... A good expert does not necessarily become a good manager. ... Some highly successful firms thus adopt a different approach, which consists in clearly distinguishing a promotion path for experts and a promotion path specifically designed for the generalists responsible for people management' (Landier, 1991).

of the distribution circuit, customers and their purchasing habits; with purchase management, control of suppliers; with public relations, control of the press and political authorities. Similarly, within the workforce, each category has been subjected to specific mechanisms: Taylorism was invented to control workers, and management by objectives to supervise *cadres*. In our time, the mechanisms of 'corporate governance' are aimed at controlling the most senior managers of large firms.

In the sequel to this history, we must ask what are the *modalities of control contained in neo-management*. This question is central because, within firms, *cadres* are principally those agents who perform tasks of control over technical mechanisms, sales, and other wage-earners, this function being vital for profit creation. Furthermore, the history of managerial practices is very often bound up with the emergence of new control problems caused by the advent of new types of actors, the setting to work of whom requires a change in methods: *cadres* are not controlled in the same way as blue-collar workers; blue-collar workers who have gone through the education system are not controlled in the same way as workers who are first-generation immigrants or of rural origin, and so on.

Like their predecessors, the 1990s authors place the question of control at the centre of their concerns. One of their main problems is controlling a 'liberated firm' (to use Tom Peters's expression [1993]), composed of self-organized teams working in a network that is not unified in time or space. 'Controlling the uncontrollable' is not something with an infinite number of solutions: in fact, the only solution is for people to *control themselves*, which involves transferring constraints from external organizational mechanisms to people's internal dispositions, and for the powers of control they exercise to be consistent with the firm's general project.¹⁷ This explains the importance given to such notions as 'workforce participation' or 'intrinsic motivations', which are motivations bound up with a desire to perform the work and the pleasure of doing it, and not with some system of sanctions—rewards tacked on externally and capable of yielding nothing more than 'extrinsic motivations'.^{xxxviii} Moreover, the 1990s authors are suspicious of the term 'motivation', which connotes a form of control they endeavour to reject, and prefer 'mobilization', which refers to an attempt at motivation supposedly devoid of any manipulation.^{xxxix}

The firm's culture and values, its project, the leader's vision, the ability of the firm's head to 'share his dream' — these are so many stimulants that are

xxxviii 'The manager of the future does not "motivate" his collaborators. By means of his daily care and attention, he reawakens their inherent motivation — something that everyone carries deep within them and which is made up of a desire to understand, to progress and to give life a meaning' (Le Saget, 1994).

xxxix 'The leader's role is no longer to motivate, but to mobilize. According to Omar Aktouf, to rely on motivation is to continue to accept the idea that employees and workers are "objects" which can be shaped at will, incapable of discovering inspiration in themselves. Motivation is an infantilizing concept that no longer has any purchase on highly educated people. If they are mobilized, employees mobilize themselves' (Sérieyx, 1994).

supposed to encourage the convergence of forms of individual self-control, since the controls voluntarily exercised by everyone over themselves are more likely to remain consistent with one another if their original source of inspiration is identical.

Moreover, the stress laid on the customer by management authors in the 1990s is a way of getting their readers to agree that customer satisfaction must be a supreme value, to which it is mandatory to subscribe ('the customer is king'). This dogma has a twofold advantage: on the one hand, it inflects self-control in a direction conducive to profit, given that a firm's differential ability to satisfy its customers is an essential ingredient of success in a competitive economy; and on the other, it transfers some of the control exercised by superiors in the 1960s to customers.

Oversimplifying, the transition from control to self-control, and the externalization of control costs formerly met by organizations on to wage-earners and customers, may be regarded as the most significant features of the evolution of management in the last thirty years. Why vest control in a hierarchy of *cadres*, who are all the more costly in that they subordinate their own adhesion to a stable career, if wage-earners can be induced to control themselves? From this viewpoint, hierarchical *cadres* are simply unproductive workers. Thus it is that the new mechanisms, combined with a reduction in the number of levels of hierarchy, aim to increase the autonomy of people and teams, leading them to take responsibility for some of the supervisory tasks once assumed by higher grades or managerial departments. This development is especially striking in the case of factories, which were more marked than any other enterprise site by a Taylorist form of organization involving a separation between design, control and execution. This is one of the most important principles undermined by Toyotism, which in the 1980s served as a fulcrum for rejecting Fordism and (in the words of Benjamin Coriat) rethinking production methods 'from top to bottom'.¹⁸ Workers, henceforth called *operatives*, gradually found themselves charged with quality control and certain maintenance tasks.

The increase in automation and robotics has, in addition, significantly raised the loss of earnings entailed by stoppages to machines and industrial plant, which are often more expensive than the workforce operating them, and whose cost, above all, cannot be varied. As Michel Aglietta explains, the new mode of regulation, which has replaced the Fordist regulation associated with the second spirit of capitalism, is based upon an increase in the productivity of investments:

Fordism weighed capitalism down ... but the gains in labour productivity were sufficient to maintain profit rates. This logic came up against its limits at the end of the 1960s, when the increase in income from wages outstripped productivity, triggering an inflationary process. The technological progress used to overcome these problems aimed to save on fixed — or constant — capital. This made it possible to turn around the productivity of capital in overall terms.¹⁹

In managerial terms, in particular, this translates into pursuing maximum employment of technical resources twenty-four hours a day, with a minimum of stoppages and faulty work, the latter representing not only a waste of materials and manpower, but also a waste of machine time. It therefore becomes crucial to train operatives to provide emergency maintenance, anticipate and diagnose breakdowns, and rapidly call on technicians where necessary. Making workers aware of their responsibilities for the 'good health' of machines has thus become economically important.

Similarly, considerable effort is made to organize them into 'autonomous teams' responsible for the whole of some output as regards quantity and quality. The requisite skills levels are therefore markedly higher for new entrants – a professional diploma is often demanded – with internal training programmes to advance established workers and redundancy for those deemed (by criteria such as inadequate written and oral skills, or a low capacity for initiative and autonomy) incapable of keeping up, who can consequently be declared 'unable to adapt'. Blue-collar workers are supposed to emerge as winners from these organizational changes, less 'alienated' than before, because they become wholly responsible for some output, their work is thereby 'enriched', they are freed from authoritarian petty tyrants, and it is easier for them to obtain adjustments that facilitate the performance of their tasks.

For its part, the outsourcing of a large number of operations, either by recourse to subcontracting or through the autonomization of sectors of large firms, which are treated as autonomous profit centres competing with the outside, has made it possible to replace hierarchical control by a *market type of control*. This is less directly associated with the dominant-dominated couple, rejected by contemporary authors, for it seems to refer to a contractually free relation between two formally equal parties. Creating competition has replaced control of work by the directors of these units, who in return can rely on customer demand to exercise control that seems to issue no longer from them, but from the market. At factory level, the suppression of stocks – a key mechanism of Toyotism – in addition to reducing the costs bound up with storage, has the effect above all of relaying the pressure of demand directly to the production unit. Production must be carried out as and when customers demand it, in the quantity and of the quality they expect. Concealing mistakes, faults and breakdowns becomes impossible, since it can no longer be disguised by drawing on reserve stocks. The slightest faults entail a production stoppage, and therewith become evident. Stock suppression reveals problems and compels their resolution, because the customer is waiting. Control, then, is exercised by the transmission of the customer's order, which everyone must face up to, *cadres* and non-*cadres* alike, as a single team united in adversity. Planning, which belongs to the control mechanisms of the 1960s, is no longer used in so rigid or long-term a fashion as previously. Employed in the short and medium term, it essentially makes it possible to establish capacity within

which the volume and quality produced can vary depending on customer demand. For what is above all at stake is responding to orders when they arrive – hence the authors' insistence not on planning, but on an ability to react and organizational flexibility as the only things that can meet new specifications.

