

# **Undergraduate representations of management and the possibilities of critical management education – the case of Portuguese management education**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores constraints and facilitators of the implementation of a critical pedagogy in a specific management course in a Portuguese context.

It does so by exploring the representations of manager and management and related characteristics that students construct and possess, as well as the processes through which they construct such representations. The research generates descriptions of students' representations by highlighting their constructs of manager and management, the myths supporting them, and the relationships developed in the process. The descriptions identify and give insight into some of the main constraints and facilitators that would allow a more critical pedagogical process to be implemented in the context studied.

The case study that forms the basis of this research is the Management degree course of the School of Management and Technology of the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo (ESTG) in the Minho region of Northern Portugal. It conceptualizes representations of "manager" and "management practice" as the result of a process of socially constructed knowledge (Gergen, 1982, 1968), partly driven individually (Kelly, 1991) but with underlying participation by the educational setting (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999; Alvesson, 1994; Latane and Schaller, 1996).

Holman's (2000) models of management education (ME) provide the main orientations of ME in Europe at present, and with the basic representations of manager to work from (ideal managers). Studies on myths and metaphors (e.g. Bowles, 1997) also form the theoretical framework, as ME settings are drawn here as privileged contexts for the production/perpetuation of significant myths that drive management practice.

The study was carried out by eliciting students' constructs of manager and management, as well as curricular and teachers' representations of manager and management, their pedagogical orientation and practice.

There were three stages of data collection: an initial stage, using a case study; a second, which adapted Kelly's (1995) repertory grids technique; and a third, making use of qualitative interviews, curriculum analysis and classroom observation.

The "data conversation", interweaving the three moments of analysis, enabled the evaluation of the expected credibility of a range of interpretive decisions and conclusions. Results reveal teachers' specific representations and educational processes aligned with the dominant educational models in that context, which give rise to a wider range of students' representations of manager and management. These become more focused from the beginning to the end of the course, and more adapted to socially transmitted/expected representations of management, as well as to the social/cultural demands on this professional activity. In turn, they are supported by internal psychological defence mechanisms.

The processes studied reveal constraints to developing a critical pedagogy in the context of ESTG, arising from the nature of the representations constructed, the attitude (motivation) and (lack of) preparation of the teaching staff, and broader social and economic demands.

It is argued that ME favours the development of specific representations of the manager in students, influenced by the preferential myths and representations of management and manager adopted by specific educational models. As technical rationality and concern for control is seen here as still dominating the management scene, with ME under a normative approach of management (Roberts, 1996), images of manager provided/developed by the students are expected to be limited and performative. This is supported by a normative discourse of ME, simplistic in its form of theorising and practising, failing to consider emotive and complex issues (Argyris, 1982; Vaill, 1989; Whetton and Cameron, 1983), and lacking critical or creative forms of being in management. These issues have implications on the possible implementation of Critical forms of management education in ESTG.

The study yields a better understanding of the impact of ME contexts. The intention is to consciously use this knowledge about ME learning processes (working processes, influences, constraints, facilitators) to promote more critical, reflexive, creative management learning processes in contexts where discomfort may be used as a basis for dialogical practices, instead of blocking anxiety with the consequent need for "taken for granted" knowledge and practices.

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## **Acronyms**

**ME.** Management Education

**MP.** Management Practice

**ESTG.** Escola Superior de Tecnologia e Gestão  
(Technology and Management Higher Education's School)

## INTRODUCTION

Our task as teachers can be to guide students to and through paradox, and thereby facilitate their own inductive discovery of wisdom

To teach subjects in all their complexity is lesson number one  
(Palmer, 1983:77)

### The antecedents

I have been teaching management students since 1991; throughout my teaching experience in management, I have often asked myself some fundamental questions, such as what a manager is or what he/she should do to accomplish the managerial role.

I have also questioned myself about what type of socialization messages we impart or should impart to students as management teachers. Management education makes more or less explicit promises about managing and these promises are present in the educational experience we expect to provide students with.

Assuming that I perform a supportive role for students who want to pursue a career in management, I feel the need to know how I am actually helping them. In terms of knowledge provided and skills improved, what is the relevance of the course and of my classes for the development of students, their expertise, and the mastery of the ‘management’ theme? Moreover, what are and should be the criteria used for defining ‘relevance’ of knowledge and developed skills, within these contexts? What are the ‘scales’ and the values which can allow us to compare between less relevant and more relevant knowledge and skills to be provided and developed, in contexts of management education (ME)?

Those questions and concerns accompanied my daily practice, taking me to an attitude of deeper curiosity; I started questioning the role ME plays when interacting with management students, and the role that I play in that specific panorama of contemporary education.

It appears to me that the mainstream normative discourse of ME is too simplistic a form of theorising and practising, in our current social contexts, as it does not incorporate a

critical stance nor promote creative forms of being in management, in a world characterised by changing moves, with members of organisations calling for more creative workplaces, and for the development of new skills. However, due to the fact that alternative knowledge systems do not rely on these legitimizing structures, mainstream management education seems hesitant to explore different paths.

Some of the contemporary models of ME express goals and concerns related with current mainstream tendencies of management, especially the integration of ME interests in a market logic, or the socialisation of future managers through the legitimization and scientification of management knowledge; both cases relate to models of ME which incorporate tendencies of contemporary management.

Even though I feel the need for more critical and creative positions within this educational field, models close to ‘critical’ or ‘experiential liberalism’ appear more difficult to implement. These models aim at developing reflexive, critical and experienced ways of dealing with management, within ME environments, but they seem faced with strong social and academic constraints, both at institutional and at individual levels.

Often, these models underpin only individual motivations and actions, rather than orienting the whole institution’s practice, hence staying at the individual effort-level and goals of just one teacher. Efforts for changing processes and contents in management classes or courses ascribe to prevailing structures in the academy; so, and despite the fact that a management educator may undertake individualized efforts to follow alternative or minority educational approaches and knowledge systems, he/she may hold back from similar developmental work in his/her classroom because of the pervasive normative pressures to engage in a somewhat restricted, modernist discourse about management.

One representative theme of the conventional discourse in ME is the guarantee of a successful performance for students and managers who experience an educational degree in management; this is a constant promise, implicit or explicit in the goals and programmes of most management education courses, including that of the management

school where I work as a lecturer: the ESTG (School of Management and Technology, at the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo).

This guarantee of success in future management practice seems to justify the investment which continues to be made in ME, an investment that I can presently observe in the variety of offers in the education market. There are many, and most of them are aligned with these goals of ‘competence’ or ‘success in practice’.

The panorama of management and ME is not unanimous in terms of management definition and aims, among academics, practitioners and investigators. Moreover, the programmes of ME which I have contact, at an undergraduate level, show that the relationships between management education and practice are far from being understood or agreed on. Within this reality, ways of changing already set relationships are rarely tried, due to the ambivalence or ambiguity presented.

Although many academics and teachers follow the presently dominant models and paths of ME, believing in or looking for a more or less functional relationship between management education and practice, a growing minority, where I position myself, prefer or would prefer alternative perspective(s). Such perspectives accept a more detached relation between management education and practice, that is, an education characterised by a less functional link with management, where the professionalized/commercial interests of ME would not have to be followed, but would rather provide the management course and agents, and the students, with a more critical role in terms of management knowledge and practice. I consider undergraduate education as a favourable domain for developing and implementing new ideas and strategies, where reflexivity and argumentation could be major skills to be developed. It seems to me that undergraduate ME has failed in its core intention, that is, to prepare for management practice (MP). After all these years, it is not clear that students who experience this ME level become more prepared for management, for properly controlling all kinds of management situations, whether expected or unexpected<sup>1</sup>, when compared with ‘non management-educated’ managers (Alsop, 2002; Pope 2002; Gammie, 1995).

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<sup>1</sup> This is the predominant notion of what management is/should be.

Nevertheless, societal and political goals and conditions still dictate a generalised quest for providing managers with the capability of working efficiently in a changing world such as the one in which we live today. This is the stance which broadly defines management education within the Portuguese context where I work<sup>2</sup>. And this makes academics and practitioners, as well as politicians and managers, argue for a variety of content or methods changes in order to equip managers with the ability to work effectively in a complex and rapidly changing world (Grilo, 2002).

These two arenas adhering to often-conflicting criteria (Forray & Mir, 1994), ‘academic imperative/commerce demands’, represent one condition which contributes to my discomfort regarding the role of the teacher in ME: as a scholar in the university, but also as trainer of future managers, I often find myself struggling with ‘structural ambiguity’ (Light, 1983), an issue partly coming from a wider contemporary shift between society and the academy, a theme which is also focused on by Barnett (1994). In the face of this struggle, critical self-reflection on the politics of these shifting demands regarding academic and business practice can be engaging and enlightening, for teachers in general, and for me in particular. As Palmer well expressed (1983:77):

(...) to teach subjects in all their complexity in management classes, means to reconsider the very nature of firm performance. One inherent problem of this approach arises in the presence of irreconcilable preferences: how do you divide up residual profits between mutually exclusive or even adversarial interests?

In the current social panorama and, specifically, within contexts of ME we, teachers, are pressed to contribute to the aimed functional relation between management education and practice, through the educational choices we make and through our daily teaching strategies. Socio-political influences dictate the managerial character of planned changes for the future of management education, and business also has significant power to shape the future directions of management education.

The efforts that I might develop to conceive alternative ME role(s), and to put them into practice at undergraduate level, ask therefore for engagement in a new management

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<sup>2</sup> Vagueness and lack of serious thought on objectives, contents and methods are endemic to this area of teaching. Some structural facts and particularities of the Portuguese system of ME, like autonomy legislation, may contribute to this state of things, but these are not the mainstream.

discourse. They must also be supported by awareness of how these learning processes happen, how knowledge and meanings are constructed in such contexts, as well as by the awareness of the interactions developed between agents of ME and students profiting from these processes. In addition, it seems urgent to establish that the image of the manager constructed by students through the action of the more commonly followed models of ME does not fit very well in present-day life, as it is too limited and performative.

Nevertheless, it is hard for me to advise my students to be more reflexive, critical-spirit apprentices if I fail to be reflexive about my own practice. And it is hard for me to be reflexive and critical of my own practice, as a management teacher, if I fail to recognize the participants and mechanisms inherent to the ME process and the way they impact on students' construction of knowledge and meanings.

I developed an active interest for improving my awareness on these subject themes, which resulted in the present investigation; my actions and reflections along this research were supported and driven by Palmer's (1998) suggestion that we need learning to teach from other parts of ourselves, besides fear, such as curiosity; moreover, this investigation mirrors Grey's idea of

overcoming the problems brought by a narrow ideological framework on ME, by giving voice to some of the messiness and suffering that characterizes management practice nowadays (2002, 503).

It seems that the present parlous state of management practice follows from a lack of alternative theoretical foundations for a practice which no longer stays within stable/immutable conditions but repeatedly insists on theoretical principles and discourse that served its early existence. ME and its practices are similarly shaped by these conditions;, principles of theories and discourse which support ME seem no longer a reflection of the way contemporary work, lives and society are organised, nor generate creative/critical insights that are relevant within such life conditions (Grey, 2002:503). The present work is thus intended as a contribution to a revitalised management education practice.

## **The background to the thesis**

The literature reveals a controversial subject, with a history of a fragile knowledge and its evolution. The inherent confusion and confusing concepts, methods and research problems, may be, as Kallinikos (1996) states, the result of an intellectual terrain that has been unable, or perhaps never intended, to define its scientific boundaries. The management theme represents a knowledge-base which is notoriously fragmented (Whitley, 1984), with very little in the way of reliable, predictive, law-like generalizations that were the dream of early management researchers (Grey, 2002), despite generations of attempts. Questions of the identity of management<sup>3</sup> are part of a wider story, which constitutes the history of management, including the evolution of management education, to the present.

After a period of apparent stability, the vulnerabilities of management knowledge became exposed by reason of the inherent fragility of its nature (Whitley, 1984). A large production of fads and fashions might have been the consequence of this fragility (Collins, 1999). As Weick (2001) states, when social identities collapse, actors find it difficult to individually preserve a reference structure on which to base their rational action. In these unstable/uncertain periods, mythical thinking is a favourable strategy for producing knowledge (Weick, 2001), different, but not inferior to the rational mode of thinking, when the latter is not an adequate or even possible reaction. We are describing moments characterised by uncertainty, and ‘uncertainty’ has been the key concept at the origins of management. Later on, it developed into an objective condition of the management environment (Weitz and Shenhav, 2000). This uncertainty and unpredictability, characteristic of management environment (Jabri, 1997; Weitz and Shenhav, 2000; Mintzberg, 1993) shaped action and strategies, generating myths that could soothe the anxiety feelings caused by that same uncertainty.

Control and planning strategies are a representative example of that. Additionally, formal contexts that started being created to provide education for managers or future managers constitute another significant example of these myths and reassuring strategies. Thus, contexts formally providing education in management represent

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<sup>3</sup> An identity which, as Freedman argues (2002), is characterized by contingency and “constructedness”, being revealed as the conditions of its existence is uncovered and renewed.

privileged settings for myth-making (Bowles, 1997; Weitz and Shenhav, 2000; Jabri, 1997). By responding to themes and issues that otherwise would remain unexplainable, ME may be perceived as a core myth. It represents both a product and a producer of management determinants, with a likely double action: a device to reduce anxiety generated via uncertainties of management<sup>4</sup>, through promising resources for a successful practice, and a source of managerial thinking and practice. This way, it reassures those who are concerned with ‘managing the unpredictable’, simultaneously producing knowledge which can perpetuate or transform the practice of management.

This capability of ME to perpetuate or transform MP may be related with a socialization role that some authors ascribe to the formal education in management. The duality of academic interests and commercial demands (Forray & Mir, 1994), which characterises ME contexts, and the claim for formal academic training for managers, seem to relate to concerns with raising the status of managers, rather than concerns with improving their practice or knowing what the most relevant knowledge to provide managers or nascent managers with is (Grey, 2002). The development of specific settings for providing managers, or future managers, with formal academic training and the amplification of offers within management education have been driven partly by this imperative: the provision of a democratic and ethical legitimacy for managers, as Child (1969) refers.

Grey (2002), for instance, states that the main role of ME is not, as many authors argue, to provide managers with the necessary knowledge and skills for successfully managing all situations in management field. Instead, he argues, the core function of ME lays in its socializing and legitimating role. Rather than providing students and managers with real resources for an efficient practice, ME constitutes a myth of ‘competence’: it purports and promises to prepare managers for management, but it does that mostly by “enculturating” future managers to an elite culture, through the ‘socializing’ role of the management education context, and by transmitting contemporary management myths<sup>5</sup>, rather than developing ‘required’ skills and knowledge. Some of these predominant myths are technical rationality, control and competition (Bowles, 1997).

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<sup>4</sup> Whilst the classroom may also be perceived as an anxious place, contributing to a static state of things and to a denial of the need to act different or be different (Freedman, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> By alleging to offer an adequate technical training, ME provides status and identification to individuals and socializes those individuals for certain kinds of organizational employment.

Because these myths still prevail in contemporary management, traditional academic philosophies in management education seem dominated by them too; as Reynolds states (2000), the educational method is a significant part of the means by which social values are transmitted. Thus, dominant models in current management education, such as “academic liberalism” and “experiential vocationalism” (Holman, 2000), carry and convey images of manager which rest on the central myths and principles of contemporary management. In this way, ME perpetuates management knowledge and practices associated with these myths; consequently, the concern with control and the aim of controlling dominate choices made within the field. The main tendency of people in situations of uncertainty is to restore the balance and be safe by avoiding any kind of discomfort. Apart from this reassuring role, which myths perform in such situations, they also can constrain creative processes by blocking the emergence of doubts or criticism. Preference lies in rationalization and it emerges in ME programmes through the exaltation of self-reliance, individualism, and ruthlessness (Prasad and Cavanaugh, 1997), marginalizing individuals or groups with less competitive inclinations<sup>6</sup>.

Underlying the emphasis on competition is a dogmatic belief in individualistic self reliance and the survival of the strongest, a legacy from the Social Darwinist doctrine, and a sense that organisational members can shape their own career trajectories and are ultimately responsible for their own organizational destinies (Bilimoria, 2000). Prevalent representations and images of manager integrate characteristics such as ‘linear, hierarchical, individualistic, rational, functional, task focused, short-run oriented, externally driven, and competitive’ (Bilimoria, 1999:464).

To debunk myths in management practice and education means to understand key-beliefs and images through which the identity of management is construed and contemporary management is practised (Bowles, 1997). Ingersoll and Adams (1992) argue that the modern academic and managerial myths reinforce one another in treating the world and people as rational, technical, and individualistic. Pedagogical models (Holman, 2000) enclose diverse/specific representations of manager (“ideal managers”)<sup>7</sup>, matching characteristics of current management myths.

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<sup>6</sup> These valued characteristics are the legacy of the 'myth of the frontier', as Prasad and Cavanaugh (1997) have argued.

<sup>7</sup> The main distinction is based on differences in socialization's role and purposes (Holman, 2000).

Applying what has just been said to the management situation, it seems that current management myths perpetuate, rather than transform, the present state of management and the associated processes of education, by conveying images of manager within a traditional competitive ethic and rationality, showing the best ways of managing, and inhibiting creative production.

These inhibiting processes are very well accepted and rarely contested in current environments of management practice and education, because they respond to a contemporary desire for

A clarity that mirrors what is already known and can be quickly mapped onto existing experience, with as little pain as possible (Freedman, 2002:4)

The uncontested acceptance of such situations appears to constrain the making of new myths, the possibility of flexible perspectives on the management world and practice, and the critical reflection on experience. Attention to affective and creative aspects of organizations and management thus remain neglected in most management educational contexts.

As a consequence of this, exposing the myths and processes involved in the making of management knowledge and practice, within ME contexts, appears to be an important step in order to connect to a more transformative education in management. The comprehension of this specific educational phenomenon will help establish priorities for undergraduate ME, which are yet to be explored, suggesting new directions for the undergraduate ME field, including more critical paths and practices.

The concern with the successful integration of traditional academic philosophies and the complexities of the business environment into a valuable, logical whole still dominates the training and development of effective managers (Bilimoria, 1998b). Bilimoria emphasizes that the normative management discourse legitimated in the educational field is still based on positivism (what is real is measurable), objectivism (the observer can separate from the observed), reductionism (a complex phenomenon can be completely understood in terms of its elements), rationalism (reliance on reason to

understand nature), and science (systematized knowledge can be transmitted to other rational beings). In terms of management and the manager represented, this discourse and educational practices provide conditions for the construction of a manager's image that appears stunted and merely performative.

Whilst evidence suggests that undergraduate ME is now changing (Billimoria, 2000)<sup>8</sup>, it appears that mainstream transformations are underpinned by an interest of driving undergraduate ME to better respond to demands of management practice. I do not share the conviction it should do so. On the one hand, I doubt the improvement of people's careers due to the mastery of the knowledge and skills acquired in business schools (Alsop, 2002). Pope (2002) argues that there are many schools in the management business not adding value, and Gammie (1995) states that this type of learning situation is inappropriate for undergraduate students, even causing actual damage (Anthony, 1986, Leavitt, 1983, Mintzberg, 1991, Whitley et al., 1981). Besides arguing that management education does very little to develop managers' abilities, an additional question is to know what these managers' abilities really are. The fact is, ME presents current difficulties in defining and understanding its real role; this role is commonly presented as a preparation of managers for their future management practice, but it fails to prove or guarantee the claimed advantages of functions ascribed.

In addition, my discomfort regarding the current state of ME culminates in a feeling that 'something is missing': when we are teaching current and/or future managers, in contemporary management classroom, we rarely privilege reflexivity and critical discussions. The modern management curriculum often appears to avoid or conflict with some of the fundamental principles valued by early traditions or knowledge systems: knowledge of self, self-reflexivity and enduring spiritual practice. More critical perspectives and practices in ME, such as Critical Management Studies (CMS), would involve continuous critique, including a critique of it; this fact implies an emphasis on reflexivity. CMS might then differentiate in terms of the extent of its philosophical and methodological reflexivity.

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<sup>8</sup> The principal changes the author emphasizes are at managerial skill assessment and development; the introduction of more global perspectives; an emphasis on increasing the technological capability of students; newer communication methods and infrastructures for teaching diverse and dispersed students; increased real-world immersion experiences built into program requirements; and the cross-disciplinary integration of management subject matter through a number of creative methods, including integrative courses, capstone courses, case competitions, organizational simulations, and team activities.

Cunliffe (2003) points out that alternative but rarely practiced pedagogies, commonly those more reflexive and critical, enable the complex and non mechanistic nature of managerial practice to be addressed in an easier and more complete manner.

Numerous types of ‘reflexivities’ have been identified (e.g. Holland, Latour, 1987); but, generically, reflexivity is entwined with a crisis of representation (Clifford, 1986) that questions our relationship with our social world and the ways in which we account for our experience; that is, questioning the distinctions we make between what is fact or fiction, the nature of knowledge, and ultimately our purpose and practice. It is characterised by an insecurity regarding the basic assumptions, discourse and practices used in describing reality (Cunliffe, 2003:983).

The pedagogies based on reflexive strategies build on the way managers learn ‘naturally’ at work; they provide an eclectic range of teaching practices for the management educator and are relevant to and critical of the object of study, encouraging management educators to review and improve their own practice. Their organizational axioms appear to be more compatible with the nature of the academic work. Most of all, these alternative ways of theorizing and practising management in contexts of ME promise those involved with processes of construction of representations of manager and management participated by critical and reflexive understandings of managers and management, allowing another way forward.

My research interests focus on the construction and negotiation of meanings in undergraduate ME, that is, an interest in comprehending the processes involved in the dynamics of ME, at undergraduate level, its theoretical ground, functions, and the way it works and influences the knowledge of subjects involved. Such an understanding is aimed at future action, in terms of possibilities for critical practices being implemented in ESTG, and perhaps in a wider world

ME studies are commonly based at the level of graduate education, rather than undergraduate, on ‘already managers’, instead of ‘only students of management’. There is lack of information and research on the influence or importance ascribed to that level of management education, in the (re)construction of the representational schemata of

students<sup>9</sup> who go through such an academic experience. Core problems discussed regarding the learning processes of students, in undergraduate management courses (Gammie, 1995), such as lack of experience and the perceived irrelevance of this knowledge to immediate career aspirations and development, reveal the main concerns authors and practitioners still have with the functional goals of ME.

Gammie (1995:34) argues that undergraduate ME does not prepare for management practice

[The] difficulty arises when attempting to encapsulate the determinants of business prosperity into a constrained programme which, in turn, will provide the skills needed to address the individuality of each specific business situation.

Quillien (1993), Pettigrew and Whipp (1991), Winter (1989), Neumann and Neumann (1993) and Astin (1984) focus on the interdependency between education and experience at strategic level, exposing the inadequacy of ME at undergraduate level, as the students commonly lack exposure to the business environment.

The critiques and arguments just presented derive from specific expectations for ME, that is, it must perform a role that brings improvements to MP, as currently conceived.

The present work follows a different line of investigation; the emphasis is put on exploring processes of knowledge construction in undergraduate students; the focus will be put on the learning experience of the undergraduate student. The concern with knowing how the course influences students, their processes of construing knowledge, is narrowed down by asking, more precisely, what the images of manager and management that the course helps students to construct are, consequently asking how the course is contributing to perpetuate a limited and performative image of manager, with limited possibilities in terms of creative and critical processes and thought, faced with evermore demanding environments to deal with, or, on the contrary, facilitating, providing firm soil for alternative, critical pedagogies in the ME field.

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<sup>9</sup> Investigation and explanations largely focus on the impact of a number of teaching methodologies on managerial learning and subsequent performance (Gammie, 1995), focusing on results, especially those concerning management practice's changes/improvements. I noticed lack of investigation on direct relational processes between teachers and students in management, in terms of cognitive developments, relations or consequences

The intention is to go deeper and, through the study of a specific case (the management course of ESTG), increase the understanding of images of the manager and management which are provided by the dominant rational models of ME at undergraduate level through exploring students' constructions of the subject. This strategy will allow me to discuss the value of knowledge and images constructed by students in terms of the added value these images might represent for students, for their future/present education, as well as, for their integration in the management world. The study of this context will also allow me to conjecture about the possibility of providing alternative images, through alternative practices, another way forward.

The fact that the undergraduate and the processes of knowledge constructed within, constitutes an under-explored area of management studies could be enough to lead the work through. However, this important motivation is not enough to explain my interest in conducting the investigation; the possibility of developing alternative ways for ME is the most relevant and stimulating element in the research. Thus, the main purposes of this research converges on the idea of exploring how and in what ways a specific educational program in management, at the undergraduate level prepares students for what managers are and do, as well as exploring the possibilities/limits to do it differently, in a critical manner.

Management myths orient the structure of management education and its functioning; these myths underpin the representations of manager held by educational agents and orient the pedagogical practice of these agents, subsequently moulding the representations construed by students; thus, I believe that, in order to understand either the impact of a certain management education model on students<sup>10</sup>, particularly at undergraduate level, or the possibilities for alternative models, like CMS, I need to explore representations of the elements involved (agents and students), as well as the presence of particular management myths, in those representations. Therefore, representations constitute a privileged conceptual vehicle to explore the impact of a management education model, as representational ways of thinking and acting due to its

<sup>10</sup> Apart from the myths and representations of the educational agents, other influences could be considered, as they participate in the construction of students' representations. Factors such as predisposition and expectations on a future career, interests, social class, and, particularly, students' previous educational experiences are major influence factors were not included in this present investigation, as they were the focus of previous research (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999).

dominance in our world (Heidegger, 1977; Derrida, 1982), are relevant to the comprehension of the modern notion of management (Kallinikos, 1996).

The existence of management as currently conceived and put to action is served by representational processes. ME has transformed the representation of manager into that of an expert of management, producing and legitimating specific forms of organisation. The representations of manager and management that management students possess, are social representations, and that means knowledge structures made up of beliefs, consensually shared among a social group of people, within a culture (in Latane and Schaller, 1996)<sup>11</sup>. The meanings produced are negotiated (Blum, 1971) among the human elements involved in the process, elements that constitute the co-constructors of this knowledge and understandings. Therefore, exploring the constructions may reveal the process of construing and negotiating it.

The educational process involving both educators and management students is a socialization process which involves dynamics and relevant modes of communicating such beliefs and meanings (Latane and Schaller, 1996) to others. Factors affecting any process of communication, in terms of contents and distribution, equally affect the effectiveness for sharing beliefs and meanings. Representations of manager and management within undergraduate ME are negotiated and constituted through linguistic acts and practices, as representations in general (Alvesson, 1994). Negotiating understandings and validating stereotypical representations depends on pressures exerted by agents, characteristics and background of students, as well as the utility of representations in defining a social group distinctively from another group (Boland and Richard, 2001). Moreover, it depends on the degree of correspondence between received and expected/observed representations on management and managers. This corresponds to the desire that individuals have of predicting their environment, which contributes to the elimination of representations that do not correspond to expected and observable instances.

Representations possessed by students and the classroom dynamics/processes involved in their construction are expected to reveal/disclose how these construction and

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<sup>11</sup> This conception about representations goes in line with social constructionist perspective on knowledge construction, as it considers that representations are construed within a social interactions' environment.

negotiation processes happen, within ME contexts. These are presumed to be processes supported by underlying myths, transmitted and transforming knowledge through the negotiation of informal meanings between agents and students. These processes are affected by the same variables that affect every communication process, and are selected (eliminated or maintained) partly through their confirmed or disconfirmed feasibility<sup>12</sup>.

Representations and classroom interactions constitute the privileged means to achieve the aimed comprehension of ME influences on students. Representations which students form during their experience of a management course may inform us of the processes of management and images of manager developed within the course, providing us with understandings on the impact/the influence of management conceptions, trends, and myths on students, transmitted through specific agents in processes of so-called ‘management education’. The agents’ practices, and the interactions developed between agents and students will add comprehension, on the regard of the processes involved, principles and models adopted, and probabilities for alternative paths.

These particular ‘products’ of knowledge construction will enable me to explore and discuss further concerns, such as how to improve my ME practice and how to drive developments of the course in a desired direction.

Drawing my work from a constructionist perspective of knowledge and focusing on representations as specific and significant knowledge elements, interactively (re)construed in ME settings, I will explore representations partly as being the result of the impact of ME on students, through processes of socialisation taken by educational agents. The same representations also will be looked at as the building blocks of “types of managers”<sup>13</sup>; in an attempt to disclose the presence of preferential myths supporting each type.

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<sup>12</sup> Students’ representations identified through data analysis should inform the processes of meaning-negotiation and construction within ME undergraduate courses; they should probably correspond to remaining representations after the process of negotiation and selection; those which are considered by students as reality-confirmed or desired; representations of manager and management which guarantee a higher degree of environmental control, previewing events and consequences, will possibly be more desirable and permanent in individuals’ constructions.

<sup>13</sup> This means the constitutive blocks of an ‘identity of manager and management’.

Groups of students who are experiencing the management course at different stages will be investigated, enabling a differentiation of representations. A confrontation of students' representations and teachers' representations about management and the manager will be added.

The exploration of students' representations of management and manager will be carried out in relation to contemporary myths of management and "ideal types" of manager transmitted through models of management education. To accomplish that, models of education taken from Holman (2000) are systematized, and the "ideal types of manager" contained in these models are confronted with types of managers derived from students and teachers' data. Same models will help me distinguishing between pedagogies/methods/strategies, used by the teachers, more traditional, managerialist, and those in line with a critical education.

Moreover, a systematization of myths of management, from Bowles' (1997), is made, in order to identify the presence of such myths in representations of the manager and conceptions about management practice, in students and teachers' data.

Whilst my work seriously considers approaches to management and management education that are relevant to this study, such as the above mentioned Bowles' study on myths of management or Holman's models of ME, differences can be underlined. My study refers to the presence of myth phenomenon and myth-making processes, both in management practice and ME, but myth is considered as shared meaning, which describes reality in a representational mode. It also looks at ME through models of management education, which hold and transmit 'ideal types' of managers, but, unlike Holman, it considers the students' perspective, in addition to those of the educational agents to define types of manager. Thus, the present research utilises a methodological system for exploring the theme, which has not been provided by previous investigations, through the development of an original approach and method combining perspectives of students and staff.

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## **Thesis structure**

This thesis is divided into five chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter addresses the approaches to and perspectives of management and the central role of ‘uncertainty’ in the origin and development of management is outlined. The way management has evolved into a powerful social mythological construction of the present, emphasising its pitfalls and positive aspects, is described and perspectives of management which approach it as a field characterised by recurrent and specific moments of mythical-thinking and myth-making processes are underlined. Special emphasis is put on Bowles’ work, around contemporary myths of management.

Finally, relationships between management practice and management education are identified. The idea of a reciprocal support between management and management education, regarding the construction and legitimisation of knowledge, theory and practice of management, is developed.

The second chapter gives relevance to explicit and implicit relations between management practice and management education by addressing the evolution of management education and its current conditions, as well as the main guidelines of investigations within management education contexts. Theoretical perspectives of management education are later integrated and differentiated through the use of Holman’s contemporary models of management education. A special focus is put on critical education’s developments, limits and possibilities.

The third chapter focuses on representations, the main devices used within this research; the chapter refers to the processes and elements involved in their construction, and the role played by myths in such processes. Perspectives of knowledge construction are considered, at both an individual level<sup>14</sup> and at a social level<sup>15</sup>.

The research design follows, in chapter 4. The intention will be to develop an investigation on the impact of ME in students, focusing on undergraduate management students looking at their representations of management and manager and underlying

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<sup>14</sup> This perspective considers that knowledge is construed internally and tested through the interaction with the outside world \_ Kelly, 1991.

<sup>15</sup> Here attention is drawn to the socially construed nature of knowledge, placing it not in the minds of single individuals but rather in the relational processes of social exchange, as Gergen (1982) or Lyddon (1995) argue.

myths plus educational agents also looking at their representations of manager and management and underpinning myths, as well as at their practices and interactions with students.

I am primarily interested in students' representations<sup>16</sup> and the matching of these representations with those from any model of management education; teachers' representations of manager and management and their main pedagogical orientation(s) and practices; implicit/explicit pedagogic orientation in the curriculum and other course documents. In order to obtain students' data, an approach from Kelly's (1991) Personal Construct Theory will be developed, and repertory grids will be applied, with the purpose of eliciting constructs from students and relate them to myths and metaphors of educational models<sup>17</sup>. A case study will be applied in advance, so as to explore basic concepts and meanings of manager and management in investigated students. The technique facilitates the gathering of subsequent constructs with a repertory grid and will allow further combination of data. With the intention of getting staff data, individual in-depth interviews, as well as classroom observations, with some elements of the teaching body will be carried out. To complete previous information, documentary analysis will also be applied to curriculum and other significant documentation of the course.

Chapter five develops data analysis and interpretation. Qualitative data analysis is supported by ATLAS/Ti software (for the exhaustive analysis of students' constructs, teachers' in-depth interviews and documentary analysis) and by WebGrid III cluster focused analysis (to obtain the archetypes of manager, in students).

The discussion aims to provide better comprehension of both the representational and the action domains of teachers and students, as well as knowing how these students' representations are affected by the role and action of the ME context, and which myths support these processes.

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<sup>16</sup>The observation focused on students in the beginning and at the end of their academic training – 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year students. First, the groups were considered a whole entity, then separated and compared among themselves.

<sup>17</sup> It is considered that constructs are ways of communicating shared expectations and rules. The educational context is part of a shared experience; management's higher education context produces shared experiences for the construction of knowledge on manager and management. Thus, it conditions students' construction of knowledge through curricula and teachers, as well as other agents.

My research embraces diverse views and integrates information from different participants in the ME learning processes. Hence a broader and more complete perspective of the phenomenon is expected. The qualitative approach and methodology developed within the research leads to more refined data and constitutes a new methodology for identifying educational models in management education.

Interpretations are finalized with conclusions and suggestions in a closing section. The discussion of results will enable me to answer the initial questions and speculating on why the phenomenon of ME, in this context, is happening that way and where to go next...

With this research I seek to explore the image of manager within ME context, as a construction partly derived from educational influences, just as Holman has done by presenting ideal types of managers generated by different models of ME, but developing a dissimilar process by adding the conditions of myth production within these contexts, and within a encounter with students' experience, besides the context and agents' logic of influences. The tendency to minimize the subjective aspects of individuals needs to be overcome in research, and I intend to do that by following the approach I designed for my work. By considering the students' action in the construction of manager and management representations and image, I see students as an experiencing subject, formed in interaction with the world and others, capable of accepting, resisting or subverting that which comes its way, in the form of management education (Freedman, 2002).

The question is that of the way in which images or representations offered by ME agents/context are limitative to develop students as future managers and at what extent these students respond to it accepting and/or transforming it. But, more than that, what motivates this research is whether management education can be changed to promote either new forms of managerial practice or other development strategies, and how CMS might be a real and effective instrument of change in that field.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MANAGERS AND MANAGEMENT: ROLES AND PRACTICES**

We live in societies obsessed with management [...]. We idolize managers [...]. We pretend to train huge numbers of innocent students to become them. Yet, we cannot come to grip with the simple reality of what they do. Why?

Mintzberg (1991, 103)

#### **Introduction**

The main goal of this study is to explore the impact management education has on students' representations of both managers and management practice in a specific management course, at undergraduate level. These representations continue to be the subject of a complex and controversial field of investigation, despite much debate and research. Therefore, the role of managers remains a complex and problematic issue, since many questions remain unanswered, such as what managers are or should be and what they do or should do.

This chapter reviews the literature that deals with management theories, approaches and perspectives. The first part of the chapter describes the evolution of management theory and its most important current issues. The description offers context-based explanations of the evolution of management practice throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Because the constructs *uncertainty* and *control* are central to the evolution of management practice and theory, as well as being soundly related with processes of myth-making, they are given special emphasis in this part of the chapter.

The second part of the chapter examines the theories of myth and mythic thinking by looking at contemporary myths in the management field. A review of the evolution of myths and metaphors is presented, followed by a description of the main myths and metaphors involved in management practice. Their role, usefulness, and functions are also discussed. Finally, approaches which link management to the making and transmission of myths, notably the work of Bowles (1997), are discussed.

## **Management Theory and Practice**

From the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to date, the main theorists of management have typically thought of, and presented, management as a body of scientific knowledge explaining and anticipating events and observable behaviours within a specific social reality: the organisation. Within these theories, the aim has commonly been to generate forecasts about the way the organisations will behave under certain conditions or when faced with certain events (Gilbert and Doran, 1993); these forecasts aim at the control of events and phenomena and help managers to make decisions and plan changes.

Researchers who adopt paradigms other than that of positivism have emphasized the need to relate management theory to specific realities, to define the relations between knowledge and power (and vice-versa) and to relate the theories to scientific communities and specific applications (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). This does not mean that they abandon control but rather that they change perspectives and strategies on how to achieve such control; management theory shifted from a group of abstract representations of reality that were possibly generalised to all management situations, to a group of representations in very close association with certain contexts or cultures. Nevertheless, problem issues and concerns in management theory seem to have changed little in the last thirty years. Darr, 1969), stated that

Management seems to be in a state of confusion both in theory and in practice (p770).

Lack of agreement over problems and issues or solutions, the absence of a general glossary or even of a general theory in management, have been seen as relevant indicators of such a confused state in management theory. According to Guillen (1994), models of management tend to be complex because they need to address two difficult issues at the same time: the technical task of organization; and establishing, maintaining, and justifying a system of authority. The problem of organization entails implementing both an ideology to support the system of authority in the firm and the techniques that enable the organization to meet its goals. The ideology and the techniques tend to reinforce each other. Guillen (1994) considers that models are useful to managers because they interpret the problem and provide practice guidelines for action. The way in which managers perceive, assess and interpret problems is partially

shaped by some ideology<sup>18</sup>. Thus managerial ideologies are cognitive tools. Ideologies are also part of the practical guidelines for action because all models of management create and justify a system of hierarchical authority. Managers develop new models of management, or use those already available, to simplify their analysis of reality, evaluate alternative paths of action, and arrange the organizational means at their disposal. Managers will select among alternative models depending on their training, mentality, experiences, institutional constraints, and so on.

It is unlikely that the analysis of theory evolution will evolve into a general theory that will predict when and where different models of management will be embraced. As paradigms of ideas, management models are widely adopted in practice only when institutional circumstances conspire with them. The nature of problems confronting managers and firms, the impact of professional groups, the mentalities of managers, the response of workers, and the regulatory role of the State, are all relevant factors for the adoption or the rejection of certain management model. A truly comparative framework for organizational analysis should balance technical and economic variables, and institutional factors, in order to study the adoption of basic models and the eclectic trends of the late twentieth century. A number of managerial theorists have offered similar readings of managerial history (Whyte, 1956; Wren, 1972; in Scott Morton, 1991), as have some of most enthusiastic critics of management (Mills, 1951; Edwards, 1979). In fact, despite serious theoretical and political differences, scholars have converged on a common vision of how managerial thought has evolved. Approaching and understanding managerial models in an historical and reciprocal support constitutes an adequate way to analyze their relevance and impact.

### **Approaches to management**

Although some scholars have suggested that managerial theorizing has produced little more than a plethora of perspectives (Koontz, 1961), or that enlargement of the subject area does not mean enrichment, most have detected more orderly development. In one influential study of managerial ideology, Darr (1969) used a listing of management perspectives/approaches from Koontz, which he considered to include all main studies and approaches existing at the time. The list characterises six schools of management

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<sup>18</sup> An ideology is, in Guillen's perspective (1994), a set of assumptions and beliefs about how the world works and how it ought to work.

and refers to the evolution of management theory some decades ago. Moreover, the list makes it possible to observe the new perspectives, the main problems and/or solutions that have emerged since then.

Reviewed perspectives of the evolution of management reveal an oscillation between ‘rational’ and ‘natural’ or ‘socio-cultural’ ways of organising and managing, ‘mechanistic’ and ‘organic’, ‘individualism’ and ‘communalism’, or ‘rational’ and ‘normative’ ways of control in organisations, assuming particular forms at particular historical moments. This oscillation constitutes a mature theme in discussions about management theory and analysis. The grouping of perspectives of management is often based on the criteria of this oscillation. Although these perspectives are normally described as sequential, in specific moments of management evolution, some authors argue that there is an alternate domination of each broad perspective, even if taking specific forms (Barley and Kunda, 1992).

Guillen (1994) considers that management evolved into three basic models of management, from which all managerial approaches (past and current ones) derive, one way or another, but in an eclectic way. The models are: Scientific Management, Human Relations and Structural Analysis. He believes it should be possible to understand current trends in management by referring to the features of Scientific Management, Human Relations and Structural Analysis. These three basic management approaches are driven by a desire of reducing uncertainty and by genuine efforts to provide management with tools and methods for improving the operation of the enterprise (Shenhav and Weitz, 2000).

Barley and Kunda (1992) analyse the evolution of management theory through the lenses of control and the evolution of control strategies. They define five basic approaches to management, oscillating between the adoption of rational or normative forms of control: ‘industrial betterment’, ‘scientific management’, ‘human relations’, ‘systems rationalism’, ‘organisational culture’. Industrial betterment, human relations and organisational culture are grounded in an ideology of normative control, while scientific management and systems rationalism reflect an ideology of rational control.

These approaches fall into two broad groups, five trends which appear to cluster coherently into two thematically contrasting sets. The rhetoric of industrial betterment, human relations, and organizational culture emphasize normative control. Proponents of each, claim that organizations are, or should be, collectives. Whether the dominant image is of community, group, or culture, each depicts the organization as a locus of shared values and moral involvement. Accordingly, all three blur the boundaries between work and non-work and between managers and workers. Because advocates of each envision cohesion and loyalty as the ultimate sources of productivity, they exhort managers to be leaders: to set an example, to inspire, to motivate, and to provide for the employee's welfare. As sentient, social beings, employees are said to perform more diligently when they are committed to a collective whose ideals they value. Control therefore rests on shaping workers' identities, emotions, attitudes, and beliefs.

In contrast, the second set of rhetorics emphasizes rational control. Proponents of scientific management and systems rationalism argue that productivity stems from carefully articulated methods and systems. Each portrays the firm as a machine, either mechanical or computational, that can be analyzed into its component parts, modified, and reassembled into a more effective whole. Both sets of rhetoric exhort managers to be experts: to bring rational analysis and a body of empirical knowledge to bear on the problems of the firm. Furthermore, both assume that employees are calculative actors with instrumental orientations towards work. Employees are said either to understand the economic advantages of an efficient system or to be powerless to resist a well-designed structure. Since compliance is therefore unproblematic, control can be readily exercised by manipulating systems.

Barley and Kunda (1992) presume that rational control-based approaches to management are related to periods of economic contraction, while normative control-based approaches emerge in economically favoured periods; they define 'rational' forms of control as driven by the behaviour of organisational actors, using hard discipline, and appealing to an individualistic ethic of success or workers' self interest, while 'normative' forms of control attend to the thought and emotions of actors, as well as, behaviour, in a species of 'moral authority'.