With the decline of close monitoring by superiors, we witness the rapid development in management literature (as in microeconomics) of the theme of *trust*. Trust is what unites the members of a team, a firm with its leader, the coach with the person he supports, or the partners in an alliance.^{xi} Trust is a sign that the situation is under control, since people only place it in someone who they know will not abuse it, who is predictable, who says what he means and means what he says.^{xii} Neo-management lays great stress on the need to develop this type of relationship, on the need for people to be worthy of trust themselves, and on the need to dismiss those who betray it. Trust is in fact the other term for self-control, since it designates a trustworthy relationship where the only mechanism that exists is the pledged word and moral contract. Besides, it is moral in character, whereas third-party control is simply the expression of a relation of domination.^{xiii}

Finally, the reference to trust suggests that the new modes of organization are not simply the product of the market's entry into firms in force. Certainly, contracts are increasingly substituted for hierarchy, but this does not always involve traditional commercial contracts. The sales contract for goods is, moreover, one of the most simple and standardized that jurists have to handle, and they are generally agreed that the development of contractualism, or what they often call the 'contractual society', cannot be reduced to the expansion of market society. Whereas the purely commercial transaction is punctual, taking no account of duration, organizing collaboration and exchanges in network form assumes the creation of relations between the partners which, while not stabilized by plans or regulations, nevertheless possess a relatively enduring character. For if firms are more flexible and more reactive, they have not stopped being large and powerful. They are more so today than ever. Large

xi 'For mobilization around a vision to be effective, the leader must also inspire trust and inspire it absolutely' (Crozier and Sérieyx, 1994).

xii 'A capacity for autonomy is required, just as a capacity for friendship is required. To support someone is to be at once very close to him, taking an interest in his story, and sufficiently distant to leave him room for freedom: he is the person who chooses to be helped and this aid must be based on a genuine climate of trust' (Aubrey, 1990).

xiii 'The doing-more-with-less strategies put an even greater premium on trust than did the adversarial-protective business practices of the traditional corporation. Business collaborations, joint ventures, labor-management partnerships, and other stakeholder alliances all involve the element of trust – a commitment of strategic information or key resources to the partners. But the partners have to rely on one another not to violate or misuse their trust' (Moss Kanter, 1990).

xli 'In fact, individuals are increasingly sceptical. They see statements for what they are: intentions. ... This growing mistrust obliges employers to be exemplary, but also to be consistent and coherent even in the smallest details of everyday behaviour. Trust can only be won at this price' (Crozier and Sérieyx, 1994).

xlii 'The balance of power is out of place when it comes to winning support, creating a feeling of satisfaction and trust in other people' (Aktouf, 1989).

firms have not been dissolved into a set of commercial contracts between small units competing in a pure, perfect atomized market (even if it is always possible to model any organizational arrangement as a network of contracts). For large firms to retain an identifiable form, and the power associated with their name, some links must remain more enduring than others, without necessarily having the inflexibility of established hierarchical relations. The solution envisaged by management authors therefore consists, on the one hand, in relaxing and streamlining institutional mechanisms, which are invariably suspected of harbouring the threat of renewed rigidity; and, on the other, in conferring an important role in economic mechanisms on personal relations and the trust people place in one another. These, it is anticipated, will facilitate co-ordination of the various resources that go into the creation of value added. As a considerable literature inspired by the theory of transaction costs, and referring to Williamson, has endlessly repeated over the last ten years, networks constitute a specific form inbetween hierarchies and markets.²⁰

The answers proposed by 1990s management literature to the two questions of most concern to it – anti-authoritarianism, and an obsession with flexibility and the ability to react – are conveniently assembled by the authors under the *metaphor of the network*, which is deployed in all sorts of contexts. These include the generalization of work in autonomous teams, which are not unified in space or time, operating ‘as a network’ (i.e. in part from a distance, with partners who are internal or external to the firm, with some stable full-time members and others who are part-time and/or occasional); the development of partnership relations where trust plays a major role (strategic alliances); analysis of the possibilities for long-distance work offered by ‘computer networks’; or the establishment of ‘networks of firms’, as in the case of ‘industrial parks’. The latter, especially with the recurrent example in the socioeconomics of work and neo-management of the ‘third Italy’ studied by A. Bagnasco, have served as models for generalizing the possibility of economic development based on types of relationship that are partially geographical, administrative and political and partially personal.^{21/xliii}

To promote these new organizational forms, the authors must also, as in the 1960s, criticize and delegitimize certain aspects of the organizations contemporaneous with them, which are deemed obsolete from the standpoint of efficiency and outmoded as regards human relations. But this time the critique is no longer directed at arrangements that are accused of transposing the

xliii The small town of Prato, some kilometres from Florence, is still today the world capital for the manufacture of carded woollen fabric. ... The efficiency of the system, in terms of competitiveness and adaptability, is based on the intermeshing that exists between multiple artisanal workshops. This intermeshing is guaranteed by Prato's industrial union – which in particular manages the computer system that makes it possible to know what the available productive capacities are at any given time – by the local bank – which ensures the redistribution of financial resources – and by the supervision of the manufacturers of the wool-carding machines’ (Landier, 1991).

domestic universe into the firm. It focuses on the type of organization advocated in the earlier period for purposes of ensuring a radical separation between the private world of the family and personal relations on the one hand, and that of professional relations and work on the other. In the 1960s, this separation was intended to make competence the sole criterion of professional success – to the point, indeed, where some authors were concerned about the balance between time devoted to the family and rest, and time spent at work. In the 1990s, management authors rebel against this separation, which is deemed deleterious inasmuch as it separates dimensions of life that are indissoluble, inhuman because it leaves no room for affectivity, and at the same time inefficient because it runs counter to flexibility and inhibits the multiple skills that must be employed to learn to ‘live in a network’.^{xliv}

To characterize the large impersonal organizations inherited from the previous period, 1990s management adopts a term derived from Weberian sociology, but popularized in the 1940s–1960s by the Trotskyist critique of the state apparatus in totalitarian regimes: *bureaucracy*. This term connotes authoritarianism and arbitrariness, the impersonal, blind violence of cold monsters, but also inefficiency and squandering of resources. Not only are bureaucracies inhuman, they are also unviable. The struggle conducted in the 1990s thus has as its objective largely *eliminating the model of firms constructed in the previous period*, on the one hand by delegitimizing hierarchy, planning, formal authority, Taylorism, the grade of *cadre* and lifetime careers in the same firm;^{xlv} and on the other by reintroducing criteria of personality and the use of personal relations that had been eliminated from firms. Even so, we are not dealing with an attempt to return to the first spirit of capitalism, since firms are larger than ever, managers are professionals not small-scale owners, and life at work is inscribed in networks, not in a domestic framework.

xliv ‘Professional life represents the domain of rationality *par excellence*; thus it is distinguished from private life, which by contrast represents the domain of emotions, the search for meaning, the expression of personal values. There is a watertight compartment between these two dimensions of existence. ... Any consideration of personal elements in the judgements made of someone by a firm is a priori regarded as an intrusion into one's private life. It is clear that such a schema ... has become totally obsolete today. Developing a vision of the firm's future, conceiving a strategy, leading work teams, creating a network of relations – these demand qualities that go far beyond mere technical competence and mobilize the whole personality’ (Landier, 1991).