Clegg (1996) presents the classical notion of ‘differentiation’ vs. the modern/post-modern notion of ‘de-differentiation’ as a chief subject in management theory. Literature reviewed within this study, on the evolution of management theories, suggests a different way of explaining the chief subject, which I highlight here: ‘uncertainty’ and ‘control’ are dominant concepts in management theory reviews (Guillen, 1994; Barley and Kunda, 1992; Weitz and Shenhav, 2000; Crozier, 1964; Pfeffer, 1981), seemingly having a central position in regard to management origins and/or evolution.

Barley and Kunda and Guillen’s ideas complement each other, with regard to the ideological character of management theories, corroborating what has been referred to here, in regard to management models as ideology-shaped. Both authors accept that management theories may also be treated as rhetorics or ideologies<sup>19</sup>; Barley and Kunda (1992) suggest that, in managerial theories, the objects of rhetorical construction have typically been corporations, employees, managers and the means by which the latter can direct the other two.

Other authors, like Shenhav and Weitz (2000), corroborate these ideas; underlining the importance of ideology, in their study of organisational uncertainty; the attempt was to understand the impact of social, political and cultural factors on management practices and theory. These authors ascribe the responsibility of the origin of management theory and practice to the development of the ‘uncertainty’ concept, due to the interest of mechanical engineers in justifying and expanding their practice and profession; engineers expanded their professional practice and responsibility by extending their concern with technical uncertainty to the concern with organisational uncertainty; afterwards the construct ‘uncertainty’ became detached from its ideological origins, and independent from the professional justification which increased its importance, evolving into an objective environmental condition of management.

Focusing on the history of ‘uncertainty’, Weitz and Shenhav (2000) show that the concept emerged and was objectified as a useful ideology of management, which a

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<sup>19</sup> By an ideology Guillen means a flow of discourse that unintentionally disseminates a set of assumptions about the nature of the objects with which it deals. In this sense, all theories have an ideological component, since all theorists must adopt some ontological stance in order to proceed with their work.

specific professional group used to justify their professional domain. Treating management theory as composed of ideological issues, and studying central constructs of management theory as ideologies, rather than only a feature of internal and external organisational environments, has been the way, for these authors, to study the evolution of the ‘uncertainty’ construct. This construct is central to management development, being usually present in formulations of organisation and management theories. However, the importance of ‘uncertainty’ for management thinking is commonly attributed to economical and functional factors, which are the objective needs of the firm; Weitz and Shenhav (2000) presented an alternative view, by ascribing the origin of management ideologies to ‘uncertainty’, explaining the roots of management theory through its development. Firstly the authors underline the crucial role performed by uncertainty in this development; then they suggest an alternative perspective from which the construct can be approached, not as the objective condition of organisational and management environments, but as the origin of management theory and developments itself.

Organization theory, which followed these managerial ideologies, went through various phases, each seeking to conceptualize the functioning of the firm. The appearance of the now classic texts of March and Symon (1958), Lickert (1967) and Blau and Scott (1962) provided the necessary integration and formalization. Others (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967; Galbraith 1973, 1977; Scott 1987) placed the concept of uncertainty squarely in the epicentre of modern organization theory; they consider uncertainty the primary variable in determining organizational structure and patterns of behaviour and suggest that organizational forms vary as a function of the environment in which they operate.

Subsequent, less mechanistic, formulations of organization theory, introduce the concept of uncertainty as a source of power, a factor critical to understanding the patterns of behaviour in complex organizations (Crozier 1964). Others, such as Hickson and colleagues (1971), argue that subgroups in organizations obtain power depending on the amount of uncertainty to which they relate, and their success in coping with it. Similarly, decision process theorists posit that behaviour cannot be predicted *a priori*, either by the conditions of the environment or by the intentions of organizational actors

(March and Symon, 1958), pointing at the need to devise programmes for routinizing decision making. Phenomenological approaches emphasized the socially constructed nature of organizational realities, and the creation of shared knowledge and belief systems (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983).

At the centre of contemporary institutional thinking is the notion that the basic tendency of modern socio-cultural environments is rationalization, the creation of cultural schemes defining means-to-ends relationships and standardizing systems of control over activities and actors, which is the essence of organizing (Scott and Meyer 1994). Uncertainty is perceived by institutionalists as a powerful engine, an important and potent force that encourages imitation which lends legitimacy to the organization, and its activities. The underlying view of uncertainty as an objective environmental phenomenon remains unchanged.

Whichever author's presentation we may choose regarding most basic models of/approaches to management, they all are supported by the concern with uncertainty, and by objectives of reducing or even eliminating subsequent perceived variability in management. 'Turbulence' and 'control' are subsequent constructs, as a consequence of 'uncertainty', developing as central in management. When Mintzberg developed his ideas on planning (1991, 1993), he explained the investment that managers make in planning activities, by emphasising the obsession that managers/management have for control. Such an extreme concern is related to uncertainty, seemingly always present in management environments.

The 'uncertainty' construct apparently relates to the idea of 'turbulence', which made its first official appearance in the 1960s, according to Mintzberg (1993), with the works of Emery and Trist (1965) and Terreberry (1968). The concept expanded with Toffler (1970; Wimalarisi, 1986), in addition to many other works, to the present day (for a detailed description, see Mintzberg, 1993). By reviewing the works where turbulence is a central construct, Mintzberg (1993) argues that, at the time, each era is seen by its authors and practitioners as a turbulent period; nevertheless, when retrospectively observed or explored by authors from succeeding periods, the same era seems much more stable and secure than their own. The real meaning of 'turbulent' is thus difficult

to define; Mintzberg (1993) emphasizes such a difficulty, pointing to the fact that managers are so obsessed with control of uncertainty and guarantee of stability that this obsession can lead them to perceive any perturbation of organisational environments as ‘turbulence’ or ‘unstable conditions’. Within such an interpretation of the events, turbulence means nothing more than change that planning could not handle, that is, conditions beyond the comprehension of procedures.

No matter how turbulent or uncertain a period may be correctly or incorrectly perceived, it is the feeling and cognition of people’s experiences at the time that count. These experiences dictate the effects and consequences for people. The consequences of perceived or experienced turbulence and uncertainty are real, regardless of the true existence of turbulence in that particular environment; and so are the strategies people create to reduce anxiety generated by turbulence and uncertainty felt. A ‘successful management practice’ usually means these kinds of strategies. Management strategies generally mean ‘control’ strategies, no matter how many diverse practices this ‘control’ need may bring with it.

The management question is ‘how much organization and control’ for adequate functioning, rather than ‘control versus other strategies’. The question leads to two primary positions in management, according to Pugh (1997): the ‘organisers’, claiming for more and better control and the ‘behaviouralists’, maintaining that continuous control over behaviours is self-defeating and defending that autonomy and trust must be given to people who are managed. None of these positions reveal real alternative management strategies to control ones.

The issue of control is central in generally defining perspectives on management. Barley and Kunda (1992) believe that, besides the concern with professionalization of management (Chandler, 1977), the evolution of management theory is marked by the formulation of theories that minister to a central problem in management: the control of complex organizations. Thus, it appears that concepts such as ‘uncertainty’, ‘turbulence’ and ‘control’ have been and still are central to the development of management theory.

Moreover, these concepts appear to have been central to the development of management education as well. The emphasis on turbulence, especially since the late

1960s (Mintzberg, 1993), is coincident with management authors and practitioners' concern about professionalization of management and formal education in management. There is concern and questioning related to the usefulness of management education and the consequences this usefulness has for management practice, as part of this development too; these facts corroborate the idea that the questioning of management education in terms of goals, methods and results, has emerged in line with the idea of a turbulent and ever-changing world; this state generates anxiety regarding the practice of management. Control strategies developed and applied within management practice appear to reflect the necessity of control.

We may consider that the development of and concern about a formal management education, in a variety of offers and settings, probably reflects the same necessity of control: to prevent any kind of problems or difficulties in management practice by preparing individuals, who perform or will perform management, in a formal and planned manner. This could also be one major reason to justify the predominant concern with functional relationships between management education and management practice, in debates about management education. Setting up functional relationships between these two fields can be assumed to happen in the following manner: management education exists in order to guarantee a successful management practice, by attenuating the uncertainty of management practice. That may be the main reason for its permanence in the contemporary educational panorama. Otherwise, why should societies continue investing so much in management education? Justifying the relevance of management education for improving management practice still seems to be one best reason to continue investing in it.

One main motive presented by Mintzberg (1993) to justify the investment made to date in management training, particularly in planning strategies and activities, is exactly the fact that authors and practitioners believe that planning, training and experience allow managers to handle turbulence or, at least, convince managers they can. 'When turbulence comes, be prepared and 'educated' to control it, to plan and manage it!' Whilst this may have a tranquilizing effect on managers and on all those who depend on management life, authors such as Mintzberg (1993) and Galbraith (1967) defend that planning activities works much better in stable management environments than in uncertain or changing organisational environments; such an argument formally

contradicts the tranquilliser effect of planning by controlling uncertainty in unpredictable management situations.

### **Management theory evolution and myth-making processes**

From the above, it may be accepted that uncertainty has been a central construct in the origin and development of management theory. No matter what classification or taxonomy we may consider, regardless of which author's perspective or approach we may choose, uncertainty is a constant presence in management theories, often explicitly and sometimes implied. Management environments, characterised in this way, generate a constant and continuous necessity of control in management practice, which has dominated management strategies..

The fragmented character of management knowledge and the fact that management is short of consistent, law-like generalizations, attempted by early management researchers, contribute to this need for control in management environments. Such need also relates to the specific nature of the 'identity of management' and associated problems, as emphasized by Freedman (2002). Fragilities of management knowledge started being uncovered, during management evolution, due to the inherent vulnerability of its nature, as Whitley recognized (1984); this state of insecurity appears to have generated a permanent concern with uncertainty, as well as primary investments in strategies of control and anxiety reduction. As a consequence of these fragilities and identity problems, abundant production of trends and myths emerged. Weick (2001) explains these productions by arguing that, as societal and group identities crumble or break down it becomes difficult for the individual actor to retain a reference structure on which to base rational action.

Specific historical and social moments in management evolution can be perceived as particular moments of myth-making activity in order to decrease anxiety caused by changes, instability, and variety, investing on control. With Scientific Management, we are in the presence of a myth of technical rationality, which emphasizes the accomplishment of given means-end relations quite different from a more comprehensive version of rationality or reason. Later, the bureaucracy concept of Max Weber (1947) reinforced this myth (Morgan, 1997) through the clear regulation and supervision of human activity. Later still, the pursuit of a technical rationality was to be

further elaborated into all areas of organization and management under the generic label of ‘strategic management’ (March and Simon, 1958; Mintzberg, 1991; 1993).

Mintzberg (1993) explains the myth very clearly when he reminds us of Hofstede’s (1980) idea that the planning system allows managers to sleep more peacefully, even if it does not really work (see also Golding, 1996). As new values and beliefs appeared, new myths and new rituals were asked for, but the competence for controlling management environment(s) and management situations remained a constant concern among theorists and practitioners, in order to reduce or suppress anxiety and stress. However, this obsession with control merely reflects an illusion of control (Mintzberg, 1993) as the shaping of the organisational destiny is accomplished by statements of intentions and abstractions of plans, rather than by tangible actions. Authors debunking the myth of control argue that the engagement with some cognitive activity about an outcome, prior to its occurrence, makes managers believe they gain control over it (Langley, 1988). To have it on paper is to have it under control. Forecasting and planning are thus claimed to be no more than magic rituals (Gimpl and Dakin, 1984) whose major function is to tranquillize individuals, independently from leading to effective solutions and results.

Control and planning strategies boost confidence, reduce anxiety and affirm managerial action (Gimpl and Dakin, 1984). People who feel out of control tend towards inactivity, while the feeling of having control makes them act. Therefore, strategic planning appears more as a *superstitious* activity with lack of scientific justification or rational explanation regarding performed behaviour<sup>20</sup>. Control, achieved through planning, or through the manipulation of social conditions, functions like the ancient myths: it tranquillizes individuals face to the uncertain and the unpredictable, in stressful situations. Problems are removed from consciousness by appointing other people to work on them; people transfer their loyalty to control, or to planning strategies, because these are privileged ways of creating the future, as aimed by that people. All kinds of individuals, directly or indirectly involved in management; educational agents, stakeholders, bankers, stock market analysts, directors; alleviate the anxieties caused by management uncertainties through ensuring that managers engage in control strategies,

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<sup>20</sup> The reason is the same as for magical rites practiced in ancient civilizations: ritualized forecasting might encourage necessarily random action.

particularly in planning activities: organisations will be properly managed if managers know how to control and formally plan. In a mythical sense, the rational model simplifies structures that make our world more understandable (Huff, 1980).

So, the construction of management knowledge is seen by many managers and educators as driven by rational change in management theorizing. This construction process is broadly described and accepted as the story of management heroes who, aided by superior understanding, lead the way to management truth and the development of management principles and laws (Strassmann, 2002).

Weick (2001) interprets the confused state in which management action seems to be involved during these periods of uncertainty and confusion as a stage of mythical thinking instead of a confused state of rational thinking. The uncertainty and unpredictability, characteristics of management environments (Jabri, 1997; Weitz and Shenhav, 2000; Mintzberg, 1993), shape action and strategies, generating myths that may attenuate consequences of inherent characteristics<sup>21</sup> of management identity.

Critical, interpretive theories, have led to accounts of knowledge construction, which conceptualize the creation of knowledge as a social process in which personal, social, and political values, and power relations, inevitably play an important role (Longino, 2002); changes in knowledge, or in what counts as knowledge, may follow changes in values, power relations, and other features of the context in which knowledge is produced. According to this perspective, management knowledge is created in a context or situation that influences both the form and content of that knowledge. In this view, producers of elite knowledge, such as managers, are members of interpretive communities who construct accounts of the world coloured by their own positions in that world, accounts that reflect both the context and other aspects of the situation in which this knowledge is produced, including power and underlying myths (Strassmann, 1996).

One way or another, the fabrication of myths and their presence as a support of knowledge construction appear to be a constant in management and ME contexts.

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<sup>21</sup> I am referring to its changing and permanently reconstructed nature, as well as its historical fragility. The answers authors/investigators produce to questions on 'identity of management' are partly the result of these management myths' fabrication and transmission (Morgan, 1997; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Bowles, 1997).

In order to approach management and consequently explore management representations, the present work favours a perspective which sees management as a theory and practice involved in the making of myths, and centrally concerned with the fabrication of myths whose particular function is to reduce uncertainty and subsequent anxiety. The work also favours a perspective that sees the construction of knowledge as a social process to which, personal, social, and political values, and power relations, contribute. The partiality, interests, and personal judgments are accepted as participants in the process of constructing knowledge, in management practice and education. During this process of construction, moments favouring mythical thinking and the subsequent development of particular myths happen; these myths are intended to be exposed by my work, after exploring students' constructions in a particular ME setting, as I believe that debunking these myths contributes to understand key-beliefs and images through which the identity of management is construed, contemporary management is practiced (Bowles, 1997) and future managers are formed, in terms of identity and knowledge.

Myths can constrain creative processes in individuals, besides reassuring them; they can block the emergence of doubts or criticism (Jabri, 1997), due to the efforts people make to avoid any kind of discomfort and to look for secure situations (Smiley, 1992). Consequently, management myths often perpetuate, rather than transform, the current state of management, the construction of management knowledge and the production of alternative forms for developing ME, because of their inhibiting role of creativity processes. The above presented description of management theories and myths has just disclosed this perpetuation phenomenon.

These inhibiting mechanisms are very well accepted and rarely contested in current environments of management and ME because they reduce anxiety and pain, preventing the emergence of instabilities. However, this appears to have consequences; it constrains the making of new myths, the possibility of flexible perspectives of management world and practice, or the reflexive critic on experience for managers and educators<sup>22</sup>. When faced with a piece of new cognitive or emotional information, if the

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<sup>22</sup> Emotions may play a major role in shaping organizational practices, as well as, our learning experiences (Fineman, 1997). Cunliffe (2002) emphasizes the need for learning how to deal with the tensions experienced during learning

disturbance is severe, the learner may reject it entirely or rationalize it to reduce discomfort. If it is radical enough, the learner may attack the source of surprise (Smiley, 1992).

The fact that the rational model is mainstream in MP and ME, and that mythical thinking processes happen in a regular way in these two fields, leads one to expect that representations developed in contexts of ME by students are primarily supported by myths predominantly concerned with technical rationality. My expectation about the probable rationality-nature of myths sustaining students' representations, agrees with the nature of main myths underpinning contemporary management practice, identified by Bowles (1997).

### **Myth perspectives**

Two basic conceptualizations of myth can be identified in management literature. One portrays myth as a collective phenomenon underlying organisational culture; the other portrays myth as a fraud or lie designed to legitimate wrong or self-serving purposes. Either myth is accepted as being constantly susceptible to trivialization, in a world that prefers logic, literalism, and a 'factual realism'<sup>23</sup> (Casey, 1976); or reality is faced as a negotiated construction where myth is not susceptible to a 'questioning belief' any more than it requires the 'support of facts' (Avens, 1991).

Weick (2001) cites Reinwald's (1991) presentation of approaches to myth; describing five perspectives which he refers to as: ritualistic, structuralist, transcendental, psychoanalytic, and symbol-related (for a detailed description of each perspective, see Weick, 2001). He considers perspectives which include: interpretations of myth as something typically primitive (ritualistic); a product of 'savage' thinking, opposed to but as good as 'domesticated' thinking, and based on the same mental structures (structuralist); a transcendental perspective, presenting mythical thinking as something earlier and inferior to western scientific thinking; a symbol-oriented perspective,

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processes and moments; such issues are generally not covered in either conventional or critical-based management pedagogies, which bypass subjective feelings for more objective and structural or ideological issues. An academically constructed logic and language, that is, theory about practice, is not the only way of making sense of experience. Whereas emotion may lead to anxiety and defence, it can also be an inevitable feature of learning by heightening awareness and sensitivity to what is happening around us (Fineman, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> In this way myth lacks substance and objective verification, and therefore legitimacy too.

claiming that myth belonged to every culture to express a non-empirical, non-rational dimension that is nevertheless valid; finally, a psychoanalytical perspective, with its two branches: the Freudian, considering that myths constitute a psychological phenomenon answering unfulfilled desires and the Jungian, to whom myths are expressions of the unconscious, which may be repressed but is still active.

The present investigation bases its standpoint on the Jungian perspective of myth, because my work considers myths as archetypical ideas that are expressions of the unconscious, part of the collective unconscious thus in no way confined to other cultures<sup>24</sup>. My work also uses archetypes as the background for exploring representations of manager and management. It considers that management and management education are characterised by recurrent confusing and uncertain moments, regularly asking for and applying mythical-thinking processes. These processes try to explain origins or transformations of something by narrate imagined events and the consequent mythical metamorphoses allow people involved to retain levels of awareness and reconstitute experienced realities that are persuasively present (Trice and Beyer, 1984). Individuals are considered not to be provided with a reason but with an insight into a remaining set of archetypal images. In my study, myth is seen as something ingrained in and inseparable from the foundations of social life and the social construction of reality.

This conceptualization of myth, which my study asserts, stems from Bowles (1997), but is broadly proposed by a large number of publications in organizational culture or symbolism (for a short overview, see Alvesson and Berg 1992); such conceptualization defines myth as shared meaning, a set of basic values (e.g., Broms and Gahmberg 1983), or an archetype (e.g., Steyrer 1995). Within this main form of conceptualizing myth, two slightly different forms arise: according to Neuberger (in Weick, 2001), either myth is one social construct among many others or it emerges as opposed to rationality or factual reality, due to its symbolic, emotional, or non-intellectual character, or to the elements of fantasy contained in it. In the first form, rationality is not opposed to myth, but is a myth itself (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; 1992). In the latter, myths are opposed to rational accounts and become stories of organizational life that,

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<sup>24</sup> In spite of being designed and shaped in a conscious mode.

instead of describing reality in a representational mode, use literary devices like metaphor or personification in order to produce a dense version of events feeding back on members' emotions and attitudes (e.g., Pondy 1983; Bowles 1997)<sup>25</sup>. In this latter view, we find more radical arguments in favour of substituting myths for 'proper knowledge' (Neuberger, 1995 and 1986, in Weick, 2001), or for establishing categorical difference between 'fashionable myths' and 'proper knowledge' (Kieser; 1996). Whilst myths serve some of the above-mentioned functions, like complexity reduction, these authors consider that this is done in a way that may serve an ideological purpose but which is driven by managers' anxieties. Thus it does not conform to the conventional rational ideals of transparency, consistency, and free discourse.

In spite of differences, both sub-conceptions of myth agree that it serves a number of functions, such as legitimisation, complexity reduction, collective-identity formation and maintenance, presentation and explanation of important events, and provision of models for action.

### **Myths, metaphors and archetypes**

The way myths are approached in the present study uses the notions of archetype and archetypal structure, borrowed from the Jungian perspective of myth. The study also makes use of Bowles' (1997) analysis of contemporary myths of management. Moreover, it accepts (as Bowles does) the predominance of technical rationality myths in these management contexts.

The study approaches and explores management myths under the light of the Jungian explanations of archetypes and archetypal structures. Bowles' approach considers that myths underpinning contemporary management practice, such as the competitive ethic or the myth of the hero, are characterised by principles archetypically grounded in the psyche. Being narratives of imagined events, these management myths produce archetypal images; the pattern of narratives is language supported and encloses metaphors. In this conception lies the belief that some narratives are thus crystallised stories not of a unique organisation but of humankind, not passing on a message

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<sup>25</sup> This version is thus closer to the 'lie-conceptualization' discussed below, although it does not use such strongly normative descriptions.

between two ‘generations’ but from the genuine first generation of conscious human beings on earth. That is why one can think of archetypal tales. The images which are enclosed by these tales are archetypal ones.

According to the Jungian and post Jungian tradition, the ways in which people experience and reconstitute reality are bound up with the innumerable images that they encounter, retain and recall. So, the images that people involved with management use, to make sense of management reality, are considered here to be archetypal, within the Jungian and post-Jungian psychological traditions, being both elemental and recurring<sup>i</sup>. The images underpinning myth-making processes are archetypes, that is, images common for all human beings as symbols of important facts and experiences in our life and personal development, as referred to by Jung (1968).

Some of these images or archetypes are well-characterised by Bowles, in his paper (1997). Jacobi states (in Eisold, 2002) that management myths inherit the characteristics of archetypes that form them: these myths function as primordial patterns, that is, general structures which determine a probability field that encompasses a range of actual events, images and experiences; they embody contradictions (positive and negative, Logos/Eros); by means of their contradictory nature, archetypes unite opposites within themselves (the good hero/the bad hero) giving the archetypal images a divine character, seemingly a universal drive, whose actions are beyond the governance of mere laws or cultural norms; they are dynamic, which means they are capable of evolution and their interaction with one another in a network of relations (Jung, 1968); finally, they describe dynamic ordering principles, characterized by non-linearity, the possibility of evolution or emergence of new forms or structures, and ambiguity. Archetypes are ordering principles, determining a probability field.

Being archetypal images, myths in general, and management myths in particular, are reflections of the archetype and thus governed by them. Usually, many archetypes are present in a given situation, bringing in the possibilities of surprise, uncertainty, and the emergence of novelty. Each archetype contains its own inner dynamic, the capability of self-adaptation, and each is subject to an outer dynamic, being influenced or contaminated by other archetypes (Cunliffe, 2002).

This conception of archetypes and myths lends them the capability for evolution, with the emergence of new forms or structures; the creation of new myths, the renewal of old ones becomes a possibility under such perspective.

According to the previous description of myths, as archetypally constructed, management myths are thus expected to be formed through the early images which grounded management and accompanied its evolution; the predominance of myths based on rationality, competition, and control is not surprising but, as referred above, the emergence of new forms of narrative is always a possibility, due to the inner dynamic of archetypes; thus new myths, and creative new ways of perceiving and acting upon management are admitted, within such perspective. Besides, the fact that many archetypes are simultaneously present in a given situation and that each is subject to an outer dynamic and open to the influence of other archetypes, together with their capability of self-adaptation, leads me to consider ME as contexts where educational agents and students negotiate knowledge and meaning construction with the help of archetypes which adapt themselves to circumstances and evolve into possible new forms of representations of management and managers.

Jung's conceptions of universal, archetypal founded myths and mythical-thinking are arguable from other authors' points of view<sup>26</sup>, thus work on archetypes and symbols has not remained static or without controversy. Symbols are less likely to be seen as direct reflections of transcendent reality. Although constructivism does not reject universals such as archetypes or universal emotions, it assumes that both the concepts and the experiences to which they refer come directly from human interpretation. That is, archetypes do not move and shape human consciousness; not are we caught in morphogenic structures.

With regard to criticisms, there are arguments (Weick, 2001) in favour of the impossibility of Jung's conceptions being theoretical frames, in case of one adhering to propositions such as the equality of mythical and scientific thinking and to the possibility of the alternating presence and absence of mythical thinking.

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<sup>26</sup> Freud had already criticized Jung's work on archetypes, claiming that it was a non-scientific work, close to mysticism and occultism; nevertheless, Freud's concerns mainly regarded the attempt to limit psychoanalysis, defining boundaries, which Jung exceeded. The few references to Jung by psychoanalytic colleagues in further works, established the difference the other authors intended to underline their loyalty to the mainstream.

Although the psychoanalytic interpretation of myth has perhaps met with the severest criticism, some of its tenets have nonetheless held in organization studies. The study of myth in organizations has mainly followed either the psychoanalytic or the symbol-oriented perspective (Cunliffe, 2002). Bowles' work (1997) on contemporary myths of management is an example, partly based on Jungian archetypes. I turn to Jungian archetypes because this study explains knowledge construction as influenced by universal and archetypal structures, whilst it accepts the involvement of context-differentiation processes in that same construction. As Beck states (1994, 5)

All knowledge combines the general and the particular, no knowledge is completely universal and none is entirely particular.

Whilst knowledge is constructed in particular contexts, this happens in the light of more general ideas, including the support of universal knowledge structures.

In addition to justifying the use of Jungian theorising on archetypes, I also turn to contemporary myths of management (Bowles 1997), because these are some of the relevant archetypal structures which participate in the construction of knowledge and representations of manager and management, central to this work.

### **Contemporary myths in management field: Bowles' analysis**

As management and organizational structures increasingly dominate our social existence, 'myths of management' spread from the management field to several areas of our social life; these myths refer to those core beliefs, values and meanings, which underpin the exercise of the contemporary management of organizations (Presthus, 1978), representing the ethic of modern organizations. Bowles (1997) tracks the evolution of three fundamental myths in management practices of the current age: competition, the economic primacy of markets and 'functional rationality'. Integrated in a Jungian perspective which considers archetypal images as myths structuring, he develops a presentation of contemporary management myths; this research relies on it for supporting data analysis and interpretation.

My work mirrors the Jungian conviction, shared by Bowles, that myth can be conceptualized as something omnipresent underlying every culture. I also share Bowles'

perception of MP as a context favourable to the regular occurrence of mythical-thinking processes and consequent production of myths, due to the uncertain and unstable character of that context. Bowles' information on myths of management is particularly important for my work because it constitutes the basis for explaining the contemporary character of management and ME in which my research occurs; it helps me to comprehend the myths which support knowledge constructed within the particular ME context I investigate; and it also supports my efforts to identify myths within the studied context, alternative to those emphasized by Bowles, that is, myths whose emergence stays out of archetypal structures of rational and economical dominance and competition.

The first main myth Bowles tracks, in contemporary environments of management, is competition, the hallmark of organizational life in the twentieth century as capitalism has expanded its frontiers. The efforts are to find 'competitive advantage'. Critical indicators used to consider the competitive position of organizations and management are: the drive for performance, market share and penetration, return on investment and profit. Competitiveness is increasingly evident between organizations and within them, not only in commercial organizations but progressively more in the public sector.<sup>27</sup>

Whilst social life has become evermore competitive in the twentieth century, the competitive fantasy is represented in a much earlier stage, in contrasting philosophies which have emerged over the last several centuries, from Schopenhauer (Brown, 1965) to Spencer, but especially in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Social Darwinism. The 'survival of the fittest' and the 'struggle of all against all' are increasingly the central features that appear to characterize corporate society; the word 'strategy' clearly translates these features: 'to lead an army' (from the Greek). The use of a militaristic metaphor denotes the warlike quality of contemporary organizational relations: invading markets, eliminating competitors, and takeovers<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Declining employment, rationalization of organizations, part-time working, merit payment schemes, fast and slow career tracks, short term employment contracts and the notion of flexible employment contributed to turning participation into an unsteady organisational experience, as well as inducing competition between people (Carter, 1985; Scase and Goffee, 1989).

<sup>28</sup> Strategy is a typical example. The meaning of the word shifted over time, as metaphorical analogies were constructed between contexts. It is therefore no surprise that The Art of War from Sun Tzu, the Chinese ruler who lived more than 2,400 years ago, is nowadays used in management teaching (Bowles, 1997).

The competitive ethic is fundamentally characterized by the power principle, archetypally grounded in the psyche<sup>29</sup>. Power archetype manifests in such a way that it reflects many of the features and sentiments of social Darwinism: self-assertion, will, power, domination, elimination. Cooperation, or ‘social feeling’ in Adler's terms, is another archetypally grounded principle also present in contemporary management, in some degree, if only small. It can be described by the Greek word ‘Eros’, referring to involvement, which brings about relatedness (Bowles, 1997)<sup>30</sup>.

Hierarchy, rules, punishment, and fear, typically characterize social relation ordered by the power principle. Such relations more often erode compassion, feeling, empathy, and consideration, being qualities more associated with Eros. The more competitive forces characterize social relations, the more completely the power principle will serve as its own self-fulfilling prophecy. Even those relations described in organisations as cooperative (Simon, 1958), should be rather taken as ‘instrumentally interactive.’ Under the influence of the ethic of organization (competition and power) ‘cooperation’ can become a limited expression. And when behaviour becomes more instrumentally interactive, individuals start to treat each other as ‘things,’ social relations being characterized in an ‘I-It’ mode, rather than an ‘I-Thou’ (Buber, 1958). However, a social relationship which only emphasizes cooperation (Eros) is a utopian ideal, which in practice, fails before too long<sup>31</sup>, as social experiments in different communities have shown. Competitiveness which serves the wider social good and promotes community, rather than that which serves narrow or elitist interests would recognize the welfare of all individuals in relation to employment opportunity and regions, with regard to the viability of local economies.<sup>32</sup>

It is not hard to acknowledge the extension in which the competition ethic and associated principles (power, mainly) expanded to; it may be expected that ME, as a

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<sup>29</sup> The archetype of power is portrayed in myths worldwide and is represented, for example, through the image of Zeus in Greek myth. Zeus' most definitive characteristic was his attempt to impose his will on others; power and domination was his aim.

<sup>30</sup> Jung (1966) pointed out that when love (Eros) achieves supremacy there is no will to exert power and where the will to exert power is dominant love is lacking.

<sup>31</sup> Across different societies there is evidence that the relation between power and Eros, or competition and cooperation, can manifest in different ways. It is sometimes suggested that the West is more characterized by power, and the East more by Eros, although such a formulation, while containing a certain truth, is too simplistic. Between European countries, organizational relations can be differently characterized (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 1993)

<sup>32</sup> In Adler's (1938) terms, it would involve a ‘creative’ expression of power, which would serve ‘social feeling’ rather than the mere rectification of individual shortcomings.

core myth of management and one of its instruments of control, easily adopts models of management and management education that promote competitive values and principles, with the aim of developing models of manager who manipulate management situations, driven by the survival of the best, hierarchy, rules, at the same time as they reject cooperation strategies. Students of management are therefore likely to accept and hold more easily images and representations of managers' efficacy related with these kinds of strategies and principles.

Secondly, Bowles refers to presence of the rationality myth in contemporary management; I have already introduced 'technical rationality'. The principle being 'whatever is capable of regulation and control can be conceived as rationally determinable', it is not surprising that the 20th century management took possession of it. Functional rationality can, in its archetypal expression, be understood with reference to the Greek word 'logos' which implies analytical, intellectual, objective interest (Bowles, 1997). Besides the opposition between 'power' and 'Eros', there is also a vital tension or opposition between 'logos' and 'Eros'.

The current primacy of 'logos' over 'Eros', found in management and organizations, exercises 'objective' and unemotional interests; technical rationality effectively reverses the exercise of the human feeling function. Again, if we transfer this analysis to the field of ME, it is possible to understand why it is so difficult for individuals, involved with management and management education experiences, to deal with emotional information and learning processes, with anxiety and doubts, and with critical and reflexive moments of knowledge construction. Because the primacy of 'logos' is a reality in these environments the exercise of human feeling function in practicing or studying management is not facilitated.

In addition, when the technical rationality principles convey with ME aims, the efficiency and efficacy in the manipulation of every kind of control strategies, rational/objective, is expected to be major aim of educating managers. Nevertheless, Bowles believes that the myth of rationality generates its own failure: by leaving out so much, principally the non-rational features of human experience, current rationality, appears to have led to its own failure, becoming inadequate as a living myth [also Clegg's (1996) perspective on management evolution]. The responses which emerged in

reaction to the myth of rationality<sup>33</sup> suggest that alternative explanations are being sought, beyond the prevailing ideology of rationalism. These movements may evolve into new myths, popular knowledge, or non-rational myths in organisation. These alternative explanations to rationalism may also be observed in contexts of management education, in knowledge constructions and representations developed.

Competitive relations between organizations can assemble the archetype of the hero and can manifest as ‘facing the enemy,’ ‘collect our resources,’ ‘developing strategy,’ and the like. Much of the activity of management is underpinned by the archetype of the hero in one form or another. However, the pattern of heroism evoked is mostly a self-interested one, which cares little for the welfare of organizational participants in society at large<sup>34</sup>.

As much of the behaviour of managers can be assumed to be underpinned by the hero archetype, the myth of the hero may be particularly relevant in analysing management myths. The attempt to design strategy and achieve corporate goals can be understood as the mission of the hero in pursuit of economic stability, rationalization, growth, profit<sup>35</sup>, etc. Either individual managers or groups of managers might assume (heroic) responsibility for setting the organization on the road to economic security. In other words, managers have to confront uncertainty and guarantee control of situations managed.

The bipolar character of archetypes is observed in the archetype of the hero as it can reflect both positive and negative poles. When it manifests positively, the hero breaks new ground, provides new insights and brings new opportunities to serve the well-being of people and the world in general. The negative expression of the hero archetype manifests when the hero acts in a self-interested egoistic way, where only particular interests or goals are served, perhaps in detriment of the community at large.

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<sup>33</sup> Techniques of individual salvation, oracle, dream, ritual, and holy books from the East, and a great interest in Astrology have been developed since. Areas such as alternative medicine, chaos theory, and the unconscious, emerged.

<sup>34</sup> Campbell (1951) argues that the Myth of the Hero is the root story of all cultures: the hero or heroine has found or done something beyond the normal range of experience; he/she is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself. As members of organizations, we may be required for ‘heroic encounters’ (Campbell, 1951).

<sup>35</sup> The corporate *Grail* (Bowles, 1997)

The reference made to the archetype of the hero can provide understanding of the manner in which Social Darwinism and Functional Rationality manifest in our organizational management practice and in society. What heroism does Social Darwinism actually evoke? It follows the motto, ‘business is only to make money, as long as it is within the laws of the society’. Seldom have we witnessed heroism which serves the community of interests in organizations and those of the wider society<sup>36</sup>. When corporate strategy and goals are set to enhance the prosperity of the few, little or no essence of Eros exists. Such heroic action only reflects the negative pole of the archetype, contradicting the pattern of the hero providing liberation or enhancement of life for the people at large.

The archetype of the hero may constitute the ground for types of managers conveyed by models of management education and for representations of manager constructed within these contexts. Following this idea, we can expect to find a predominance of representations of manager underpinned by the negative pole of the hero, in such contexts, rather than images of managers with purposes of serving the community of interests in organizations or in the wider world. Often, this negative pole of the hero, supported by principles of Social Darwinism and functionality, manifests itself through a specific type or image of manager: the charlatan. The charlatan is in fact one image of the hero (Henderson, 1964) but it represents the stage of the hero, which is essentially unconscious; his appetite and instinct dominate his behaviour; he lacks any purpose beyond immediate gratification of his needs; he can be cruel, cynical, and unfeeling, but also dissimulated in a nice and sympathetic way. The image of the charlatan is reflected in myths worldwide. The characteristics of the charlatan can be argued to typify many of the features we find in the management of organizations.

One image related with the hero, that Bowles (1997) describes, is the image of the ‘promised land’<sup>37</sup> which the hero pursues. The ‘promised land’ defined by Social Darwinism envisions a society of ‘fittest’, ‘winners’, ‘self starters’, whose ability to achieve economic gain furthers social progress. The image of a ‘promised land’ defined by technical rationality refers to a world with fully understood and controlled

<sup>36</sup> More typically we hear of ‘rationalization’ and ‘de-massing,’ and other such euphemisms, which actually means that people’s employment and welfare are being taken away, in order for shareholders to improve their (heroic) return.

<sup>37</sup> Promised Land is alternatively characterized in myth as the ‘golden age,’ the ‘grail,’ ‘Atlantis,’ ‘Eldorado’; the ‘promised land’ that the hero finds is a particular feature of the myth of the hero (1997).

phenomena<sup>38</sup>. Viewing technical rationality and competition as dominant in management environments, it is expected that these are equally dominant myths in processes of management education, and consequently, in students' representations of management and the manager.

While tales of a Promised Land can potentially serve constructive purposes for people and society in general, as well as, for managers and management educators in particular, those which have accompanied the myths of management during last and current century seem one-sided and therefore unbalanced, only favouring traditional perspectives of management and the development of rational forms of management.

After the review of the contemporary situation in management and related myths, I conjecture we are passing through a period characterised in the management field by the death of old myths and the urgent need for new ones, even if management researchers or experts do not possess the exact knowledge on what the 'new ones' are or should be; and when they think they know which way(s) management should go, they do not agree with each other on the direction.

As Bowles (1997) states, a new myth is required, that which offers a more complete expression of the human condition, including Eros and the diminishing of the excesses of competitiveness and functional rationality. It can only emerge over time, and not be invented, but furthered through reflection and consciousness of individuals and society. Nevertheless, aiming towards a promised land characterized by the elimination of uncertainties and the achievement of total control of management situations is still very frequent in management.

What can be taken from this analysis that directly interests me, with regard to this research? Firstly, I posit that contexts of ME, and, particularly, students' representations of manager and management constructed within these contexts, mirror the contemporary panorama of management myths, revealing characteristics related with rationality and competition, a tendency to images of manager related with the negative

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<sup>38</sup> More recently, 'quality programmes' in organizations represent one attempt to achieve such a goal: rules, procedures, attempted symbolic control of employees, and statistical monitoring, all testify to a re-bureaucratization and furtherance of control in organizations, with the aim of achieving predictable outcomes.

pole of the hero, and management goals oriented towards a world/organisation of winners, fully dominated by managers.

However, this work accepts the inner flexible character of archetypes, their outer adaptability, and the fact that ME contexts are places where knowledge is constructed through a negotiation of meanings ruled by power relationships. The acceptance of such flexible character for archetypes makes me expecting a margin of variation for images and representations produced by management students, alternative to the dominant myths and derived representations of manager and management in these contexts. If the fabrication and transmission of new myths is a reality, then management education is expected to reflect this changing character, alongside the dominance of rationality and competition myths. Whether these alternative constructions exist and whether this process of construction happen as conjectured here forms a major theme of the work.

The disclosure of emergent myths in ME is a possibility, both in myths underlying educators and students' representations; nevertheless, the way it might happen seems poorly understood at present

### **Socialization processes and contemporary management myths in contexts of ME**

Myth became an inevitable result of the attempts of the people at the time to seek and obtain an understanding of change (Jabri, 1997). When the images rendered by these myths fail to address the accumulated knowledge and imagination of the age, individuals can experience existential anxiety and there is the attempt to return to the old myths and images in search for security and support. These times of mythic transition often give rise to new ideologies, fads, fashions, and affectations, which serve momentarily to moderate anxiety. Some major functions of these processes are legitimization, complexity reduction, collective-identity formation and maintenance, presentation and explanation of important events, and provision of models for action.

Because modern age societies ascribe the institutions of higher education the key role in the process of knowledge development and maintenance (Ravn, 2004), these institutions hold a privileged position for providing and developing knowledge at the present, as well as, for the making and sustainability of contemporary myths. Products and

producers of management knowledge, ME contexts are supported by same processes and myths that are present in management, hence representing a relevant source of managerial thinking and its key conduits (Grey, 2002)<sup>39</sup>. Formal academic training of current or future managers possibly derives from the claims for a democratic and ethical legitimacy for managers (Child, 1996). These offers of formal education to managers, in the search for managers' legitimacy, become privileged settings for myth-making (Bowles, 1997; Weitz and Shenhav, 2000).

Luke (1992) distinguishes different phases of development for sociology of education. First wave (e.g. Young, 1971) put the emphasis on phenomenological aspects while the second wave (e.g. Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Willis, 1977) is 'corrective', emphasizing structural factors such as labour, class and culture (which fills the gap of the first wave concerns). This second-wave promoted a more deterministic picture of socialization within schools in that, where student resistance exists, it does so in ways that reinforce rather than disrupt institutionalizing processes, perpetuating existing patterns of privilege. In a third-wave educational sociology, critical pedagogy carried forward the second-wave emphasis on the importance of social structures in educational settings, but did so in ways that acknowledged that strategies of resistance existed and that power was not unidirectional. For educators like Giroux and McLaren (see for example Giroux, 1981, or Giroux and McLaren, 1987), students and teachers are capable of action and of a shared understanding that can result in change. Giroux, for example, has written of the idea of pedagogy of possibility, restoring agency to the position it was given by first-wave educational sociologists, but recognizing that it exists in tension with institutional and cultural processes.

Establishing a parallel between the reassuring function of myths (Jabri, 1997) and the role that ME plays, in management field as well as in educational panorama, we may consider ME as a core myth itself because it aims to reduce anxiety generated by uncertainties of management<sup>40</sup>, by promising students and managers the resources for a successful practice through providing individuals with managerial thinking and practice.

<sup>39</sup> It does so by bearing the imprint of an engineering ideology that represents management as no more than morally neutral technique (Shenhav and Weitz, 2000) and, on the other hand, by standing ready with an overtly moralistic stance in which the values of market populism and humanistic management are endorsed.

<sup>40</sup> Whilst the classroom may also be perceived as an anxious place, contributing to a static state of things and to a denial of the need to act different or be different (Freedman, 2002).

It therefore reassures those who are concerned with ‘managing the unpredictable’. This ‘myth-perpetuation’ role attributed to ME can be associated with Grey’s idea (2002) of a socializing and legitimating role for ME, rather than a resource for an efficient practice-provider role. ME, Grey (2002) states, constitutes a myth of ‘competence’, purporting to prepare managers for management, through its ‘enculturating/socializing’ role, apart from transmitting contemporary management myths<sup>41</sup>, such as technical rationality, control and those of Social Darwinism. This makes part of a broader socialising process ascribed to management since long ago.