‘It requires us to give up the division between the professional person and the private person, between rationality and intuition, between the natural and the artificial, between head and heart’ (Sérieyx, 1993).

xlv ‘If the organization of the future only contains a few hierarchical levels – between three and four, for example, rather than a dozen – there will remain few rungs for the candidate for honours to climb. Career advancement will have to be pursued laterally rather than vertically: by accepting new spheres of activity or a different type of responsibility; and hence by apprenticeship and an expansion of experience, as opposed to attaining a higher rung. Moreover, progress of this kind will not systematically translate into higher pay. Different times, different rules. Given that the paths are no longer all mapped out, successfully managing one's career in this new world will signify being the agent of one's own evolution, taking control of one's future, since no one else can do it for you’ (Le Saget, 1994).

As we said at the beginning of this chapter, we used a textual analysis software program to compare the two corpora systematically. In Appendix 3, readers will find a presentation of this work, offering statistical confirmation of the interpretation of their content we have just presented.

Having identified the concerns, projects, hopes and enemies on which management literature in the 1960s and 1990s focuses, it still remains for us to verify to what extent these bodies of ideology do indeed contain two different expressions of the spirit of capitalism. To do that, we must examine whether their proposals do in fact offer those whom capitalism needs, and who must be persuaded by these texts, not only a list of 'good practices' for the purpose of making profits for the firm, but a series of arguments capable of mobilizing them. Let us reiterate that, in order to meet the constraints of the test to which we are subjecting them, these texts must present engagement in reformation as a personally exciting venture, demonstrate that the measures proposed are justifiable in terms of the common good, and, finally, explain how they will deliver to those who invest in them a certain form of security for themselves and their children.

3. THE CHANGE IN FORMS OF MOBILIZATION

The 1960s: The exhilaration of progress and job security

The *attractive dimension* of 1960s management is provided by the project of decentralization, and by the autonomy held out to *cadres*. They are finally going to be able to use the means put at their disposal as they see fit, and will be controlled exclusively on the basis of results. And those who are identified as efficient managers through this mechanism will have career opportunities, and rise in the hierarchy.

The new system will be more just, and hence more conducive to everyone's benefit, because people in firms will be assessed according to objective criteria, and there will be an end to nepotism, favours, 'string-pulling', 'the grapevine'. As for society as a whole, the 'rational management' proposed here, by making firms more efficient, serves economic and social progress, the two terms not being dissociated at the time.^{xlvi} This is one of the essential features of the spirit of capitalism in the 1960s. Firms are at the heart of a societal project, and all are agreed in assigning them a prominent role with respect to general well-being – not only on account of the economic wealth they create, but also because of the way they organize work and the kind of opportunities they

xlvi 'Man is not only a productive animal. As the domination of nature creates new needs, work must procure him an increasingly fulfilled existence: the continuous rise in living standards must put this increased wealth within reach of ever larger masses of people. ... This need for an improvement in the physical, moral and social conditions of people's existence outside work is now felt in all milieux' (Borne, 1966).

offer.^{xlvii} Certain texts from the 1960s indicate very clearly how the role allotted to firms in social progress is connected directly with the Marxist critique, which was pervasive at the time, and with the shadow cast over the 'free world' by the communist countries. There is no better illustration of the impact of critique on capitalism and the partial incorporation of its demands into the spirit of a particular period.^{xlviii} The still recent memory of the fascist regimes, as well as the survival of dictatorships in Europe, is a further reason for urging firms to respond to people's aspirations, to divert them from totalitarian temptations.^{xlix} Management is thus especially legitimate in that it serves the cause of democracy. Generalizing the use of rational criteria in the operation of firms, which marks the 1960s project, is presented as the best safeguard against the irrational assaults that threaten liberties.¹ For management in the 1960s, the association of reason and freedom, in opposition to passion and barbarism, goes without saying.

The 1990s hark back to this idea in order to counter it: the endeavour relentlessly to rationalize the way firms are run has created inhuman machines. The 'peculiarity of human beings' has changed: reason in the 1960s versus feelings, emotion and creativity in the 1990s. Despite everything, the irrational phenomena that people wanted to eradicate have succeeded in taking over the machinery, with bureaucracy proving to be the worst system imaginable.

As far as *demands for security* are concerned, management in the 1960s counted on the advantage enjoyed by large organizations in offering *cadres* career guarantees. This mechanism was perfectly suited to the various questions posed by management consultants at the time. It can be justified from the standpoint of justice (careers are meritocratic, and offer everyone development opportunities) and control of the future (it enables firms to hold on to the valuable individuals they need). Management works of the time are full of advice about how to guard against the risk of a lack of *cadres*: planning requirements, careful

xlvii 'Playing a key role in the phenomenon of industrialization, for those who work in them our firms increasingly represent a human environment that their fulfilment depends on. Without sacrificing any of their economic and social objectives, they must help their members in today's world to play the freely chosen personal role that has fallen to them' (Paul Huvelin, Chairman and Managing Director of Établissements Kléber-Colombes, quoted in Drancourt, 1964).

xlviii 'These facts lead us to think that ... in order to survive – and after all, the prize of freedom is worth it – private firms will have to become increasingly democratic in the diffusion of their capital, and increasingly concerned to promote more justice and real freedom for the people whom they employ' (Devaux, 1959).

xlix 'If we want social progress to go in tandem with material progress, minds must be improved at the same time as living conditions. People have to learn to live. The first countries to take an interest in the organization of leisure were the totalitarian ones. The movement first emerged in Italy, then Russia, and then in the Third Reich with the *Kraft durch Freude*' (Borne, 1966).

1 'Some critics, today, keep worrying that our democratic, free societies are becoming over-managed. The real truth is precisely the opposite ... the real threat to democracy comes from under-management. ... The under-organization, the undermanagement of a society is not the respect of liberty. It is simply to let some force other than reason shape reality' (Robert McNamara quoted in Servan-Schreiber, 1967).

recruitment, and the establishment of career profiles making it possible gradually to raise beginners up to the level of competence attaching to posts with significant responsibilities.^{li} Careers motivate *cadres*, who feel appreciated for their abilities. The possibility of changing the post of someone who does not make the grade is mentioned; redundancy, never (except in the case of those guilty of embezzlement).

The career, which involves a guarantee of regular salary increases, also represents a mode of redistribution between the generations: young *cadres* are underpaid at the age when they are at their most effective, but recover the advance made to the firm at the end of their career, when their salary is higher even though their skills are tending to become obsolete. This way of organizing the life-cycle has as its corollary the development of credit – mortgages and consumer credit – which is required to finance investments at the start of family life, and which people are assured of being able to pay back thanks to salary increases. A meritocratic dimension is nevertheless maintained in that the most efficient will receive higher-than-average income growth. In this way, security and emulation are reconciled.^{lii} The future is radiant.