Current definitions of socialization reflects the idea of "a process by which an individual learns the appropriate modifications of behaviour and the values necessary for the stability of the social group of which he is a member" (Simpson & Weiker, 1989, p. 910). The explicit outcome of successful socialization, then, is the transfer or perpetuation of culture (Tuttle, 2003a). In combination with other tactics affecting the entry process of individuals, socialization is thought of as a process to increase job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and tenure (Wanous, 1980). The indicators of success for workplace socialization looked very similar to those for socialization in other areas of life: learning, adjustment, and culture acquisition (Louis, 1990; Tuttle, 2003a). Socialization, as it was and is currently conceptualized, in both management education environments and in organizations, is not intended to facilitate organisational/management renewal; rather, its purposes, desired outcomes, and characteristics, have been designed to perpetuate a stable and unmoving organization and management practice. The myths involved in the process are a guarantee of this stagnant state of things. This could hinder management ability to help an organization to be agile and change.

An alternative theory of organizational socialization implies previous intervention, at business/management education, one that is designed to facilitate renewal and one that takes into account what has been learned from other relevant theories, probably incorporating new myths, aspects of theory on organizational change, innovation, knowledge, systems, or learning, applied to the entry process.

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<sup>41</sup> By alleging to offer an adequate technical training, ME provides status and identification to individuals and socializes those individuals for certain kinds of organizational employment

One reason which took me to this study, to explore the possibilities for new ways/models in ME, specifically for CME, in Portuguese educational context, is exactly the belief that pedagogic models that are more critical and reflexive, would facilitate renewal, both at educational and organizational levels. But even pedagogies that purport more radical or/and critical can take the risk of being perpetuating the status quo; Ellsworth (1989) criticized the ‘radical’ education movement by suggesting that their version of criticality had become a repressive myth that perpetuated relations of domination within the classroom. She considered critical pedagogy an interpretation of emancipation that failed to confront the authoritarianism inherent within most teacher–student relations. Perriton and Reynolds (2004) argue that critical studies in management might be looked at in a similar way and start being renewed from there.

Following this, there is an urgent need to determine the changes that need to take place in ME contexts and in teaching strategies to better mirror the world. It seems likely that, at this level, individuals learn about how the organization operates, through interactions with educational agents. During these interactions, agents consciously and unconsciously reward behaviours that align with the existing organizational values, beliefs, culture, practices, and systems and manage those behaviours that do not align (Louis, 1990; Jones, 1983, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Students’ knowledge and future behaviour is modified by this new knowledge<sup>42</sup> (Van Maanen, 1976). The process appears to consist essentially of validating scientific/ technical management knowledge within institutions/contexts of ME.

Much attention has been focused on how individuals respond to the socialization efforts of the agents rather than on understanding how the individuals themselves affect the process. In more recent years, there has been an increasing trend focusing on both organizational and individual variables in the socialization process; this is often termed an *interactionist* perspective (Jones, 1983). This argues that analysis of the socialization process cannot be complete unless some essential issues are taken into consideration: "(1) the effects of individual differences and (2) the effect of the attributional process involved in learning" (Jones, 1983, p. 464) and (3) individuals as active participants in

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<sup>42</sup> The majority of organizational socialization theory and research is focused on this learning process for individuals entering into or transitioning within an organization; there is very little research and theory on how the transitioning individual influences organizational incumbents (Jones, 1983; Tuttle, 2003a). Thus, there is a significant theory to explain how socialization can perpetuate that which has brought the organization success in the past, but there is very little to explain how an organization would go about socialization if the goal was to change.

their own socialization experience. In essence, "characteristics of the insiders as well as the interactions themselves need to be investigated if research from an interactionist perspective is to proceed" (Reichers, 1987, p. 279).

From this standpoint, the present investigation emphasizes the second issue presented, that of attributional processes. Interactionist research and theory suggest that reciprocal influence exists, between individuals in transition and agents of education, causing shifts inside the organization as well as inside the individual learner (Jones, 1983; Wanous, 1980).

The literature regarding socialization, particularly the one focusing socialization strategies, is also beginning to take note of the reciprocal influence that the learner can have on the educators, (Ashford, 1986; Feldman & Brett, 1983; Fisher, 1985; Gabarro, 1979; Hegstad, 1999; Jones, 1983; Louis, 1980, 1990; Manz & Sims, 1981; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 2002; Reichers, 1987; Wanous, Reichers, & Malik, 1984; Zahrly & Tosi, 1989). This is an important focus for my research, as well, as I emphasize the interactions developed between teachers and learners during a specific process of socialization, the process of education within a management course context, with relevance to learners' role in the process

Nevertheless, as well as most of the research, which rarely focus on the continuous nature of socialization, my research also is limited to a picture in time during a particular socialization experience

It is asserted here that the usage of socializing strategies to quickly shape understanding of the role, task, and interpersonal demands of management practice, prior to (if possible), the practice itself, will be a facilitating factor in the progression of the rest of the socialization cycle. The current research focuses on the "prior" part (instead of "during" or "after") of the socialization process that contributes to shape the role of *manager* in ME students. Interactivity between the parties during the course is the foundation for negotiated meaning. Humans in organizational systems create their environments through social interaction and negotiated meaning (Ashforth, 1985; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Biddle, 1979; Goffman, 1959; Katz, 1980; Weick, 1969). Meaning negotiation is a process of "reciprocal influence-participants gradually shape one another's understanding of the situation under discussion" (Ashforth, 1985, p. 843).

This discussion defines the process of meaning construction as the purposeful exchange of managed symbols between students and agents during communicative acts to negotiate expectations for future behaviour (Ashforth, 1985; Biddle, 1979, Goffman, 1959; Weick, 1969). This happens both in ME contexts and organizational contexts.

The initial intent is negotiating an understanding of the new situation and the individual's role in it (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Katz, 1980). Subsequent behaviours are reflective of that situational definition, and reactions by others continue to shape the individual's concept of role identity (Katz, 1980); a common problem facing individuals in this situation is that of developing a role identity which will be viable and suitable both from the viewpoint of the individual person as well as from the viewpoint of other persons within the relevant organizational area.

Jointly negotiated during the interaction, emergent outcomes are not immovable definitions of reality; rather, they are a working consensus between the parties as to the definition of the situation and roles that will carry forward for the time being (Goffman, 1959). The emergent situational definition and role identities that emerge can be characterized by shared expectations for the behaviours of both parties (Biddle, 1979; Goffman, 1959). Symmetrical interactions between the parties allow for each to influence the understanding of what it perceives as the role of the other and what future behaviour it expects from the other.

Management courses, specifically at undergraduate level, represent a specific part of these socially privileged contexts; they provide the student with managerial knowledge and skills for the development of a managerial identity. This is supposedly achieved through negotiating processes of knowledge construction and representations construction, which are supported by myths of management, and depend on social and power relations. Exploring which values and myths underpin the socialization process developed within ME contexts is important because this awareness may allow us to consider whether the current value basis of management education is appropriate.

I believe that the undergraduate ME context constitutes a particular period of transformation for students, a socialization period where mythical-thinking may reveal its force. Seen as a management core myth, it is favourable to mythical-thinking

processes, taking advantage to transmit and transform students' representations of the manager and management, in harmony with contemporary management existence and requirements.

From the standpoint of this study, ME plays an active socialising role, strongly underpinned by an orthodox managerial thinking and by management myths that are essentially *masculine*<sup>43</sup>; If we look at socialisation processes happening in business/management schools through the lens of Hofstede's (1990) cultural dimensions, it could be stated that this work is particularly interested in understanding how "uncertainty avoidance" is negotiated within ME contexts, in order to form/ to contribute to the construction of a manager's identity and managerial thought and practice.

Within this work this identity process is perceived as a transmission and/or transformation process; students' construction of management knowledge is supported by archetypal structures representing universal narratives which correspond to the dominant contextualized knowledge structures; thus, students' representations will be constructed partly within this logic of the *transmission* of dominant myths in contemporary management practice and education; but also *transformation*, because the archetypal structures, on which these processes of knowledge construction are based, are subject to change. Moreover, the educational process may assume strategies and follow ways which promote transformation, in the sense that alternative myths can participate in the construction of knowledge about manager and management, myths which stay out of the technical rationality domain.

This is outlined by authors such as Strassmann (2002), and Longino (2002). They consider that the myth of the free and open marketplace of ideas, in ME contexts, hides the role of personal, social, and political values in the construction of management knowledge, disguises the risks and helps maintain the power of the established powers. Alternatively, scholars in contexts of ME may also promote a more honest social process for the selection of favoured perspectives and accounts, by revealing

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<sup>43</sup> According to Lamsa et al. (2000), rationality, wealth maximization, as well as competition, are considered "masculine values".

information about their own personal and social situation in relation to the themes under discussion, by clarifying the positioned nature of their arguments and assessments, and by providing more information about arguments than normally revealed by practicing scientists. This constitutes a rather more transformative role for ME; different myths may emerge within such education practices. The clarification of the nature of positions, arguments and assessments would consequently imply the exposure of myths alternative to dominant ones. Whether this gives rise to the replacement of old myths by new ones is another important question in the present work.

## **Summary**

The latter sections of this chapter attempt an understanding of the problematic notion of the representations held on the role of managers and the socialization processes involved in their construction. The above review of the literature show that the representations that authors and management practitioners construct and sustain, about management practice, not only reflect mainstream theoretical views but also influence answers to problematic questions on the subject, including educational ones. Management theory represents a major societal influence for the processes and strategies of management as well as for the ways management and managers are mentally represented by the individuals directly or indirectly involved in management education and practice.

This seems likely to affect/effect the construction of students' representations of the manager, directly through the knowledge students might already have regarding managers and the practice of management, when they enter a management course, and the knowledge they will construct during the management course, but also indirectly, through the existing relationships between management practice and management education.

I have chosen to adopt a particular perspective of management within this investigation; as Costello and Zalking (1963:91) pointed out, 'a way of seeing is a way of not seeing', and it became necessary for this research to decide what is considered relevant, in order to be seen, and what is taken as peripheral, in order to be ignored. The present investigation aims at knowing more about what management and managers are believed and expected to be, and how management education can affect these beliefs and

representations. I chose approaching management as a process of specific myth-fabrication and communication, as I assume that management and manager representations are partly the products of mythical fabrication and transmission. On the other hand, educational settings are considered socializing entities, which participate in the (re)construction of students' identities, including their representations of manager and management practice through processes influenced to some extent by the myths dominant in contemporary management.

The changing context of management and the myths held by its contemporary practice influence models of management education and knowledge of their agents; these, in turn, may impact on the way students construct their representations of manager and management. Myth-making processes sustaining management today are centrally concerned with the reduction of anxiety generated by the uncertainty which characterizes the practice of management. The "uncertainty avoidance" is also one of the four cultural dimensions considered by Hofstede (1990), apropos the socially determined nature of culture, which is conditioned, within a certain social group, by a common education and life experience.

'Uncertainty', as well as 'turbulence' and 'control', have led the concerns and goals of management theory and practice during its evolution, mostly relating with uncertainty reduction and control strategies. Management education shared and still shares the interests in rationality and control emphasized by management theory and practice; moreover, it represents an instrument of control, that is, the result of management concerns and interests for control, reciprocally feeding those interests.

In addition, ME may be a 'myth of competence': it is believed, not only by those direct or indirectly involved in management and management education, but in general, that someone who profits from a ME experience becomes prepared, at least 'psychologically' prepared, to deal with the inexplicable or unpredictable, as he/she can control and manage the social situations they are asked to.

Latter sections in the chapter tracked management myths that can be identified as increasingly emphasized by current management practices; the more significant ones are the belief in competition, the economic vital dictating primacy of markets and profits

over community, individuals, and ecology, and the search for ‘functional rationality’, economism, materialism, secularism, and rationalism, all “masculine” notions (Lamsa et al., 2000). Bowles’ work (1997) illustrates in detail the historical evolution of enduring myths.

Evolution and contemporary existence of management myths reveal that technical rationality dominates the modern-day management and its requirements. The question is to know how narratives and myths of rationality embody political and epistemological suppositions which regulate social experience, through educational experience. Accepting that management is mainly about control and management education is about teaching and using those control methods to educate/prepare representative agents, the aims of management-related contexts reflect the privileged myths which safeguard the thought, practice and education in the field.

Trends in management education reflect management trends. Whilst stable organisational conditions are rare nowadays, management models still invest in organisational control, preview and planning. Whilst more flexible structures are demanded and people are less inclined to follow rules and decisions they do not understand, the traditional structures are still very much required to ensure the reliability of processes, to clarify responsibilities, manage scarce resources and deal with different perceptions (Ahrne, 1994; Palmer and Hardy, 2000). ME follows management evolution patterns and the management knowledge and representations constructed by students during their management course are assumedly influenced by the mythical structures dominating the educational scene. Hence the exploration of that knowledge and representations is expected to reflect the dominance of myths such as technical rationality, competition and the myth of the hero, but may also disclose new tendencies.

One of the aims of the present work consists in the identification of mythic tendencies in a specific management education context, as these myths condition processes and future identities and practices; management education contexts are perceived as preferential settings both for making and transmitting management myths and reducing uncertainty about future events of management practice, providing contexts with “immutable” conditions where changes are needed. The dominant tendencies in terms of

myths, are thus explored through the analysis of teachers and students' representations of manager and management, with reference to Bowles' work (1997).

I use Bowles' analysis of management myths to explore the presence of these myths, specifically in a context of undergraduate management education. The analysis and interpretation of data in the current investigation will rely on it, for the work explores representations of students as if these representations could involve mythical-thinking processes in their fabrication; the dominant archetypal constructs participating in these processes would probably be those which remain dominant myths of management in the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> centuries: competition and survival of the fittest, rationality, the pursuit of stability and control by the hero/manager.

These are structures which, due to their "immutable character" provide contexts with, consequently can 'save' students, managers and/or educators, from anxiety produced by management uncertainties and complexity, by taking representations as versions of management events feeding back on students' emotions and attitudes. However, due to characteristics of the archetypes (Cunliffe, 2000), on the one hand, and to limitations of the rationality myth (Bowles, 1997) on the other, alternative mythical structures (deriving from archetypes like Eros, or cooperation and social feeling) may arise or co-habit with the dominant ones; if this is so, I expect to identify it somehow in my findings.

The constitution of types of managers derived from my findings will follow this line of thought and argument; the analysis and description of managers' representations will rest on the definition and variations of the myth of the hero, as Bowles (1997) presents it. I develop a template summarizing ideas on contemporary myths of management, which will be used to support data interpretation, specifically with regard to repertory grid cluster analysis; this template will be used as a grid for facilitating the identification of myths in students' constructs as well as in agents' discourse. In addition, the template<sup>44</sup> will be used as a guide for construing types of managers based on presented archetypes, from students as well as teachers' data, apart from identifying myths that can represent constraints to critical pedagogies and related processes.

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<sup>44</sup> This template is presented in appendix 2

The awareness of which myths of management underlie our models and practices of education in management appears to be an important step in order to obtain a more transformative educational process: management myths orientate the structure of management education and its functioning, underpin the representations of the manager held by educational agents and orientate the pedagogical practice of these agents; subsequently, they mould the representations construed by students. In order to understand the impact of management education on students, particularly at undergraduate level, I need to explore representations of agents and students involved in the educational process, and identify which specific management myths are present in those representations<sup>45</sup>. The comprehension of this phenomenon will help generate priorities for my practice as a teacher at undergraduate level, which are yet to be explored, due to my lack of clear conscious of the processes developed, and consequent possibilities of reflexivity in my daily practice.

Identification of the main myths present in models of management education is needed to support this line of thought; the following chapter approaches the subject. A review of the evolution and current state of management education in relation to the evolution of management is presented, and an effort to systematize current perspectives on ME, considering contemporary models of education, is made. An exercise in relating models of education to management myths will then be completed.

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<sup>45</sup> Relying on the concept of myth in my research is not obviously a standard scientific mode of description. Nevertheless, it still relates to scientific thinking. This relationship can be justified in the following mode: the exploratory nature of my work has to be stressed; myth is not a simple concept, but a complex phenomenon that can be explained differently from diverse perspectives. The perspective on myth chosen determines the ‘searchlight’ that the notion of myth can shed on the learning/changing processes. Since my work relies on a constructionist perspective of knowledge, there is an inevitable focus on constructions of learners and teachers, specifically those regarding the manager and management themes. This includes focusing on myths involved, especially myths of management.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **FROM MANAGEMENT PRACTICE TO MANAGEMENT EDUCATION...**

#### **Introduction**

The present investigation explores the interactions/relations between educational context and students, in which the former provides the latter with contributions to their process of knowledge and myths construction. This research looks into the impact of a specific context of management education on students' representations of managers and management, as well as into the limits and possibilities that alternative pedagogies would face in that context; management education is studied essentially through two of its agents: staff and curriculum. The current chapter reviews the evolution of management education and business schools, its presumed roles and relations with management practice.

Early in the chapter, current definition(s) of and approaches to management education are considered. Evolution, the current situation and approaches to management education are addressed within a critical description. The role of business schools in the management and ME panoramas is focused. In a later section, the different approaches reviewed are assembled in the contemporary models of management education, as from Holman (2000). The author profited from Barnett's work (1994) on higher education, systematizing current perspectives on management education and this systematisation resulted in four models of management education. Holman's work is presented here as a way to explore specific contexts of management education, in terms of theoretical convictions, conceptual and pedagogical orientation, demands and social influences; and the exploration of privileged myths and metaphors within each model is added. Principal directions taken by studies/research into undergraduate management education are also focused upon and significant gaps and problems within this field of investigation are addressed.

#### **Educating managers**

The education and development of effective managers by academic institutions has been the cause of much debate over a number of years. It is already clear that the role of the

manager is extremely complex and, consequently, the education of managers is a long and difficult task (Bilimoria, 2000), for some even an impossible one (Grey and French, 1996).

One major concern and theme for discussion has been how this education should happen and which should be its main goals. The view of education in management which developed in a formalised way along the lines of perceived ‘turbulence’ or constant ‘uncertainty’ of the management world, supports my belief that management education might have emerged as a specific answer to the generalised necessity of control in management environments, a way of preparing managers *a priori* to face uncertainties and unexpected events in management practice.

Thus management education may have been (still be) used as a preventive strategy to face the uncertainty characteristic of management practice; that is, a control strategy for management. This assumption could justify the desperate need of many authors and practitioners to affirm and confirm the usefulness of management education<sup>46</sup> for management practice. As management finds a formal way of ‘educating’ its agents (managers) to perform management practice, it appeases managers by making them believe that a manager who gets a degree in management education is better prepared to face the uncertainties of management practice. All other individuals directly or indirectly involved in management are also reassured, at least to some extent, by this belief. Thus for many it becomes imperative to defend the idea that management education guarantees better management performance and enhanced results; management education could otherwise lack sense and purpose for its existence.

This strongly functional relationship that is ascertained to MP and ME makes it difficult for its defenders to recognize that the meanings and goals of management education may have changed: that management education may have different meanings and functions today from those it presented fifty years ago. Although it originated within the logic of control and uncertainty reduction, once it was formally institutionalised as a specific educational setting, management education became independent of the social, political and economical environments in which it had originally been produced and nurtured. The rhetoric of management education becomes detached from the political

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<sup>46</sup> This concerns especially the undergraduate level, perceived more as a ‘preventive’ situation of uncertainty in management practice than the graduate level, which could have a more repairing action on uncertainties.

and economical worlds that create it, generating new meanings dissociated from its epistemological roots.

Though many assert that we have entered a ‘postmodern’ age (e.g. Clegg, 1996), the influence of rationality and the claim for control in management practice clearly continues to characterise the state of things. There are many characteristics of the present-day world that are also those of the management environment: changing environments, globalization, and significant economic changes. In spite of this changing character of current social world, dominant management beliefs and myths and theories which support current management practice are all still much focused on technical rationality. Management education follows such pathway and shares directions and concerns with management practice. Education and practice are not detached and no such thing as unproblematic relations between management practice and management education exist.

Within this social environment, two main perspectives are identified with regard to the practice of management (Grey and French, 1996). The first asks for new skills and techniques to deal with management situations and problems (Henry, 1991; Hammer and Champy, 1993; Scott Morton, 1991). It is assumed that the practice of management becomes more difficult in a world with characteristics such as those mentioned above but, at the same time, it is believed that it is still possible to find new ways of practicing management. The other broad perspective argues that ambiguity, irrationality and turbulence, characteristic of our times, make management current goals no longer viable (Cooper and Burrell, 1988; Jeffcut, 1994; Hassard, 1993). Moreover, according to MacIntyre (1981), the inherently uncontrollable nature of social relations turns management’s capability to manage into an illusory promise. Schön argues (1983: 39) that it does not bring what it guarantees, that is, help for managers to solve organizational or social problems.

However, both perspectives insist on the same purpose for management: that of controlling situations, only shifting between ‘it is still possible to control and manage’ to ‘it is impossible to keep control and manage’.

Different approaches to management education, diverse in its rationale and proposals, are generated from these views on management, some of them emphasizing the need for improvements or even radical changes in basic approach, course contents, teaching methods, and the rationalisation and clarification of roles in management education; while others seek paradigmatic changes in management education, asserting the need for a non-functional character to the relationship between ME and management practice, a critical stance and a reflexive practice. Through emphasizing the need for a critical analysis of management and managers limitations authors who support this view also expect ME to serve purposes quite different from those leading to improvements in management practice's current strategies of control.