The diffusion of Abraham Maslow's theory of needs, postulating a hierarchy of human needs such that certain needs cannot be satisfied unless other, lower needs have been, imparted self-evidence to the belief that security needs are essential because they rest at the base of the pyramid, immediately after physiological needs like food or sleep. As soon as one seeks to manipulate the needs of *cadres* for fulfilment through management by objectives, it becomes obvious that this cannot be achieved unless security is guaranteed.^{liii}

Security forms part of the implicit, but universally accepted, definition of the work contract. It is one of the central arguments in defence of capitalism, to the point where some authors reject anti-capitalist demands to entrust the management of firms to workers on the grounds that they would thereby risk losing the security they enjoy in exchange for their subordination.^{liv}

li 'Job rotation ... can provide a series of planned experiences which can help a manager to broaden in knowledge and skills' (Humble, 1968).

'Work promotion allows the wage-earner to accede to more refined, better paid tasks: it must allow everyone, depending on their abilities, to try their luck in life. For a firm, internal promotion is thus both an economic and a social necessity' (Borne, 1966).

lii 'In a firm, career development is essential, because if the wage must answer to the virtue of justice, career development answers to hope and there is no balanced human society without hope' (Devaux, 1959).

liii 'The first requirement for fulfilling oneself and making a success of one's life is a minimum of security, so that one's mind is not utterly consumed by anxiety about tomorrow and people can devote themselves completely to their work. It can be said that most French firms offer great security to their *cadres* in the sense that the chance of being made redundant and finding oneself without work is tiny; dismissing a *cadre* is not part of the tradition – except in the quite exceptional instance of serious embezzlement' (Froissart, 1969).

liv 'Finally, the decisive argument against any total or partial transfer of authority in firms to trade unions is that this operation involves transforming a contract for the hire of services into a contract of partnership. This cannot occur without major disadvantages. It assumes

The final security mechanism management authors count on is none other than the welfare state, which is regarded as the requisite complement to economic existence.^{lv} The corpus of the 1960s thus contains several defences of the effectiveness of public policies and the central importance of the state.^{lvi} Servan-Schreiber (1967) will seek to promote the principle of a modern economy based, on the one hand, on firms employing the most recent management techniques (American) and, on the other, on a state that practises a flexible form of planning.^{lvii} Firms produce wealth and forge technical progress, while the state ensures that everyone gains from these benefits. The distribution of roles is clear and the state is not at issue. Alone among our authors, Octave G  linier proves slightly critical when he worries about the freedom granted firms by the state. But what he proposes is that the state should enforce competition between firms, put an end to monopolies and forms of protection, while being responsible for offering the indispensable complement of security that workers need, and firms cannot fully satisfy.

The texts from the 1960s thus echo very strong concerns over security, with firms, which create redundancies only in exceptional cases, and offer jobs for life, and the state, which provides insurance against other types of risk and unemployment in the event of firms closing down, taking it in turns. In the 1990s, by contrast, we witness a *simultaneous* challenge to these two forms of protection, which is paradoxical, since one would have thought that any reduction in one of the two mechanisms would have led to greater intervention by the other. We may advance the hypothesis that the authors have in mind the financial difficulties of the welfare state, inhibiting them from turning to this ready-made solution. An apologia for change, risk and mobility replaces the high premium put on the idea of security.

As we shall now see, this is without a doubt one of the points where the new spirit of capitalism is at its weakest, even if management authors are not wanting in imaginative attempts to hit upon forms of security that are compatible with the currently dominant requirement of flexibility.

accepting serious risks: capital and job losses without any compensation if problems arise. Obviously, the wage-earner can lose his job in the event of the firm closing. But unlike the partner, he enjoys legal or conventional guarantees such as compensation for notice and, in most cases, redundancy, as well as insurance against unemployment' (Malterre, 1969).

lv '[The need for] security ... has been solved, at least partially, in most developed countries through a more or less sophisticated social security system. ... It has considerably altered – some would say revolutionized – everyday life by dispelling the misery and anxiety that resulted from blows of fate for those who work' (Borne, 1966).

lvi 'After a certain level of technical development, the opinion seems to be that the means exist to guarantee the right to work and a certain sum of income. ... It is less and less acceptable for employees in rapidly expanding sectors to be the only ones to benefit from progress, whether it involves wages or guarantees of every sort (illness, retirement, etc.). The same goes for the right to work' (Armand and Drancourt, 1961).

lvii 'It goes without saying that there is no end of difficult reconciliation to make between the freedom of individuals and the strategy of the government. But experience denies that there is a fundamental antagonism between the two' (Servan-Schreiber, 1967).

The 1990s: Personal fulfilment through a multitude of projects

Before broaching the way in which issues of security are treated in the 1990s corpus, let us examine the proposals by neo-management intended to galvanize those whose engagement is to be stimulated, and the justifications that are given for them in terms of the common good.

As was already the case in the 1960s, one of the main attractions of the proposals formulated in the 1990s is that they adumbrate a certain liberation. But it is no longer merely a question of obtaining the supervised freedom of management by objectives, which in any case is open exclusively to *cadres*. In the new world, anything is possible, since creativity, reactivity and flexibility are the new watchwords.^{lviii} Now no one is restricted by belonging to a department or wholly subject to the boss's authority, for all boundaries may be transgressed through the power of projects. Lemaire (1994) dreams of abolishing bosses completely, in particular by introducing a principle of symmetry that allows the person in charge of a project to have as their basic collaborator the head of another project in which one is oneself merely a participant.^{lix} With new organizations, the bureaucratic prison explodes; one works with people at the other end of the world, different firms, other cultures. Discovery and enrichment can be constant. And the new 'electronic relations' at a distance prove to be more sincere and freer than face-to-face relations.^{lx}

Another seductive aspect of neo-management is the proposal that everyone should develop themselves personally. The new organizations are supposed to appeal to all the capacities of human beings, who will thus be in a position fully to blossom.^{lxi} 'Coaches' will support people in this endeavour, and everything will be done to ensure that they attain a better knowledge of themselves, and discover what they are capable of.^{lxii} The new model proposes, so we are told, 'genuine autonomy', based on self-knowledge and personal fulfilment, not the false autonomy, framed by the career paths, job descriptions, and systems of sanctions-rewards, proposed by the 1960s.^{lxiii}

lviii 'To be effective, the firm must in fact increasingly count on the capacity for initiative of each of the wage-earners it employs. To call upon their initiative is to call upon their autonomy and freedom' (Landier, 1991).

lix 'The only way to avoid such conflicts is not to have hierarchical superiors!' (Lemaire, 1994).

lx 'Electronic nomads, relieved of symbols of power and "social conformism", express themselves more freely via networks than face to face' (Etrighoffer, 1992).

lxi 'However essential, administration constitutes a rustic domain pertaining exclusively to rationality; it is therefore readily communicable by a trainer. But giving dynamism and life to an organization brings into play the eyes, listening, the desire to extend one's own field of consciousness, a capacity for empathy, imagination, the ability to switch logics, courage in choices and in action. ... Administration deals with what is certain, leadership confronts what is fluid' (Sérieyx, 1993).

lxii 'Through questioning one can – according to Socrates, one should – help others to discover the values and truths they possess' (Aubrey, 1990).

lxiii 'The race for promotion fuels the illusion of autonomy that it seems to promise. Discovery of the illusion reinforces the need to dominate by way of compensation – which then

To conclude, let us recall that the 1990s authors also entrust leaders and the power of their vision with responsibility for helping human beings to advance themselves. What in theory is equally attractive in neo-management is the prospect of working on an interesting project, which is 'worth the effort', led by an 'exceptional' person whose 'dream' one is going to 'share'. And since management literature urges everyone, and especially *cadres*, to be 'charismatic leaders' and 'visionaries' who give meaning to people's lives, the implicit suggestion is that those to whom these proposals are addressed – the readers – could themselves – why not? – very well be among those who, with the help of their firms, will realize their dreams and share them with others.