No matter what direction debates on management education might take or which is the nature of proposed developments, current approaches to management education can be included in one of these two broad perspectives. Either management education has strong reasons for existing as an instrument of management capable of reducing uncertainty and improving practice, whilst needing to experience whatever changes may be necessary; or, on the contrary, the reason for management education to exist no longer nurtures its investment in a contemporary world whose unpredictable characteristics no longer make management education an instrument of possible control, improving practice in a functional relationship. In this case, different reasons for management education to perpetuate its existence are needed, different goals or relationships with management practice, other than only functional. Nevertheless, even for those who argue that new relationships between MP and ME have to be looked for, there is little consensus on the character of these expected relations, or on how they could be best achieved.

The fact that the functional character of the relationship between management education and management practice is a deeply installed belief among authors and practitioners can partly be explained by the archetype of management education. The archetype of management education stems from medical school, since business schools, existing since 1870s, were mostly trade schools at the time, only becoming business schools after the Second World War. Therefore, they initially adopted the teaching model and paradigm from Law and Medical Schools. In the late 1950s, especially due to the results of the Gordon-Howell report on American Business Education, they had to change in

academic terms, but the medical paradigm laid the basis for the orientation of most programmes and course structures in the field of management education. The similarity between the medical model and the management education model is defended in the field of management education but such a model presupposes an occupational closure which is not general in the management field: the fact is that managers can practice as managers without receiving any training or accreditation (Grey and French, 1996), contrary to doctors.

The argument which defends that the archetype of the medical school is the most suitable for the management field, gives rise to discussion on the eventual need for undergraduate education in management: to be a manager without training or accreditation is common and quite legal but, on the other hand, management is seen more and more as a professionalized activity; in a report on management education drawn up in 1987 (Constable and McCormick, 1987), almost 50% of the managers sampled aimed towards management becoming a professionalized activity. This idea is confirmed by Grey and French (1996) and Grey and Mitev (1995), who do not believe in a clear difference of effectiveness between a trained and a non trained manager.

Moreover, management aims and methods for achieving such aims are still not very clear in management studies (Whitley, 1984). Even generally accepted aims such as 'management is to make profits' could be contradicted by non-profit organisations; and to say that management is concerned with achieving organisational aims in the most efficient and effective manner still generates discussion on what organisational aims are or what constitutes effective and efficient means for their achievement.

The arguments presented point out some weaknesses regarding the strong acceptance of the current archetype of management and functional relations between education and practice in the management field. Nevertheless, those who believe that management education is a potent strategy for reducing uncertainty share the conviction that management education is the right instrument for future managers to guarantee the quality of their management practice in the future, where the 'quality' concept refers to 'managing the unpredictable'.

Authors like Murphy (1992) emphasize such an orientation for ME, by presenting the education of managers as a setting which principally facilitates the learning of knowledge and skills in the most pedagogically effective way, for individuals with varying abilities, backgrounds and needs. Bilimoria (2000, 161) defines the fundamental mission of ME historically as being ‘to prepare students for becoming effective business managers within the corporate hierarchy’. Raelin and Schermerhorn argue (1994) that management education aims to provide managers with the knowledge and skills they need to operate effectively. All these authors consider the need for more compelling and sustainable missions to be developed in management education, in order to be vital and constructive in the future, or for it to provide a very different type of education to the one traditionally offered (Raelin and Schermerhorn, 1994).

However, the ‘managerialist orthodoxy’ is not the only perspective on management education, as Grey and French (1996) state. And these are not the only authors to argue so; for Roberts (1996), as mainstream ME approaches put the emphasis on a normative approach to learning, specifically, by advocating the systematic application of theory and techniques to every situation, they fail to consider that practitioners deal with ill-defined, unique, emotive and complex issues (Argyris, 1982; Vaill, 1989; Whetton and Cameron, 1983). Critical positions are developing an attitude of questioning the presumptions of management education that result from traditional approaches (Willmott, 1994, Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, Grey and French, 1996; Reynolds 1999). Authors supporting the view state that, complex and theoretically informed versions of management education, may provide managers with a more accurate account of organisational and commercial reality; and this view represents an alternative for defining management education.

Authors have drawn on the post-modern debate to raise important questions about epistemology and pedagogy (French and Grey, 1996; Giroux, 1988). They suggest the need to develop a critical pedagogy which may take a number of approaches: questioning managerialist ideologies, techniques of legitimization, and power (Boje and Dennehy, 1992; Knights, 1992; Mumby, 1988; Prasad and Cavanaugh, 1997), using a critical philosophy to question the nature of knowledge and education (Grey *et al.*, 1996), encouraging students to carry out a critical re-interpretation of management and organization theory (Calais and Smircich, 1992; Carter and Jackson, 1993, Cooper,

1990; Schultz, 1992; Summers et al., 1997), or developing the critical thinking skills of students (Caproni and Arias, 1997; Chia and Morgan, 1996).

Nevertheless, the effects of the critical position, in terms of educational models acting effectively in management schools, are still rare<sup>47</sup>. Most approaches to management education are non-critical ones (Kallinikos, 1996), in their epistemological, social, pedagogical or management axioms (Holman, 2000)<sup>48</sup>. Reporting to Elizabeth Ellsworth's (1989) argument, 17 years ago, the so-called dialogic process of critical education itself contains significant repressive potential, with its assumptions that 'democratic spaces' for 'voice' can actually be created within heterogeneous groups marbled with complex power relations and conflicting interests, simply by pronouncing it so. Ellsworth (1989) concluded, through an analysis of her own class which she designed and conducted according to the precepts of critical pedagogy, that such precepts actually produced students' repression rather than their 'empowerment'. She showed that so-called 'democratic' dialogue is difficult given the ongoing complex power relations of any group; that rational approaches of critical thinking do not penetrate deep levels of self-interest and alignment with dominant discourses; and most important, that a teacher's authoritative stance with respect to students remains unchanged by critical pedagogy, and in fact may be heightened through its assumption of ideological superiority.

The call to educators to stimulate "colonized minds", which means the students, according to Fenwick (2005), and emancipate critical consciousness is a temptation to critical pedagogues. However, to learners, the resulting evangelization may appear absurd, deranged or even dangerous.

At same time, the "emancipatory" educators may range themselves out of their critique, creating a new way of domination by simply reversing the knowledge hierarchy it presumes to interrupt. A polarity is often created between academy-based critique and the orthodoxies of practice in the 'real world'.

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<sup>47</sup> The Cambridge MBA is one of few examples of a reflexive perspective, where students are encouraged to see themselves as subjects and objects of management practice (Roberts, 1996) as well as the Critical Management Studies programme in Lancaster University (Gosling, 1996); both are postgraduate studies. *You might want to add in the Leicester programme here.* In Portugal reflexive perspective based-courses are not officially known.

<sup>48</sup> Whilst Kallinikos (1996) refers to the UK situation in her statements, most Portuguese institutions providing management education also follow a traditional methodology, supported by a teaching approach, with case study, lectures and individual assessment in the form of final examinations being dominant strategies in the field (Sá, 1991).

## **Contemporary approaches to undergraduate management education**

Management education in Europe, specifically the contemporary approaches to undergraduate, spread, from more traditional vocational and business-directed forms (the mainstream) to ‘learning by doing’ perspectives or critical studies of management (a minority). These approaches have given rise to different educational models: from liberal *curricula* to vocationalist conceptions; from experiential ‘learning by doing’ educational approaches to the most recent perspective of management education, detaching it from a functional relation with management practice, arguing in favour of the possibility of critical knowledge and practice (Thomas and Anthony, 1996), which develops students’ awareness of their limitations as managers.

Holman (2000), in his overview of the contemporary panorama of management education, reviews and summarizes perspectives, in a presentation of four contemporary models of ME. Holman bases his work on Barnett’s (1994) contemporary analysis of higher education in the UK. I emphasize this work here due to its completeness, in terms of theoretical background, when compared with other works reviewed<sup>49</sup>. Moreover, it constitutes a practical tool for approaching and characterising contexts of ME; the work represents a valuable systematisation of information, facilitating the immediate insertion of a specific context of education in one of the four models, through the identification of main context characteristics and procedures. An ‘ideal type of manager’ is aimed, within each of the four models; each model presents conceptions of management and education and proposes strategies/procedures that wish to promote the development of a certain type of manager. The author provides a description of each of these ideal types. So, one can subsequently presume some of the educational consequences of being exposed to a particular ME context, for example, the kind of management knowledge students will construct, as it is orientated by specific theories of management and aims towards one specific practices of management.

Holman’s models are thus an useful tool to support my research because they allow the identification of the model of education which dominates the management course I want to explore and, also, because it provides some expectations about the most probable

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<sup>49</sup> Its work results from an operationalisation of Barnett’s (1994) reflection on the relationships between knowledge, higher education and society, which employed a social philosophy approach.

type(s) of manager promoted by this context among students, which will be the basis of students' representations of manager and management. The models help me to identify the pedagogic preferences of the ESTG management course, and the representation(s) of 'ideal manager' held and supposedly transmitted by the teachers and course's *curriculum*, as well as to relate these representations of 'ideal manager' to specific myths of management, as characterized by Bowles (1997), although Holman's work does not explore the management myths involved in each model, consequently ignoring the impact of these archetypal constructions on students' representations of management. The research I develop here intends to cover that gap by considering and integrating in analysed data the myths of management involved in these processes of education.

An added value is the fact that my research looks at the problem from both the agent and the student's perspectives. When Holman constituted models of contemporary management education from Barnett's analysis, these models were derived only from the perspective of the educational 'context' or 'agents'. The ideal types considered are expected to be transmitted by these agents to students, and students are expected to reveal in their constructions of manager the ideal type transmitted in an approximate way. Holman approaches the phenomenon only by looking at the agents/context premises, ignoring the active role of students in the process; but, as knowledge is considered here as a social constructionist product, students' premises need to be considered as well, for the types of managers constructed depend not only on ideal types transmitted by educational agents but also on the interaction between information transmitted and students' constructs, their previous knowledge and experience; knowledge is socially constructed (Von Foerster, 1984; von Glaserfeld, 1984; Watzlawick, 1984) and social interactions are the support for these processes.

### **Holman's models**

From Barnett's analysis of debates about the purpose, nature and value of British Higher Education, Holman (2000) identifies five recurring themes, according to: an epistemological axiom referring to assumptions about the nature of knowledge pursued; a pedagogical axiom referring to the nature of the learning process, the ideal outcomes of the learning process, and the teaching methods; an organizational axiom referring to the management and organization of higher education; a social axiom, referring to the

perceived role of higher education in society; and finally, a ‘management axiom’ referring to the nature of management practice, as there is an intimate relationship between ideas about the nature of management and ideas about the ‘ideal’ process, content and outcomes of management education. These axioms have been applied by Holman to characterize current forms of management education, allowing him to identify four models: academic liberalism, experiential liberalism, experiential vocationalism, and the experiential/critical school.

The epistemological axiom refers to the nature of the knowledge that should be pursued in management education. The main distinction is between objectivism (universal truth, generic laws) and relativism (pragmatic truth, subjectivity, contextual relativity). The nature of knowledge is central to debates, regarding experiential (knowing how) vs. theoretical knowledge.

The pedagogical axiom is concerned with three interconnected themes: a theory of the learning process, the specific, intermediate and general ideal pedagogical aims, and the methods of teaching. Theories of the learning process are divided essentially between academic (‘traditional’, in many literature reviewed) and experiential theories of learning. This distinction between academic and experiential theories of learning has been one of the most significant in management education (Holman, 2000).

The specific, intermediate and general pedagogical aims refer to the ‘ideal’ outcomes of management education. Specific aims refer to the skills and attributes that a person should develop. The intermediate aims are concerned with the nature of the ‘ideal’ manager, and this ‘ideal’ is metaphorically represented (e.g. scientist, author) and derives from the management perspective adopted. The general aim refers to the ideal emancipatory outcomes of the pedagogical process. These aims vary between those of the ‘conservative’<sup>50</sup> and ‘critical’ views<sup>51</sup>.

The main concern of the social axiom is the role of management education in society. The assumption that management education is a core rather than a peripheral activity for

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<sup>50</sup> These suggest that the social and psychological constraints on emancipation are relatively weak (Barnett, 1994), and that individuals need to develop the right personal skills to become emancipated.

<sup>51</sup> These argue that the social and psychological constraints are much stronger and more interdependent, personal emancipation being more difficult to achieve, for it is dependent on the achievement of wider social change (Wilmot, 1997).

managers and organizations (Weiner, 1981; Maxwell, 1987) is common to all models<sup>52</sup>, and management education is perceived as an excellent ‘site’ for the acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary in contemporary contexts such as the post-industrial society or learning organization. The potential roles of this axiom are: an indirect cultural role, by producing capable citizens able to lead personally fulfilling lives and to help sustain a democratic and learned culture; a vocational role, by providing students with the necessary knowledge and skills to sustain a competitive economy, direct or indirectly; an academic role, by increasing knowledge and understanding about management and management education; and a critical role, by enabling critiques of management.

The organizational axiom is concerned with the appropriate ways of organizing and managing management education to achieve its epistemological, pedagogical and social aims (Holman, 2000). Three main issues are included: the level of autonomy exercised by a university, the management of management education and of universities in general, and the accountability of management educators.

With regard to the management of management education, approaches split between managerialist and non-managerialist ones. The management axiom refers to the nature of management practice. It is based on the three perspectives currently held in management education: technicist, practice, and critical (Reed, 1989; Alvesson and Willmott, 1996).<sup>ii</sup>

Authors have used the ‘liberal’, ‘vocational’ and ‘critical’ designations in order to label particular sets of educational positions/orientations within the five axioms (see Barnett, 1994). According to Holman (2000), these labels are too rudimentary in contemporary management education because they do not adequately differentiate between the models. Holman (2000) essayed a finer grade differentiation using two constructs to label each model, in order to eliminate the oversimplification of the labels. The first construct focuses on the nature of pedagogical assumptions, between predominantly academic or experiential. The second underlines the predominant assumptions behind

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<sup>52</sup> Regarding the social axiom, this presentation seems not to be entirely inclusive, as the perspective on management education which states that management is no longer capable of managing the world thus it does not serve any purpose, is not included in the axiom; but this logically happens as the axioms refer to the supporters of management education, whilst having diverse views on it.

the social and organizational axioms, between liberal, vocational or critical. Four models of contemporary management education result from this finer grade differentiation. Holman's (2000) depiction of the models follows.

	1. Academic liberalism	2. Experiential liberalism	3. Experiential vocationalism	4. Experiential/critical school
<b>1. Epistemological axiom</b>	Objective and theoretical knowledge	Mainly subjective and experiential knowledge, but also objective and theoretical knowledge	Objective epistemology	Subjective and experiential knowledge. Highlights connection between power and knowledge
<b>2. Pedagogical axiom</b>				
i. Theory of learning	Academic: acquisition of objective theoretical knowledge	Experiential: process of reflection, conceptualization, and action	Experiential: learning by doing, comparative encounter between own skills and standards	Experiential: emphasis on examination of power in own practices and learning process
ii. Teaching methods	Lectures, seminars, case studies, experimentation	Learning contracts, group work, action learning, self-development	Competence based approaches	Critical action learning, critical reflection
iii. Specific aims	Objective knowledge and generic 'scientific' skills	Experiential and theoretical knowledge, interpersonal and technical skills	Interpersonal and technical skills	Experiential and theoretical knowledge, interpersonal and technical skills, critical insight
iv. Intermediate aims	Management scientist	Practical scientist, reflective practitioner, practical author	Competent manager	Critical practitioner
v. General aim	Personal autonomy	Personal autonomy, situated reflexivity	Managerial autonomy	Social change, emancipation, empowerment, situated reflexivity
<b>3. Social axiom</b>	Academic role, indirect cultural role, direct vocational role	Academic role, indirect cultural role, indirect vocational role	Direct vocational role	Academic role, indirect cultural role, indirect vocational role, critical role
<b>4. Organizational axiom</b>	University autonomy, stress on uniqueness of HE, non-managerialist practices	University autonomy, stress on uniqueness of HE, non-managerialist practices	Managerialist practices relevant to HE. Stress on standardization, quality, customer service and flexibility	University autonomy, stress on uniqueness of HE, non-managerialist practices. Resistance to bureaucratization and commodification of academic work
<b>5. Management axiom</b>	Technicist perspective	Practice perspective	Technicist perspective	Critical perspective

**Fig. 2.1. Contemporary Models of Management Education (source: Holman, 2000: 203)**

Below I pay attention to the way the models and approaches to ME have developed, supporting formal institutions and processes of education in management, and how these schools and approaches influence MP and managers.

## **ME models in formal education \_ the role of business schools**

The predominant orientations taken by ME, in general, as well as the specific choices made by business schools on the regard of knowledge transmitted and teaching/learning strategies, strongly depend on the management perspectives *and* educational perspectives that societies broadly support at each epoch.

The offer of undergraduate education in management spread widely in several European countries and in the USA after 1986, as a consequence of the increasing relevance of management education (Constable and McCormick, 1987). With the interest in qualification becoming universal, the emphasis has been put on pre-entry education as a necessary, if not sufficient, condition of success in management; and the belief in education both as an investment in one's future and as an individual right has reinforced the evolution of undergraduate offers in management education.

The epistemological roots of a construction tend to disappear as the environmental conditions which generate it change; thus, the reasons that initially underpinned the emergence of a formal academic education in management, an answer to uncertainty or as an instrument of management control (Barley and Kunda, 1992), do not have to be the reasons that sustain or should sustain its contemporary existence.

Debate on the usefulness and future of ME, as well as, of the schools to provide it, usually focuses on the graduate level of management education; the undergraduate level work does not generate deep discussion and analysis. The arguments divide between the important role played by management education and, particularly, by business schools, in the larger educational panorama, and the denial of any evident value given to current ME, thus to business schools. The major concern of researchers to date has lain exactly with knowing to what extent a formal education in management, at undergraduate/graduate levels, contributes to an effective managerial performance; when “value of ME” is mentioned, value normally means “improving the practice of management”.

## **Lessons from the graduate's evidence**

The commercial successes of business schools are not doubted, the question rather being the relevance of its educational product or the effects this education might have both on management practice and their graduates' career (Pfeffer and Fong, 2002). Whilst these schools have adopted a scientific paradigm similar to that of other social sciences, they are confronted with problems, with particular emphasis given to the centrality of business schools and business education to the world of management (Pfeffer and Fong, 2002). In addition, *curricula* were seen as too focused on analytics, with lack of emphasis in problem solving or integrative aspects across different functional areas.

Pfeffer and Fong (2002) founded their observations, of the impact business schools, on the two outcomes of the most relevance, the graduates' career and the knowledge these schools produce, and showed that the panorama is somehow desolate: firstly, if professionally useful knowledge is supposed to be conveyed by business schools to their students, then success is expected to be observed in their performances and careers. Nevertheless, this does not constitute evidence; people hired from high-end business schools were no better at integrative thinking than those hired from liberal-arts programs (Lieber, 1992), nor visible gains (economic or progression) were observed in the business career of those having a business degree, when compared with those who have not. So, the authors claim that, if the subject matter of business schools were directly tied to business success, then there should be stronger connections between business success and mastery of the relevant context.

Secondly, they say, whilst business schools' research activity and the knowledge produced on that regard, give prestige to the institutions to which they refer to, this research and knowledge barely influence the practice of management. As Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) noted, contemporary business education focuses on the functions of business, more than the practice of managing.

The criteria used by authors such as Pfeffer and Fong (2002) to evaluate the performance of the business schools currently "educating" managers is rather conservative, in the sense that they look for arguments to judge the way students are taught/getting "really useful" knowledge, a view which is far from my standpoint. I aim for other purposes and goals for ME than only teaching/providing students with useful

knowledge and tools, purposes that relate with more critical thinking and reflexive environments in ME, and the search for possibilities for CME, educational contexts of management other than those providing “useful instruments and knowledge” for/serving the practice of management. Thus my research will use arguments and will be based on criteria to evaluate ME processes/products necessarily different from Pfeffer and Fong’s (2002), different from “useful knowledge”.

But I still can use the work developed by these authors and the conclusions they have drawn can be used to ask ‘what have we, as arguments, for the undergraduate level? What are the current situation and characteristics of undergraduate, which are the main gaps to fulfil’?

Even those arguing in favour of ME as facilitating a better practice of management, recognize that the performance of the manager depends on and improves through a mix of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experience *acquired through education*, which does not necessarily mean *acquired through an undergraduate programme in management*<sup>53</sup>. Many people, who have accomplished great things in the business field, had/have not a business school degree (Mintzberg and Lampel, 2001).

Whilst there are authors who defend the value that this kind of education represents to management practice (Locke, 1989), helping students to learn from experience, to develop a capacity for dealing with change, to support community motivation, many doubt this contribution, especially at an undergraduate level (Grey and French, 1996). Many e.g. Porter and McKibbin, (1988) assert that *curricula* taught in business schools only have a small relationship to what is important to succeed in business, with great emphasis on quantitatively based analytical techniques and too little attention given to developing leadership and interpersonal skills; at undergraduate level, these problems become harder to overcome, because the gap between knowledge and experience is in strong evidence at this level, constraining the observed need for interdependence between the theoretical framework and the experiential development in this ME level (Bilimoria, 2000).

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<sup>53</sup> The undergraduate level of management education seems to generate even more polemic regarding its usefulness for management practice improvements (Alsop, 2002; Pope, 2002; Gammie, 1995 Murphy, 1992) than other levels of ME.