As we have seen, in order to confront critiques that challenge the unjust character of capitalism, at enterprise level, management in the 1960s insisted on the meritocratic aspect of the mechanisms proposed, while at a more general level it stressed the necessity of sound economic management to defend democracy and the 'free world', and spur social progress. Justification through economic growth, assumed to be bound up with social progress, as well as the alliance of capitalism and democracy, are among the most stable justifications of capitalism, as we mentioned in the introduction. But we also observed that these very general justifications are insufficient in themselves to legitimate local action, in the absence of supporting evidence pointing towards *local justice*, to adopt Jon Elster's terminology.²² Moreover, the possibility of rooting major principles in mechanisms attuned to the specific characteristics of the firms into which they were integrated was precisely what meritocracy, based on measurement by results, supposedly offered in the framework of the second spirit of capitalism.

In the 1990s, the classical arguments invoked in defence of capitalism are still deployed: the theme of liberties is obviously the most pervasive of them. Now combined with it is another, no less traditional argument, which asserts that firms serve consumers (it has always been more legitimate to say that firms served their customers than that they made their owners wealthy). This increase in generality is readily ensured in the 1990s, given the focus on customers proposed by the new mechanisms. Contrariwise, the theme of economic progress – a third classical justification – is less in evidence, doubtless because most management authors in our day are too embarrassed to invoke it with confidence, given the rise in unemployment. They therefore fall back on the theme of surviving in a situation of increased competition (the changes proposed are justified by necessity) – which does indeed represent a justification, but one that is rather too meagre to engage people and elicit their enthusiasm.

further intensifies the race for promotion. Here we have a vicious circle, or interminable "game", of power as described by Simone Weil. It is always people at the bottom who believe in the enviable freedom of the higher level of the organization and the further one ascends, the more this desirable objective recedes' (Orgogozo and Sérieyx, 1989).

It remains for us to spell out the forms of local justice presented by contemporary authors, without which support for the current changes in capitalism risks being insufficient. In the 1960s, the idea was to reward people according to their results or efficiency. In contrast, the 1990s enhance the status of those who know how to work on a project, whether as leader or simple contributor. From this perspective, valuable members of staff are those who succeed in working with very different people, prove themselves open and flexible when it comes to switching project, and always manage to adapt to new circumstances.^{lxiv}

This way of appraising people, which is conveyed in most of the 1990s texts, contrasts sharply with the precepts of justice formulated in earlier periods. But it remains decidedly unconvincing on account of its still imprecise character, and its vagueness about how it might give rise to convincing tests. Our hypothesis is that we are witnessing *the emergence of a new ordinary sense of justice*, which should eventually be amenable to codification in line with the architecture of political cities as described in *De la justification*, whose main lines we recalled in the introduction.²³ For judgements corresponding to this new expression of the sense of justice to be made explicit, and embodied in tests with a claim to general validity, we still lack an elaborated grammar based on a clearly stated anthropology and political philosophy. (This was the case, for example, with the commercial order, whose syntax can be derived from reading Adam Smith; or with the industrial order, resting on a principle of efficiency – central in the justifications of the 1960s – which was clearly formulated by Saint-Simon.) The next chapter is devoted to this labour of clarifying and grammaticizing forms of judgement corresponding to the sense of justice contained in neo-management, deriving this new form by comparing the texts in our corpus. We have dubbed this new ‘city’ the *projective city* with reference to the flexible world, composed of multiple projects conducted by autonomous persons, whose picture is painted by management authors.

The question of what guarantees of *security* are contained in contemporary management texts exposes us to other problems, above all because security is not a dominant value in the 1990s, when it is associated with status, hierarchy, bureaucracy – all of them things that are insistently denounced, in contrast to what we observed for the previous period.

The most combative author in this respect is Bob Aubrey, who recalls that Maslow’s pyramid is a false scientific law.^{lxv} More troubled by this lack of

lxiv ‘In future, those who can master the greatest variety of professional situations, and who integrate into teams of different configurations without posing demands, will have an incontestable advantage in their professional advancement’ (Le Saget, 1994).

lxv ‘Today’s organizations must assimilate the new reality by treating each wage-earner as an enterprise. This change dictates abandoning a number of assumptions that dominated industrial society, the first of them being that individuals seek job security – an idea generated in the 1950s by Abraham Maslow’s famous “pyramid of needs”, which posited as a rule that basic needs must be satisfied before thinking about fulfilment. Not only is this thesis debatable theoretically (how

interest in security, Rosabeth Moss Kanter weighs the reduction in guarantees for the future against the freedom that has been won, and hopes that the excitement generated by greater autonomy will prove stronger than fears for the morrow.^{lxvi}

Even so, management authors also know that without new forms of security, their proposals will not tempt many people.^{lxvii} The first problem they have to resolve is to suggest some alternative to the hierarchical careers whose importance in the second spirit of capitalism we have seen. The suggestion is to replace them by a succession of projects. Henceforth people will not make a career, but will pass from one project to another, their success on a given project allowing them access to different, more interesting projects. Since each project is the occasion for many encounters, it offers an opportunity to get oneself appreciated by others, and thus the chance of being called upon for some other project. Being by definition different, novel, innovatory, each project presents itself as an opportunity to learn and to develop one’s skills, which are so many assets for finding other engagements.^{lxviii}

The key idea in this conception of life at work is *employability*, which refers to the capacity people must be equipped with if they are to be called upon for projects. The transition from one project to the next is the opportunity to increase one’s employability. This is the personal capital that everyone must manage, comprising the total set of skills people can mobilize. While it is not

can we then explain someone who risks their security to become an artist or to embark on a new career?), but the interpretation of it in the management sphere – firms must guarantee security first of all and only then fulfilment – is hardly justified’ (Aubrey, 1994).

lxvi ‘[T]he new business forms are accompanied by insecurity and overload at the same time that they generate more exciting and involving workplaces and give more people more chances to operate like entrepreneurs, even from within the corporate fold’ (Moss Kanter, 1990).

lxvii ‘The post-entrepreneurial principles I have identified clearly have both an upside and a downside. At their best, they create opportunity, giving people the chance to develop their ideas, pursue exciting projects, and be compensated directly for their contributions. At their best, they encourage collaboration across functions, across business units, and even across corporations. The business benefits from the use of these principles are lower fixed costs and increased entrepreneurial reach. But at their worst, the same strategies can lead to displacement instead of empowerment, rivalries instead of teamwork, and short-term asset-shuffling and one-night stands with the latest attractive deal instead of long-term commitments to build capacity. The same strategies executed unwisely and without concern for the organizational and human consequences will not produce continuing business benefits – especially if people withhold effort and commitment for fear of being displaced or to hedge their bets against change’ (Moss Kanter, 1990).