To this is added the fact that management is considered a practical subject, rather than an educational experience to be acquired. For those who ascribe a practical character to management, it does not seem appropriate that a degree in management, taken before work experience, is the main route for large numbers of young people to obtain their primary qualification for dealing with the management field; many authors express this concern (Pope, 2002; Gammie, 1995; Anthony, 1986; Thomas and Anthony, 1996). The concern can be based on the following arguments: having an academic degree in management, especially before management experience acquisition, is not an obligatory pre-condition for those who will become managers; the motivation that leads many students to enter a business school, or to get a degree in management, may not necessarily be ‘to become a manager’; and, finally, the possession of a degree in business/management neither guarantees business success nor prevents business failure (Pfeffer and Fong, 2002).

To these assertions we can also add the fact that managerial success is less and less directly related to a previous management education opportunity<sup>54</sup>, as argued by Pfeffer (1981) and Pope (2002). On the contrary, some authors state that say this type of learning situation is considered inappropriate for undergraduate students (Gammie, 1995), and there is even some argument that it causes actual damage (Anthony, 1986, Leavitt, 1983, Mintzberg, 1989, Whitley et al., 1981). Nevertheless, for Thomas and Anthony (1996), to affirm that specialised management education does nothing or does harm to students may be attributing consequences to the wrong cause: for those authors it is not the value of education but the belief in the importance of a general managerial career pattern which weakens management.

Authors taking an extreme view deny any contribution of undergraduate management education to managers’ development; apart from arguing that management education does very little to develop managers’ abilities, as Grey and French (1996) do, it could also be asked what managers’ abilities really are. If we consider, as Porter and McKibbin (1988) do, that major abilities to business careers are interpersonal skills, leadership and communication skills, then the lack of attention given to those skills in

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<sup>54</sup> The spectacular growth of markets and business deals in Central Europe illustrates this very clearly.

business schools *curricula*, allows us to affirm that the *curricula* of business schools do not provide students with the development of required abilities for management.

*Curricula* of business schools seem, thus, a paradox: the abilities these schools transmit better are those also easily learned and imitated by intelligent people, while less privileged abilities, having more value in the competition for leadership positions (such as leadership, communication and wisdom), fail the necessary attention in business schools *curricula*, whilst being less easily imitated (Pfeffer and Fong, 2002). In spite of all considerations, and investigations made about the *curriculum*, things have not significantly changed and, besides having incorporated new knowledge, the structure of courses and the basic concepts have remained extremely similar.

### **The teaching process**

A first reflection about the teaching process in business courses takes us to some general considerations: incorrect assumptions about learning leading to programmes which operate in a way that poorly contributes to learning outcomes; a focus on learning requires an output orientation (Boyatziz, Cohen and Kolb, 1995), and such an orientation is absent from teaching methodologies/practices in many business courses. One representative work in the field<sup>55</sup> has been developed by Prosser and Trigwell (1999), who explored specific teaching and learning experiences, as well as, the major factors of influence, within each of these experiences. They focused on how students learn and how teachers can improve learning outcomes, and they typified the learning conceptions of teachers and the learning approaches of students.

The learner's role is principal aim of research at undergraduate level of ME; at this level, learning is seen as constrained by the context and the characteristics of the learner, neither offering nor providing experiential gains (Grey and French, 1996). The same authors consider the ability of management teachers to change learning and teaching contexts, in their investigations, but the emphasis of their work is on students' reception of the learning situation. According to them, a key way of bringing about changes is through changes to the context. They also refer to 'good teaching' (facilitating students' learning): this 'good teaching' is about becoming aware of one's own conceptions of learning and teaching, as well as, being aware of the approaches to

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<sup>55</sup> Focusing on processes of learning, instead of results/products

teaching and teaching outcomes. In a ‘good teaching’ process, a major task which is currently being overlooked to a large extent, is to ascertain the perceptions that the students have, of their learning situation, and to work towards developing learning and teaching contexts from students’ experience, in a similar way to that intended by the teacher.

The concept of “good teaching” is focused/developed in other studies: in different studies, ‘teaching’ varies, in accordance to more limited or more complete ways of understanding what teaching is about and how to practice it. The ‘complete’ way involves helping students to change their conceptions of the subject matter, while the ‘limited’ way involves the transmission of the information about the theme or teachers’ understanding about it. Those who work within more limited ideas may not see the purpose of teaching as being any more than an increase in student’s knowledge through the transmission of information.

Another relevant issue related with the teaching process is the use of external incentives, particularly grades, which seem to be far from having a real positive effect on learning outcomes, inhibiting it, instead (Kohn, 1993). Besides the absence of positive effects on learning outcomes, grades are not given much weight by employers in recruitment (Pfeffer and Fong, 2002). Nevertheless, grades are usually used in business schools as a strategy for promoting adequate learning outcomes and the development of management skills as well as a strategy for the development/increase of students’ self-esteem.

## **Methods**

Apart from teaching processes and *curricula*, some issues with the method of instruction are presented. Postgraduate courses benefit from concrete experience in the learning process, since students are already in contact with professional experiences; this is an advantage, for “concrete experience is the basis for observation and reflection” (Kolb, 1976:21). The undergraduate level provides poorer learning experiences, both due to the absence of students’ professional experience and to the methods which are privileged in this academic level of business education.

Gammie (1995), for instance, considers two interrelated problems, at this level of ME, the first being exactly the range of methodologies applicable to this category of

students, and the second being the overall suitability of those being taught. The methodological point can, in turn, be further broken down into content and process; the process at undergraduate level being largely lecture, tutorial, case study and computer simulation based, and the content consisting mainly of lists and platitudes that can only be applied to static case studies (Gammie, 1995); so, true managing cannot be replicated in classes; students may learn to talk about business, but they probably do not learn business.

As Leavitt (1989) noted, business schools have been designed without practice fields. Murphy (1992) suggests that an undergraduate programme in management education should reject the traditional academic subculture and install a managerial subculture oriented towards action and practical skills as opposed to a focus on theory and an emphasis on cognitive skills, based on models like the experiential liberalism one. Bilimoria (2000) is of the opinion that Murphy's methodological suggestions can only develop the skills of management if the student acquires them through experiential learning. Her view on teaching methods comes in line with her definitions of new missions for management education and with her claims for progressive learning methods instead of traditional ones, as the latter are incongruous when dealing with change-oriented missions, while forms of 'learning by doing' are consistent with real world learning. In fact, professional mastery in management requires transcending the rules and plans of technical rationality to reflect in action, and this is done by providing people/students with real opportunities to "act/do".

An additional criticism directly refers to the specific group of people being taught at this level of education: those being taught at the undergraduate level are unsuitable for this type of education. If management education requires real, practical experience prior to classroom studies, as argued by Quillien (1993), then the place for undergraduate level of ME is questionable and the obvious problem is the fact that education cannot generate experience. Bilimoria (2000), Quillien (1993), and Grey and French (1996), suggest that management education is viable or adequate only at post-experience level; otherwise, it is only fact-gathering and assessment achievement-based. The same authors argue that the problem-solving nature of management cannot be realistically and appropriately addressed unless the environment is created in which to experience this.

## **Investigation at undergraduate ME**

Reference to some issues with business schools research has been made: the prestige that this kind of research gives to the school where the research is done and, in contrast, the rare impact that the outcomes of this kind of research have, in the practice of management, both have been emphasized above.

The investigations made, at this level, have not proved to be sufficiently illustrative, neither in understanding the real value and effects/outcomes of undergraduate ME, nor in exploring the processes involved or changing the practices adopted. To date, studies have been too centred on students' academic results (Burgoyne and Cooper, 1976), which are believed to indicate the success of teaching and learning methods, and approaches. Major weaknesses ascribed by Burgoyne and Cooper (1976) to this specific field of research are: lack of comparative research (regarding methods comparison), and the problem of 'method enthusiastic' (implying the discussion of preferred methods).

A good deal of research has developed on products, results, or on the relationships between processes/methods and results; cognitive-focused methodologies are less highlighted in research, in spite of some relevant works, such as Swan's (1997), Lavin and Latane's (1996), Latane and Schaller's (1996), Boland and Richard (2001), and Prosser and Trigwell, (1999). Insufficient research appears to exist with relational purposes: there is very little research on teachers' conceptions of teaching, their perceptions of the teaching context, their approaches to teaching, teaching outcomes and relations between these aspects of the experience of teaching. Thus, this represents a significant gap in the field, because Lawrence (1992) argues that the best works and outcomes originate from problem-oriented research, not from theory-oriented one, and problem-oriented research in management education is lacking. This fact partly explains the poor outcomes at undergraduate level of ME.

## **The alternatives**

Discussing and investigating the real contributions of undergraduate management education to MP, as well as, their possible, or impossible, relationships, questions main pedagogic models of contemporary ME: both the credibility of vocationalist foundations for ME and the importance of the myths of management which sustain these vocationalist contexts are doubted. The main goal/function of these vocationalist

foundations and underpinning myths is to provide management students with adequate strategies for facing uncertainty and restructuring control of managed situations, hence guaranteeing a strong relationship between knowledge and skills provided by the course and the organisational competences required by the professional context.

Nevertheless, when judging the role of ME and business schools at undergraduate, main concerns still focus on the extent to which *curricula* are or are not linked to the concerns of the profession and directly oriented toward preparing the students to practice that profession. Programmes addressing the issue of “relevance” share some principles, which authors underline: more experienced students (allowing the transfer of training between the school and the workplace), multidisciplinary in *curricula* design, focusing on changing people’s thought about business issues, instead of only learning concepts and techniques, having a clinical/action component. But all these issues and concern this relate to the conservative view.

### **Consequences and value of ME approaches and models: beauty(ies) and the beast**

My major concern is with the nature, value and purpose of management education, which generated and leads this investigation. After having reviewed Holman’s models of management education, as well as the business schools role, I am tempted to ask: which model/models or strategies appear to be most appropriate for developing managers? Whilst being acceptable, the question enters precarious ground, as no agreement or evident consensus exists on what ‘developing managers’ means.

It is suggested (Grey and Mitev, 1995) that it could be appropriate for management educators to make clear to students the existence of different perspectives when problematic assumptions are drawn up. Students should appreciate the complex and disputed nature of management as a practice and a body of knowledge (Grey and French, 1996).

On the other hand, experience is accepted as a necessary element for the effectiveness of the management learning process, which takes undergraduate management education to be perceived as not directly favouring managerial practice. Experience is not present at an undergraduate level in an acceptable proportion in a world whose unpredictable

character does not combine with education in management aiming to be a control strategy; functional relationship between management and management education is doubted as researchers reveal difficulties in demonstrating the positive relationship between undergraduate ME and practice improvements.

For Gammie (1995), the lack of managerial experience during an academic learning period generates a superficial, theoretical and unsubstantiated involvement of the students and this is not a facilitator of future managerial practice. Instead, it could promote students' awareness of management practice and managers' limitations.

As I aim at a more critical and reflexive attitude and practice in undergraduate management education, I am tempted to decide in favour of a combination between action learning and critical pedagogy orientations, to answer the 'appropriateness' question. However, all models must be critically looked at, so we can get a perspective on the pedagogical limitations and advantages of each one.

There are some problems inherent to pedagogies related with academic liberalism: these pedagogies seem to be a poor mechanism for developing managers; its managerial axiom seems to be undermined by its organizational axiom, with technicist assumptions of management implying that there is no problem in applying generic and instrumental practices to all organizations, despite their size, sector and stage of development. Its organisational axiom's considerations are clearly in disagreement with this model's critics to managerialist practices in higher education.

Approaches and practices of experiential vocationalism similarly reveal some inadequacies: its suggestion of action as the alternative to theory is too basic, and it seems rather restrictive, in denying social, political and moral aspects of management (Holman et al., 1997); moreover, the act of learning is summarised into a comparative and instrumental process (Holman, 1996). The social axiom reveals excessive vocationalism in management education, inhibiting learning about management (Holman, 1995, 1996); its managerialist assumptions (defending better standardization and formalization) appear inappropriate to the nature of academic work and learning processes.

Experiential liberalism and the experiential/critical school pedagogies seem to offer better potential for developing managers since they share a focus on experiential pedagogies and a concern with the lack of experience in teaching strategies within higher education, whilst the critical school draws on both critical and post-modern theories to inform upon the nature of the learning process, its aims, and teaching methods. From a critical perspective, Alvesson and Willmott (1996) suggest critical theory can generate insight by focusing attention on unacknowledged representations of management and, in doing so, could bring about change. In addition, reflexive dialogue from within can make our own assumptions and tacit ideologies surface, question the limits and constraints we may impose on self and others, and explore how we may create possibilities for a more critical practice.

These pedagogies enable the complexity and the non-mechanistic nature of managerial practice to be addressed in an easier and more complete manner and they build on the way managers learn ‘naturally’ at work. They also provide a more eclectic range of teaching practices for the management educator and are relevant to and critical of the object of study, encouraging management educators to review and improve their own practice, all this making their organizational axioms appear to be more compatible with the nature of academic work. Pedagogically, these approaches could be developed by exploring the nature and role of identity in learning and teaching and, in addition to these more ‘rational’ forms of knowing, other forms of knowing, such as emotion or intuition, could be addressed.

At an undergraduate level of management education the integration of a critical perspective may face strong constraints, both institutional and intellectual, as the students are faced with ideas that often run counter to their previous educational experiences (Grey *et al.*)<sup>56</sup>. Gilleard (1998) confirms the lack of correspondence between the teaching strategies chosen within these particular management education models and the previous learning culture to which students might have been exposed . The integration of a critical perspective at an undergraduate level is clearly faced with these kinds of constraints<sup>57</sup>. The existing differences between the discourse of

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<sup>56</sup> Again, this is stated with reference to the UK situation, but it could be easily transferred to Portugal  
<sup>57</sup> In many cases this lack of correspondence is due partly to teachers' lack of knowledge on previous characteristics of the educational situations to which students have been exposed (Gilleard, 1998).

management education and management practice and the view of learning as a cognitive, disembodied, reflective process contribute to the further separation of theory and practice and do not necessarily help managers becoming more critical-and moral-practitioners. The discourse of management education and that of management practice are very different. As academics, we talk about ideologies, social structures and systems of domination that are generalized across different organizational and management contexts. We speak about things we can transform if we apply critical reasoning to our understanding and our action.

The goal of critical management education is to 'liberate individual and collective human potential' (Caproni and Arias, 1997: 294) by encouraging critically reflexive readings of 'texts', and by addressing the discursive structures that control, normalize, dominate, and support managerialism. But this often encompasses a first-order reflexivity in which we (learners, teachers, and managers) do not turn these readings upon ourselves (Chia, 1996) but are critical of a generalized other. We are encouraged to protest and resist that generalized other without becoming aware of how to liberate our own potential. While critical stances may open up conventional managerial ideologies, forms of knowledge and teaching to critical questioning, they do not necessarily help managers act within their daily experience in more critical ways. The main reason for this is that both conventional and critical approaches focus on realities and systems existing independently from our own personal involvement, and use external or third party frames of analysis and critique.

Besides that, experiential and critical pedagogies can also be gendered, ethnocentric and elitist (Ellsworth, 1989); they can equally lead to anxiety, cynicism and disablement (Brookfield, 1994), with such an outcome possibly being partly due to the critical insights gained. Management educators may need to provide examples of critically reflective practice in order to overcome these difficulties.

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Current educational experiences provided to students, contradictory to previous ones, make it even more difficult to run a critically based management programme at undergraduate level. Added to this is the fact that many times the undergraduate level of management education is designed jointly with MBA courses and both use the same approaches as those applied to practising managers and executives (Gammie, 1995).

Critical pedagogies aim to dislodge managerialism by standing back and questioning ideologies and techniques and practices of domination, hierarchy, and control, but managerialism still exists within business and academic contexts. Indeed, many management students and educators work within organizations in which discursive structures institutionalize and espouse managerialism in implicit and explicit ways (Boje, 1994, 1996; Cooper, 1989). We have hierarchies, a need for competitive advantage, for technological dominance, and (presumably) we engage in education in order to improve management skills and career prospects in this context. As educators, we ourselves are agents of control and surveillance as we share our 'expertise', and categorize and evaluate the performance of our students, whatever ideology we subscribe to, whether managerial, critical, or constructionist.

In other words, both students and academics bring traces of wider discursive structures, ideologies, and power relations into the learning process. While critical approaches may bring these wider contextual influences to the fore, they can often result in impotence unless we also recognize the formative, relational, and embodied nature of local discourse (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004; Cunliffe, 2002).

In spite of the constraints, the presented arguments, together with the analysis of Holman's models, lead me to argue in favour of an education in management which might be based on experiential approaches and non-managerialist, reflexive and critical, practices. Even with all the problems that it may cause and the constraints it presents – or even impossibilities of real practicality, according to some authors – CME continues to be, in my opinion, the way forward in terms of change beneficial for ME, as long as we know how to take from all the proposals, controversies and recent developments the teachings that its advances and setbacks have given us. One good illustration of what I have just said, about different ways of applying and integrating one perspective or approach (in this case, CME) is the work of Reynolds and Trehan (2003).

These authors state that much of management education, even that which is intended support critical approach, did not provide structure or social/educational process adequate to the task of foregrounding differences in order to understand them. Management education seems to have largely ignored difference or contributed to its

suppression. However, 'critical' pedagogy supporting the exploration of difference, experiences resistance to consensus-driven tendencies to obscure or deny difference; it also reveals that differences present in the life of the course as students and tutors worked together would be worked with so as to provide learning for living and working within the wider social context.

Critical analysis may not be enough to develop change; some versions of criticality worked as repressive myths that perpetuated relations of domination within the classroom. Ellsworth reminded us of this fact, when she pointed out that radical pedagogy failed to confront the authoritarianism inherent within most teacher-student relations; this argument underpins Perriton and Reynolds (2004) idea that, critical studies in management might be looked at in a similar way and start being renewed from there. For critical studies to act as catalyst of change, in a really critical sense, students must be given equal chance to articulate their cultural experiences, and teachers must help students discover how they self-construct cultural meanings and identities within and against the ideological frameworks of mass culture, institutional settings and discourses. Translating this intellectual position into classroom practice is the core of critical educational projects in relation to management.

Hence, there are issues from CME to be profited from, such as the participative methods, privileging notions of 'group' and 'community' and therefore reinforcing values of consensus that potentially diminish the importance of difference, if one works them in other ways than exalting the difference. This can be one alternative way of doing critical pedagogy, using the reflexive way of educating, and getting aware of the differences, but out of the reinforcement/exaltation of that difference. The ways in which people distinguish themselves, or are distinguished from others, often providing the basis for the formation of coalitions and sub-groups as well as illustrating the ways in which people's experience of difference can distance them from others within the learning environment. The idea is not to abandon CME but to exert it in other directions.

Other obvious limitations, less scientific or theoretical and more practical, must be considered, regarding alternative approaches for business schools: first of all, is cost; students are reducing and salaries increase. Then, the fact that business schools are not, in general, well prepared, well equipped, to staff new models of ME. Additionally,

although business schools can innovate, their ability to compete successfully for status and prestige will be limited. Thus the business education's system seems a self reinforcing one, constraining real change, the schools with more success and prestige not revealing any need for changing the *status quo*, and the others that might have an incentive to innovate, starting with an anticipated disadvantage of not being necessarily able to attract the most applicants or best students.

These additional reasons contribute to the *status quo*, already strengthened by the taken for granted aspects of business education, the fact that what we do and how we do it in management has become truly institutionalised. This legitimates models and practices, isolating them from questioning. And, as Pfeffer and Fong (2002) state, schools are too busy, teaching and researching, to consider the environment where they are working or, more than that, to consider their ability to change that environment.

## **Summary**

Different approaches to management and different understandings of management mean different approaches to management education; approaching ME in a more traditional or in a more critical way generates different directions for the development of management education, different goals, strategies and results. Management education's developments and current situation mirrors the fragmented state of management (Kallinikos, 1996); it also reveals/emphasizes preferences of authors and practitioners, ranging from more traditional to experiential or critical approaches, from teaching to learning focused perspectives, or from a context of an educational nature to an essentially training context.

Many assert that critical reflection and discussion are needed; and that these should focus on what should be worthwhile in management education, or whether what is learned in management education is in any way worthwhile. Many authors argue in favour of "inappropriateness" of undergraduate ME. This 'inappropriateness' normally refers to the difficulties found for developing adequate skills for MP. The main reason for sustaining the arguments of 'inappropriateness' generally refers to students' lack of exposure to business environment (Bilimoria, 2000).

The insistence on a functional relationship between management and management education still guides much research, with results being considered in that light. This applies to research on methods, learners' characteristics, and the added value that management education represents, to management practice. Whilst the political, economical and social conditions of management have changed since the rise of management education, many authors, managers, educators and practitioners insistently continue to approach management education as an instrument of management which prevents uncertainty in management practice by *a priori* controlling its quality, through the teaching of 'the right practices'. As a consequence, discussions have largely centred on the impact of a number of teaching methodologies, both on managerial learning and subsequent management performance. These discussions vary between arguing in favour and doubting the usefulness of this kind of educational intervention (Bilimoria, 2000).

The present research has been developed precisely at the undergraduate level of management education and its chief concern relates to alternative ways for ME in Portugal, particularly focusing on the possibilities for CME in that field. For that reason, this thesis also relates to the argument of 'usefulness' of this type of education, at present, but not in the usual 'functional' manner, rather in the sense of "which purposes should this education serve, for students and society"; the inherent question to my work is how the present education in management impacts on the students' knowledge and representations - how it works, what are the agents' and the students' processes - rather than how the course improves (or not) management practice. This will bring up to date what are exactly the possibilities and constraints for CME development in the investigated context, possibly leading to a broader analysis of the main constraints and possibilities for CME in Portugal, later on.