lxviii ‘The post-entrepreneurial career is a constant race from one project to the next. The value added at each project signals so many successes. ... People’s careers are more dependent on their own resources and less dependent on the fate of a particular company. This means that some people who know only bureaucratic ropes are cut adrift. It means that incomes are likely to fluctuate rather than increase in an orderly fashion each year. It means more risk and uncertainty. It does not necessarily mean lower productivity, for professional standards and concern for reputation may be sufficient incentives and also the best guarantee of continuity of employment even with the same corporation. No longer counting on the corporation to provide security and stature requires people to build those resources in themselves, which ultimately could result in more resourceful people’ (Moss Kanter, 1990).

able to avoid redundancies, or promise careers, a firm will be regarded as offering a certain form of security when it does not destroy the employability of its wage-earners, but enhances it instead.^{lxx} Thus, the 1990s authors do indeed have solutions to propose for the problem of security. But their proposals still lack comparable orchestration to that offered by the 1960s literature on managing *cadres*, which explained in detail how to recruit, appraise and advance human beings. In the texts that we have read, there are scarcely any mechanisms for appraising employability or confirming that it is increasing rather than diminishing. An optimistic explanation for this is that the 1960s texts offer a comparatively belated formulation of the second spirit of capitalism at a time when it is widely entrenched, whereas the 1990s texts are associated with a nascent new spirit of capitalism, which has not yet received its most bracing formulation.

Another risk, of a very new type, generated by flexible organizations is that it is much easier for actors in firms to be 'out for themselves', as popular language has it – to pursue their own interests, without taking into consideration those without whom their action would not have been crowned with success. The refusal of instrumentation, regulations and procedures, the rehabilitation of the affective and relational dimensions against which the 1960s consultants had struggled – these open up more space for this kind of behaviour than in the past. Such reprehensible forms of behaviour involve an opportunism in relationships that seizes on all the actually or potentially useful connections to which participation in the mechanisms surrounding daily life provides access (the mechanisms of a firm, training courses, academic, amicable, familial, romantic connections), in order to divert them to the end of personal profit. In a world 'without borders', in which the firm is 'fragmented', 'virtual', 'postmodern', where hierarchical constraints are very attenuated, where institutions no longer reveal their presence through tangible signs and, in particular, a symbolic system of power, how can one guarantee the loyalty of the manager both to the team and to the (often remote) profit centre he depends on?

Similarly, what guarantee is there that the integrity of persons will be respected in a context where they are called upon to bring to firms all their skills, including the most personal ones – not only their technical skills, but also their creativity, their sense of friendship, their emotionalism, and so on? The introduction of the 'coach', functioning as a psychologist in the firm's service, although charged with helping people to flourish, can be experienced by some as a danger of the firm encroaching on their private lives. Hence it is clear that, in order to be genuinely convincing in the eyes of those concerned, neo-management must comprise a minimum number of mechanisms aimed at controlling those risks that constitute other forms of attack on personal

^{lxx} Job security cannot be guaranteed. On the other hand, firms can guarantee "employability" – that is to say, a level of skills and flexibility allowing each individual to find a new job inside or outside the firm' (Aubrey, 1993).

security. Management authors show that they are conscious of these risks to the extent of mentioning them, in particular when they tackle the question of 'coaching'. Yet they rapidly brush them aside, stressing that not just anyone can be a 'coach', and that those who play this role will have to possess personal qualities such that they will not intrude upon the subjects with whom they work, or oppress them, in line with a deontological approach akin to psychoanalysis.^{lxx}

Generally speaking, the mechanisms of neo-management need to be used by people whose behaviour evinces a high level of ethical concern. The recent development of 'business ethics', as a specific management discipline, is no doubt related to these anxieties. Triggered by episodes of corruption to obtain procurement contracts, particularly abroad, this current of thought attests to the difficulty of supervising people's distant intrigues. And the problem is compounded by the generalization of new flexible mechanisms, since a very large number of wage-earners are now induced to move around and pursue 'network' activities that are less amenable to control. Once again the security of workers, as of the firm, can be guaranteed here only by a form of self-control that assumes the internalization of rules of behaviour safeguarding the integrity of persons, and avoiding a situation where their contribution is not acknowledged. Here we rediscover the theme of trust evoked in connection with new forms of control.^{lxxi}

To meet these anxieties, management authors foreground the regulatory effect of mechanisms of reputation (which we also find in microeconomic modelling): actors in the world of business will police themselves, and will be keen in future not to work with those who have not observed the basic ethical rules. Reputational effects play a central role here. On the one hand, they are at the heart of employability – a good reputation being the surest means of continuous employment. On the other, they make it possible to exert especially effective normalizing pressure, since the persons with whom one is involved can seek to destroy one's reputation in the event of behaviour they deem harmful.^{lxxii} What remains problematic in these proposals is that repu-

^{lxx} 'His approach is basically amorous, oblatory; he creates lasting bonds; his collaborators are developing beings' (Cruellas, 1993).

^{lxxi} 'Administrator of a process that is, when all is said and done, an educative one, the coach is therefore very keen to watch over the different stages of autonomy that his support should lead to' (Lenhardt, 1992).

^{lxxii} '[B]usiness athletes must operate with the highest ethical standards. While business ethics have always been important from a social and moral point of view, they also become a pragmatic requirement in the corporate Olympics. ... The trust required for all of these new business strategies is built and reinforced by a mutual understanding that each party to the relationship will behave ethically, taking the needs, interests, and concerns of all others into account' (Moss Kanter, 1990).

^{lxxiii} 'It will be observed that "highly ambitious individuals" are often solitary. When they seek to integrate into a group, they are very rapidly identified and rejected. We should be aware that a network has its own invisible "police" capable of getting the better of profiteers and usurers: "old school friends, regimental comrades, bridge club enthusiasts ... or those sharing a table at a wedding very quickly identify those who are only there to exploit the situation". So much the better. It is because networks are anxious about their image. The better the image, the more effective the network is in influencing economic life and relationships' (Bellenger, 1992).

tation can also be taken hostage for less noble reasons, and be misappropriated to the advantage of the strongest. But this scenario, which doubtless requires a perverse mind to be taken seriously, is not envisaged by management authors, who are rather inclined to optimism.

In the final analysis, the mobilizing capacity contained in the new spirit of capitalism as displayed in 1990s management literature seems to us poor. The proposals advanced certainly aim to sketch a world where life would genuinely be very exciting. But they exhibit a deficit in terms of justice, in that they presuppose reference to a new value system which exists only in outline. As for the security on offer, while there is no lack of ideas, they suffer from weak orchestration. 'Employability', 'personal ethics', and 'holding reputations hostage' – in management literature at least, these have yet to find any very solid translation into mechanisms. It is nevertheless the case that the people best adjusted to the new world, and best placed to take full advantage of it, should not suffer from these absences and, consequently, should enthusiastically engage in reformation. The problem will be to persuade larger groups of people – in particular, all those without a very high reputation or varied resources, or whose possibilities of mobility are, for various reasons, restricted, and who desire a more sheltered existence, even if it might be reckoned less exciting according to the new criteria.

CONCLUSION: NEW MANAGEMENT AS A RESPONSE TO CRITIQUES

The management literature of the 1990s contains ideals, proposals for organizing human beings, ways of arranging objects, and forms of security so different from those of the 1960s that it is difficult not to accept that the spirit of capitalism has undergone a sea change over the last thirty years. And this is so even though the new configuration does not possess the mobilizing power achieved by its predecessor, because of its incompleteness at the level of justice and security.

In so far as we have established that the critiques to which capitalism is vulnerable constitute one of the determining elements in the formation of the spirit of capitalism peculiar to a period – changes in this domain invariably being based upon the satisfaction of certain criticisms, whether of the reformist variety that seeks to improve existing mechanisms, or the radical variety that demands a transformation of the tests – we shall now seek to identify the demands which the new spirit is capable of satisfying. In any event, in order to take root, it must find sufficiently broad support and, to that end, offer different kinds of satisfaction from those proposed by the previous spirit. Otherwise, the change will be received in purely negative fashion. It must therefore be capable of meeting a demand that was not satisfied in the earlier period, for whose duration it was probably predominantly expressed in the rhetoric

of critique. The pinpointing in the introduction of the four sources of indignation on which critiques of capitalism draw will help us to identify the demands satisfied by the new spirit. It thus seems to us fairly obvious that neo-management aims to respond to demands for authenticity and freedom, which have historically been articulated in interrelated fashion by what we have called the 'artistic critique'; and that it sets to one side the issues of egoism and inequalities traditionally combined in the 'social critique'.

Challenging the hitherto dominant forms of hierarchical control and affording greater freedom are thus presented in management literature, but also by sociologists of work, as a response to demands for autonomy from more highly qualified wage-workers, who on average have spent longer in the education system (the percentage of autodidacts among *cadres* fell, for example, in the 1980s), and especially from young *cadres*, engineers and technicians. Trained in a more permissive familial and educational environment, such people find it difficult to tolerate the discipline of the firm and close supervision by bosses, rebel against authoritarianism when they are subject to it, but are also loath to exercise it over their subordinates.

It is not difficult to find an echo here of the denunciations of hierarchy and aspirations to autonomy that were insistently expressed at the end of the 1960s and in the 1970s. Moreover, this filiation is claimed by some of the consultants who contributed to establishing neo-management mechanisms in the 1980s. Hailing from leftism, and especially the self-management movement, they stress the continuity between the commitments of their youth and the activities that they pursued in firms, following the political turning-point of 1983, with a view to making working conditions appealing, improving productivity, developing quality, and increasing profits. Thus, for example, the qualities that are guarantees of success in this new spirit – autonomy, spontaneity, rhizomorphic capacity, multitasking (in contrast to the narrow specialization of the old division of labour), conviviality, openness to others and novelty, availability, creativity, visionary intuition, sensitivity to differences, listening to lived experience and receptiveness to a whole range of experiences, being attracted to informality and the search for interpersonal contacts – these are taken directly from the repertoire of May 1968.²⁴ But these themes, which in the texts of the May movement were combined with a radical critique of capitalism (particularly the critique of exploitation), and the proclamation of its imminent end, are often to be found in the neo-management literature autonomized, as it were – represented as objectives that are valid in their own right, and placed in the service of forces whose destruction they were intended to hasten. The critique of the division of labour, of hierarchy and supervision – that is to say, of the way industrial capitalism alienates freedom – is thus detached from the critique of market alienation, of oppression by impersonal market forces, which invariably accompanied it in the oppositional writings of the 1970s.

Similar remarks may be made about the critique of disenchantment, of the inauthenticity of daily life in the capitalist universe. At the level of organizing production, the stress in neo-management on interaction, on authentic human relations (in contrast to bureaucratic formalism), represents a response to critiques that condemned alienation in work and the mechanization of human relations. The discrediting of bureaucracy and its project of eliminating everything that is not 'rational' – that is, formalizable and calculable – should, we are told, facilitate a return to a 'more human' *modus operandi*, in which people can give full vent to their emotions, intuition and creativity. Does not neo-management propose that everyone should stop being an instrument, and instead 'realize their deep desires and flourish' (Le Saget, 1994)?

More generally, in stressing versatility, job flexibility and the ability to learn and adapt to new duties, rather than possession of an occupation and established qualifications, but also the capacity for engagement, communication and relational qualities, neo-management looks to what are increasingly called 'life skills', as opposed to knowledge and *savoir faire*. Recruitment is now based on an assessment of a person's most generic qualities – those that are just as valid in justifying the pairings of private life, whether amicable or emotional – rather than on objective qualifications. Accordingly, it becomes difficult to distinguish between engaging collaborators to perform a particular task and attaching certain people to yourself because they suit you personally. These trends in neo-management are often, as we have seen, presented as an attempt to inflect the world of work in a 'more human' direction. But through a backlash they can create new risks of exploitation, on which we shall elaborate later. For now, let us simply observe that those of the new mechanisms which are justified not only by the reduced wage costs and increased productivity they entail, but also by the intention of breaking with Taylorist forms of work, legitimately considered inhuman (job enrichment, improvement in working conditions), are especially ambiguous in this respect. The Taylorization of work does indeed consist in treating human beings like machines. But precisely because they pertain to an automation of human beings, the rudimentary character of the methods employed does not allow the more human properties of human beings – their emotions, their moral sense, their honour, their inventive capacity – to be placed directly in the service of the pursuit of profit. Conversely, the new mechanisms, which demand greater commitment and rely on a more sophisticated ergonomics, integrating the contributions of post-behaviourist psychology and the cognitive sciences, precisely because they are more human in a way, also penetrate more deeply into people's inner selves – people are expected to 'give' themselves to their work – and facilitate an instrumentalization of human beings in their most specifically human dimensions.

Another form of reaction to the theme of disenchantment aims to answer critiques of the inauthenticity of daily life – the loss of uniqueness, the

destruction of spontaneity, anxiety, the generalization of calculation, the will to total mastery, the proliferation of ossified things (as opposed to living entities), the creation of products or spectacles – which are rooted in the sphere of consumption. These denounce prefabricated needs, the ascendancy of advertising and marketing, the 'crumbling away of human values under the influence of exchange mechanisms',²⁵ the reign of the quantitative (as opposed to the qualitative), the standardization of goods in mass production, the domination of appearances, the tyranny of standing, the invasion of useless, ugly, ephemeral objects, and so on. The capitalist response to this modern variant of the artistic critique will to some extent take the form of seeking to develop the production and marketing of goods that are always new (the famous imperative of continual managerial innovation), whose novelty and limited distribution when they are first introduced temporarily assuages anxieties about massification. Furthermore, insistence on personalized service to customers, on the importance of careful attention to their wishes, and on the development of individualized relations²⁶ aims to introduce 'authenticity' into capitalist production in the form of the 'personalized'. On a wider scale, this same concern to return to personal desires as closely as possible inspires the transition from mass production to the limited series production of an ever greater variety of goods – the 'flexible production' characteristic of the 'second industrial divide'.²⁷

Hence new-style management does indeed offer various responses to the critique of disenchantment by promoting the creation of products that are attuned to demand, personalized, and which satisfy 'genuine needs', as well as more personal, more human forms of organization. Similarly, it satisfies demands for liberation from the sway of bureaucracy associated with the critique of the second spirit of capitalism. These two dimensions help to give it salience and appeal, even if it proves to be somewhat lacking at the level of mechanisms of security and rests upon a form of justice which, while presenting characteristics that may be regarded as very specific, still remains largely implicit. The next chapter is devoted to bringing out that form of justice.

Notes

1 We distinguish between literature intended for *cadres* and research literature in management whose aim is not normative, and whose mode of composition in particular assumes a critical apparatus that is offputting for the average reader, meaning that it is intended primarily for instructors in management orientated towards research.

2 We date management not from the appearance of the various practices it comprises (in which case one could find examples of management, as some authors indeed do, even in antiquity – for example, in the organization of the building of the Egyptian pyramids), but from their codification. It is then that reference is made to the discipline of 'management', which is generally held to begin with the works of two emblematic figures: the Frenchman Henri Fayol (1841–1925) and the American F.W. Taylor (1856–1915). The founding works of the two authors date from the second decade of this century.

3 See Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA) 1977.

4 See Werner Sombart, *The Quintessence of Capitalism*, trans. M. Epstein and T. Fisher Unwin, London 1915, pp. 104–5. Weber is not in agreement with Sombart's choice, and considers that Alberti's writings lack essential elements of the spirit of capitalism, such as the fact that 'time is money': Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Stephen Kalberg, Fitzroy Dearborn, Chicago and London 2002, pp. 170–71 n. 12.

5 See *ibid.*

6 Our way of constructing the two images of management in the two epochs is thus similar to that employed by Weber: 'If one can discover at all an object for which the phrase *spirit of capitalism* is meaningful, then it can only be a specific *historical case*. Such a singular entity is nothing more than a complex of relationships in historical reality. We join them together, from the vantage point of their *cultural significance*, into a conceptual unity. Such a historical concept, however, cannot be defined according to how it is "demarcated" vis-à-vis other concepts (*genus proximum, differentia specifica*). This holds if only because the concept denotes a phenomenon that is of qualitative importance as a consequence of its individual *uniqueness*. Moreover, this concept must be gradually *put together* from its single component parts, each of which is taken out of historical reality' (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 13).

7 See Louis Dumont, *Homo aequalis*, Gallimard, Paris 1977.

8 See A.O. Hirschman, *The Rhetoric of Reaction*, Belnap Press, Cambridge (MA) 1991.

9 See Pierre Ansart, *Marx et l'anarchisme*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1969.

10 Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, trans. Sian Reynolds, Harper & Row, New York 1982, p. 453.

11 See Luc Boltanski, *The Making of a Class: Cadres in French Society*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, Cambridge University Press/Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Cambridge 1987.

12 See Lester Thurow, *Head to Head: The Coming Economic Battle among Japan, Europe and America*, Nicholas Brealey, London 1993.

13 See James Womack, Daniel Jones and Daniel Roos, *The Machine that Changed the World*, Rawson, New York 1990.

14 SMED (Single Minute Exchange of Die) is a means of rapidly changing tool or reference that makes it possible to multiply changes of series without increasing the time machines have to run in order to produce; TPM means Total Productive Maintenance and aims to organize the set of relations to machines (preventive maintenance, avoidance of errors by the operator, training of the latter to detect signs of impending breakdowns, etc.) in such a way that the machines are never out of order; KanBan, which is a method allowing for prior communication of the requirements of the following stage of production (for example, by sending a car ferry to load up), is the main tool for organizing production on a just-in-time basis; 5S, from the name of the five Japanese words beginning with S, aims to organize a workspace visually so that it becomes, as it were, 'obvious' (that each thing has a place and one place only, that it is always returned there after use, etc.).

15 See Ève Chiapello, *Artistes versus managers. Le management culturel face à la critique artiste*, Métailié, Paris 1998.

16 See Luc Boltanski, 'Pouvoir et impuissance. Project intellectuel et sexualité dans le Journal d'Amiel', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 1 (5–6), 1975, pp. 171–99.

17 See Ève Chiapello, 'Les typologies des modes de contrôle et leurs facteurs de contingence – un essai d'organisation de la littérature', *Comptabilité–Contrôle–Audit*, vol. 2, no. 2, September 1996, pp. 77–114; and 'Les organisations et le travail artistique sont-ils contrôlables?', *Réseaux*, November–December 1997, pp. 77–114.

18 Benjamin Coriat, *Penser à l'envers – Travail et organisation dans la firme japonaise*, Christian Bourgois, Paris 1991.

19 Michel Aglietta, 'Nouveau régime de croissance et progrès social' (interview), *Esprit*, November 1998, p. 147.

20 See Oliver Williamson, *The Economic Institutions of Capitalism*, Free Press, New York 1985; Walter Powell, 'Neither Market nor Hierarchy: Network Forms of Organization', *Research in Organizational Behavior*, vol. 12, 1990, pp. 295–336.

21 See Michael Piore and Charles Sabel, *The Second Industrial Divide*, Basic Books, New York 1984; Georges Benko and Alain Lipietz, eds, *Les Régions qui gagnent. Districts et réseaux: les nouveaux paradigmes de la géographie économique*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1992.

22 Jon Elster, *Local Justice: How Institutions Allocate Scarce Goods and Necessary Burdens*, Russel Sage, New York 1992.

23 Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, *De la justification. Les économies de la grandeur*, Gallimard, Paris 1991.

24 Take, to give only one example, these passages, chosen almost at random from Vaneigem's book, which could feature in the corpus of neo-management (Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, Left Bank Books and Rebel Press, London 1983):

'Has anyone bothered to study the approaches to work of primitive peoples, the importance of play and creativity, the incredible yield obtained by methods which the application of modern technology would make a hundred times more efficient?' (p. 39.)

'What people do officially is nothing compared with what they do in secret. People usually associate creativity with works of art, but what are works of art alongside the creative energy displayed by everyone a thousand times a day: seething unsatisfied desires, daydreams in search of a foothold in reality, feelings at once confused and luminously clear, ideas and gestures pre-saging nameless upheavals' (p. 147).

'Once the light of the qualitative is shed upon them, the most varied kinds of knowledge combine and form a magnetic bridge powerful enough to overthrow the weightiest traditions. The force of plain spontaneous creativity increases knowledge at an exponential rate. Using makeshift equipment and negligible funds, a German engineer recently built an apparatus able to replace the cyclotron. If individual creativity can achieve such results with such meagre stimulation, what marvels of energy must be expected from the qualitative shock waves and chain reactions that will occur when the spirit of freedom still alive in the individual re-merges in collective form to celebrate the great social fête, with its joyful breaking of all taboos' (p. 153).

'But in the end the disgust aroused by this world of inauthenticity revives an insatiable desire for human contact' (p. 194).

'The problem then is how to organize, without creating a hierarchy; in other words, how to make sure that the leader of the game doesn't become just "the Leader". The only safeguard against authority and rigidity setting in is a playful attitude' (p. 202).

25 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

26 In the new customer-orientated organizations, customers must, for example, always deal with the same person whatever their requirements, this person being charged with mobilizing the resources required to satisfy the customer. In Taylorist organizations, by contrast, the counters or services that customers inquire at vary according to their demands, and they may end up having several interlocutors and having to discover the route to be followed to receive satisfaction. In the second case, customers are themselves Taylorized.

27 Piore and Sabel, *The Second Industrial Divide*.