It is not my intention to deny usefulness to the current undergraduate management education; however, I intend to look for indications of that usefulness using arguments other than the evidence of functional relation with MP, as an instrument to improve management performances. I am rather interested in exploring "usefulness" in other direction(s): I accept that, to some extent, the course changes students' constructions, and my main goal is to understand the process and the implications of this impact, the constraints and facilitators to that process, more than exploring its direct contribution to

MP. Rather than discussing the usefulness or effectiveness of the studied undergraduate management course for future management practice, I am interested in understanding how the processes developed within that context impacts on students,, whatever benefits this impact might directly have on students' future practice of management. I still am interested in course's usefulness, but the question now relates with what benefits or contribute the course might have/give to other areas than only the direct improvement of MP in the enterprise.

As Huczynski (1993) reminded us, it does not matter if undergraduate management education really makes the difference for future management practice; what matters is whether students who engage in such an educational context, as well as the agents involved, believe it does; this belief causes real effects on both poles of the interactive process: the agents and the students. Research rarely centres on the impact that the management education context has on students' cognition, mental maps or, more precisely, on their representations of management and managers. The effectiveness of management education is usually explored in terms of advantages of a particular management education setting or context for management practice, learning outcomes within a certain management education setting, or quality indicators regarding a specific management education context. Many recent studies even look into the effectiveness of teachers' approaches or teaching methods in terms of desired students' outcomes; but this usually happens in a results-oriented manner, instead of a process-oriented way.

A new research standpoint is required: students are submitted to a context of an undergraduate management education which is supported by a specific model of education that aims to transform students into a specific type of manager. That model exerts its influence for years (from three to five years, minimum) and such an educational influence develops within power relations, dominant myths, dominant culture(s) and social interests; performance or results are not the only ways through which the educational phenomenon can be investigated, processes and dynamics are central to its understanding. The pedagogic model supporting the educational practice of a specific context of ME, like the one at ESTG, is perceived as a specific educational experience that has specific effects on students, which can be observed through the processes developed for constructing knowledge, representations and interactions with contexts and situations. By 'effects' I mean the orientation that these models imprint,

one way or another, on students' managerial representations and practices; this concern is independent from the concern researchers in this field normally have with the degree of success or effectiveness students might have as managers, which is a consequence of such effects on management practices.

The criteria 'managerial success', normally used to assess the usefulness or contribution of ME to management, could underline other powerful outcomes, besides adequate/successful MP, such as extending paradigms or distributing power and knowledge to the world (Srivastva et al., 1995). These are relevant outcomes (Huczynski, 1993) as management academia plays central role in modern societies, in producing and reproducing the practices of management. For this reason, the processes and products, the events occurring in management education settings, matter. Importance must be given, not to truth of management and manageability discourses, but to the true effects that may ensue, because those effects, particularly in education's contexts that intend to develop the managers of the future, dictate the future of practice(s) in the field

As well, if we intend to insert new practices in the classroom, if we aim at working the difference in a useful, critical way, reflexively, we need to be aware of what is happening in these contexts right now and how, what the advantages and constraints the current approaches to ME practiced in the classroom bring, to aimed goals and results. From the perspective of critical pedagogy, and in contrast to traditions of much mainstream management education, it becomes important to know how differences emerge, on what basis, of what kind, and with what consequences for an individual's experience and subsequent action-whether as student or tutor. This investigation aims at contribute to this comprehension, by understanding the process of representations' construction in ME classes, a process imbibed by mainstream ME trials to ignore difference in the management learning context.

Representations of manager and management are context-dependant. So, the specific context of this research (management course of ESTG), will be investigated and characterised, in terms of its main pedagogic orientations and practices; this characterisation will be made with the help of Holman's work (2000) in respect to contemporary models of ME. These have been developed within the UK, but they may

be easily applied or transferred to the Portuguese reality, because debate and analyses about the developments and current situation of ME in Europe emphasize some common concerns and problems, goals and orientations. In Portugal as in the UK (alongside with other European countries), concerns and planned improvements regarding the future of management education do not put their emphasis on the undergraduate level; lack of practical experiences and too theoretical orientations are pointed as “the” weaknesses of this level of ME, and the fact that academics, practitioners and researchers have not agreed yet on the main role and function of ME at undergraduate constrains specialists to decide which way(s) future improvements must go. Exploring the possibilities for more critical pedagogies in a specific Portuguese ME context can help filling this knowledge’s gap. I hope that the investigation moves forwards an open debate in Portugal, on this matter.

As we referred, just above, the focus on social difference has been largely absent from mainstream management education, and the response to differences is predominantly that they are to be managed or otherwise resolved in the interests of smooth running of the organization, ensuring compliance with its objectives (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000). It might be argued that the emphasis on psychological explanations in preference to social critique, which still characterizes management education, has held back the development of a theory-in-action towards difference. Certainly the interests represented by such bias are still evident in the selection of ideas for inclusion in mainstream curricula. In the same way, organizational development characteristically outlawed difference through its programmes for 'attitude change' in which individuals were encouraged in the belief that their personal goals could be in harmony with those of the organization. In management development the overriding tendency has been to limit the interpretation of complex group phenomena to psychological processes. In contrast to the predominantly psychologized approaches to difference adopted by mainstream management education, differences play a much larger part in adult education but with contrary views as to how to respond to them.

The evolution of ME in Portugal, and the critics developed, have been never sufficient to generate a ‘critical’ movement in management education, as we can confirm by the mainstream orientation in these schools or courses, drawing upon positivist versions of

theories and subjects, with quantitative methods dominance and managerial orientations prevalence; nevertheless, the fact that some conditions exist that pointed in a different direction, probably there were also some academics that were inclined towards a critical analysis.

Critical Management Education has emerged as an educational wing of the critical management studies (CMS) in the mid-1990s. Its development is patent in the work of Alvesson and Willmott (1992), followed by a series of works that apply a critical perspective to pedagogy<sup>58</sup>. These authors argue for the need for critical management academics<sup>59</sup> to contest the instrumental and unquestioned teaching that characterizes 'mainstream', 'technicist' or 'managerialist' management education. Its pedagogic underpinnings would seem to be predominantly Freirean but, in the early stages of its development, is subject to a growing emphasis on critical reflection from a Habermasian perspective (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004). CME developments shift away from critical pedagogy towards critical theory; regardless its diverse underlying influences, it distinguishes itself from mainstream approaches by regarding generalized observations and prescriptions on social structures and behaviour (education and management theories included) as inherently interested (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004).

As Grey et al. (1996) pointed out, not all 'critical' education in management can be said to belong to something that might be identified as the CMS or CME 'movements':

Critical pedagogy ... is a minority and marginalized activity within management education that deserves to be more widely recognized and adopted. Although there has been a proliferation of literature on management learning, especially in terms of techniques of teaching, the efforts of critical pedagogues in

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<sup>58</sup> Examples are Willmott's 'provocations to a debate' (1994) Fox's 'debate' (1994), Grey and Mitev's 'polemic' (1995) and the edited collection by French and Grey (1996). Also clearly influential in the development of the idea of the critical management educator are Anthony's (1986) critique of management education and Reed and Anthony's (1992) challenge to business school academics for their uncritical stance. These articles, the presence of educational streams within the CMS conference and the creation of the 'Connecting Learning and Critique' conference series could be regarded as marking a kind of public proclamation of the critical 'turn' within management education, providing a platform for the development of a critical management pedagogy. Though, as Perriton (2000) notes, this interest in critical pedagogy is largely restricted to university- rather than organization-based education

<sup>59</sup> Critical academics are defined as those 'concerned to analyse management in terms of its social, moral and political significance and in general terms to challenge management practice rather than seek to sustain it' (Grey and Mitev, 1995: 74).

management education have rarely been articulated and consequently, we suspect, their practice probably occurs in a fragmented and ad hoc manner. (p. 108)

Grey and Fournier, consider that “to be engaged in critical management studies means, at the most basic level, to say that there is something wrong with management, as a practice and as a body of knowledge, and that it should be changed” (2003:7). These authors state that, due to theoretical pluralism that characterises CMS, it is not possible to demarcate the critical from the non-critical positions, and the term (CMS) is used by them (and others) in a broad sense, encompassing a plurality of “conflicting intellectual traditions, including some authors who would reject the CMS label” (2003:7). Some boundaries are, nevertheless, drawn, and those are built around issues such as performativity, denaturalization and reflexivity. A performative intent is the intent to develop knowledge which contributes to the production of maximum output for minimum input (Lyotard, 1984), knowledge within means-ends calculation. The principle of performativity dictates the orientation of non-critical management work, subordinating knowledge and truth to the production of efficiency.

In other words, the aim is to contribute to the effectiveness of managerial practice, or to build a better model or understanding thereof. Management is taken as a given, and a desirable given at that, and is not interrogated except in so far as this will contribute to its improved effectiveness.

Critical work is not performative in this meaning, rather questioning the alignment between knowledge, truth and efficiency and is concerned with performativity only in that it seeks to uncover what is being done in its name. The demarcation between the critical and the non-critical may be recognized in the lexicon of concepts which are set out: notions such as *power*, *control* and *inequality* typically make us to expect some form of critical approach whilst *efficiency*, *effectiveness* and *profitability* do not. Of course, much depends upon how terms are then used.

Another boundary marker between critical and non-critical relates to the commitment to denaturalization: Grey and Fournier (2003) suggest that maybe what unites the very disparate contributions within CMS is the attempt to expose and reverse the work of mainstream management theory. Alvesson & Willmott (1996) consider twentieth-

century management theory as being involved in a double movement of constructing organizational reality and rationality while effacing the process of construction behind a mask of science and 'naturalness'; these authors argue that the principal activity of CMS is exactly being engaged in a project of undoing this work, of deconstructing the 'reality' of organizational life or 'truthfulness' of organizational knowledge by exposing its 'un-naturalness' or irrationality; that is what 'denaturalization' means.

This commitment to denaturalization suggests that CMS is not a static entity; as Grey and Fournier argue:

CMS commitment to critique through denaturalization places it continuously on the move, for critique has to follow the practices that constitute its target and to draw promiscuously upon a plurality of intellectual traditions to launch and perfect its attacks (2003:9)

Thus, CMS involves continuous critique, including a critique of itself; this fact implies its emphasis on reflexivity. CMS might be, then, differentiated in terms of the extent of its philosophical and methodological reflexivity.

Various polemics<sup>60</sup> have had some important implications not only in articulating the different politics that CMS can engage in, but also in encouraging a greater degree of reflexivity in CMS writing. These debates have led CMS writers to question the grounds for critique, their rights and ability to offer critique, and have alerted them to the paradoxical and even preposterous nature of their position as academic writers, sharpening critique (Parker, 1995: 562).

Whilst being a fragmented domain, fractured by multiple lines of division, which reproduce divisions in the social sciences, CMS's divisions may be seen as defining lines of movement, arguments and shifting alliances, that constitute the very criticality of CMS, polemics that allow for the doubt, questioning and reflexivity that feed and sustain critique.

Returning to education and particularly to CME, what can we do, as academics? As with its counterpart in adult education, critical management pedagogy puts 'traditional

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<sup>60</sup> I'm referring to polemics between neo-Marxists and postmodernists, between those seeking to reconcile epistemological relativism with some form of ethical commitment and those arguing for permanent critique.

notions of objectivity into question and is constantly alert to attempts to pass off sectional viewpoints as universal, natural, classless, timeless ones' (Gibson, 1986: 172). Grey and colleagues' definition of critical pedagogy casts it as a perspective that 'challenges positivist knowledge within management and, in so doing . . . opens up the debate about the social and moral implications of management practice' (1996: 109). Maybe all we can do is make sure that this dissonances, which mainstream management theory has treated as either irrelevant to the analysis of organizations or as a set of resources and constraints for the pursuit of performativity, is heard by students of management, 'undistorted' by the performative intent (hence the particular importance and the significant role of management education for a more critical perspective in management).

An open question remains: whether such a project requires, or is compatible with, the promulgation of critical management studies as a space or a 'home' from which critiques can be formulated and launched.

Burgoyne and Reynolds suggest that

Critical reflection has a collective focus. This sense of acting in concert with others contrasts with the discourse of individualism inherent in much formal education' (1997: 316).

Lave and Wenger (1991) within management education have fostered the adoption of the classroom group as a community: learning, as a process, cannot be separated out from its social setting, that 'learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice' (1991: 31). Thus learning is not simply about the acquisition of knowledge; it also concerns 'the production, transformation and change in the identities of persons, knowledgeable skill in practice, and communities of practice as realized in the lived-in world of engagement in everyday activity' (1991: 47). Fox (1997) notes that qualities of 'naturalness' and mutuality are associated with Lave and Wenger's concept of situated learning.

Trying to describe the 'typical' critical management pedagogue' \_ Critical Management Studies Workshop Mission Statement (Critical Management Studies Workshop, 2001):

Critical management educators are, by and large, adherents of 'critical management studies' (CMS), seeking to translate their understanding of what management is and what it should be, into some form of engagement with its practitioners.

Right from the start the statement contrasts the narrowness of the goals of business organizations with more important goals, including justice, community, human development' and 'ecological balance' (2001: 1). This project is partly to be realized through teaching, the schools of management having to create thoughtful practitioners capable of engaging with these issues both inside the corporation as managers and outside it as citizens. (2001: 2). Fournier and Grey identify management education as being 'the most immediate arena within which CMS might hope to influence managerial practice' (2000: 23). That is the most important link between CMS and education's field. Critical Management Education should attempt to follow two foundational principles: (1) critical reflection on group processes, theory and personal experience and (2) a negotiated approach to both content and process (French and Grey, 1996).

Reynolds (1997), for example, suggests a set of questions that should be asked when designing critical classroom practice. On the side of those responsible for the process of education, the author highlights the importance of they previously being aware of their own approaches to learning, of a belief that theirs are the only ideas, information or experience worth learning about, as well as the awareness of the assumptions implicit in the way they work with course participants. On the regard of methods, questions should emphasize the values (social and educational) reflected in the structures, procedures, roles and relationships adopted, room for critical reflection, dialogue and opportunity to question the assumptions implicit in the design, as well as the development of both participants' abilities to work with others and confidence in their abilities to convey ideas.

Researching the main restrictions to the implementation of CME in management course of ESTG, could lead me to a kind of "pilot first step", something like the introduction of a "Critical perspectives on management" module, in my classes, with diary recording events and my own reflections. The introduction of such a module should be preceded by a reflective work using Reynolds' guidelines, just presented above. I will use those

questions as guidelines for my semi-structure interviews and classroom observations, with students and staff.

So, one should bear in mind what characterises a critical pedagogic process, in order to implement one; critical way of conducting the pedagogic process involves introducing a number of critical frameworks in classes. The aim is to use these diverse frameworks as contrasting ways of enabling students to make sense of their experiences of management and management theory. As a part of the process some of the assumptions underlying other modules on the course can be drawn in and criticized. Students must also be provided with the discursive resources, or 'vocabularies of contestation' (Fraser, 1989), enabling them to challenge the truth claims implicit in managerial discourse and, of course, in teachers' own pronouncements.

In addition to this, the attempt is for opening up the process by which classes are conducted; students are/may be asked to consider how they wish to study, what role they want teacher to adopt, the order and timing of the suggested topics, and whether they want them at all. To discuss and learn from the negotiation of the learning process, integrating the experiential and theoretical elements with broader concerns regarding students' conception of the 'good life', social justice and emancipation are targets aimed by critical pedagogues. In addition, students need to be treated as members of an academic community of practice, in order to establish a sense of co-operative enquiry into the complexities and contradictions of managerial work.

The present research focuses on the issues that constitute the boundaries of CME: the distinctive knowledge and representations of managers produced within a management course, performative Vs critical, as well as the character of the strategies used by the teachers in the classroom, scientific and morally neutral Vs. reflexive, self critical ones, to engage with management theory and practices (presenting all the process of management as 'natural' Vs. 'denaturalising' it).

It will look for data that can tell us how far this is taken in the investigated context (management course of ESTG): which are the principal strategies developed, which line of action in education do they identify with (critical/non-critical), which are the more relevant consequences/effects of this educational action (images, representations, knowledge,...produced), how can processes and dynamics developed within such a

context be considered as constrains or advantages to the implementation of CME in referred context.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **... And back again: from management education to management practice**

#### **Management and the manager represented**

##### **Introduction**

The students I am going to investigate are inserted in a context of undergraduate management education, which is supported by a specific model of education aiming to transform management students into a specific type of manager; according to the prevalent models, presently, in this area of education, ESTG model is not expected to be drawn from a critical perspective, rather following the mainstream, traditional, managerialist approach. Which are the possibilities for a CME approach/pedagogy to install there? To be informed on this question, I need to be aware of the pedagogic processes and classroom dynamics that currently act in that context.

The pedagogical model which supports the practice of ME in a specific educational context is considered an experience which induces specific consequences on students. These consequences can be observed in the processes students use for constructing knowledge, in the representations they build and in the interactions developed in the classroom. These students' representations of manager and management will also contain and embody myths of management.

##### **The rise and development of representations of manager and management**

This work accepts that ME is underpinned by the management myths and metaphors that are privileged by management practice at each moment of social development. Moreover, each particular moment of developments in the management field carries with it specific values and beliefs, and the formal academic offers of management education possibly derive from the need for a democratic and ethical legitimacy for managers. Alongside this 'legitimacy-provider' role, ME becomes a core myth for management, one of its functions being to reassure people and legitimise role and practice, as with any myth (Jabri, 1997). It can be argued that contexts which specifically aim at providing formal education to managers may turn into privileged settings for myth-making (Bowles, 1997; Weitz and Shenhav, 2000), for ME contexts may strongly reduce the anxiety generated by the uncertainties of management with

their promises and offers of resources for successful managerial thinking and practice. This way, ME may reassure those who are concerned with 'managing the unpredictable', as it alleges to prepare managers, and budding managers, for management.

Through transmitting contemporary management myths, such as technical rationality, control and Social Darwinism, ME can also perpetuate the representations of manager and management practice associated with these myths. These myth-making processes are supported by specific models of ME, with consequences for the construction of management representations in these contexts. Action and results within each context depend on the particular pedagogical goals, practices and strategies of the model adopted; each model aims to develop a specific 'ideal manager' that agrees with the management perspective embraced by the model. For instance, traditional academic philosophies, mainstream in management education, are dominated by the myth of technical rationality (Bilimoria, 2000; Cunliffe *et al.*, 2002), typical of contemporary management. Consequently, the concern with control impregnates choices made in these educational philosophies, in terms of *curriculum*, strategies to be taught, or roles to be performed by managers. According to this concern with control and its consequences, students learn that their chosen profession is

linear, hierarchical, individualistic, rational, functional, task focused, short-run oriented, externally driven, and competitive (Bilimoria, 1999:464).

The dominance of models such as 'academic liberalism' and 'experiential vocationalism' (Holman, 2000) in contemporary management education generates a lack of attention to the more affective, intuitive, reflexive or critical aspects of organizations in many management courses. Neither the development of critical skills or adequate strategies to deal with world demands are sufficiently developed or invested in; the creative human elements that instigate and transform, appear to be missing from the management classroom (Cunliffe, 2002).

As mentioned above, ME preferences are still for rationalization and exaltation of self-reliance and individualism, marginalizing individuals or groups with less competitive

inclinations<sup>61</sup> (Bilimoria, 2000; Cunliffe *et al.*, 2002). Emphasis is put on individualistic self-reliance and the survival of the strongest/fittest. It is generally believed that organisational members can shape their own career trajectories and are ultimately responsible for their own organizational destinies. The contemporary academic and managerial myths usually reinforce one another in treating the world and people as rational, technical, and individualistic (Ingersoll and Adams, 1992).

In accordance with this, contemporary models of ME hold representations of ‘ideal’ managers that match characteristics of current management myths and metaphors; since management education generally mirrors the main concerns of management practice in each moment of its development, and ‘controlling uncertainty’ relevantly remains one of these concerns, then representations of management negotiated through management education will probably also reflect such a need for control and stability as they are supported by management myths of a similar nature.

Students’ representations about management, therefore, are expected to include a need for control in management practice and a concern with uncertainty and its reduction. However, representations other than these anticipated ones may also be revealed; adopting the concepts of ‘student authority’ and ‘reciprocal authority’ described by Beck (1994), we can look at authority as a more reciprocal phenomenon, in formal education contexts, that corresponds to the personal knowledge and wisdom of the various participants. Teachers are considered to be better informed *on certain matters* by students than themselves, whilst students check the credentials of their teachers in many ways. Then, they take what teachers have to say, to some degree, on trust, as they know this is a safer route to take than to rely solely on their own ideas in an area where knowledge is limited. However, information and advice will not be accepted without modification, even from those regarded as experts. Teachers’ contribution to students’ construction of knowledge is only one *component* within a belief or a decision, and students do not completely adopt another point of view. As Beck states (1994:6):

We ‘stretch’ another person’s advice to fit our particular needs, insights, and intuitions.

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<sup>61</sup> Prasad (1997) argues that these valued characteristics are a legacy of the ‘myth of the frontier’. As Freedman (2002) suggests, this is probably because the taming of the frontier is an archetypal myth.

Beck's arguments would lead one to expect the emergence of some 'personalized' constructions of manager and management in students' findings, contrary to those transmitted by teachers and course contents revealing the dominant character of management; but the possibilities for these constructions to emerge seem rare in contexts of ME where mainstream, traditional, managerialist models prevail, where critical thinking and reflexive attitudes lack, where power relations in the classroom are far from being overtly recognized and discussed.

Representations of management students constitute the means through which the impact of specific models of ME on students' constructions of knowledge during their academic experience in management will be explored here, as well as the possibilities and constraints to critical models that are alternative to dominant ones.

Thus, the following section(s) focus on explanations about the construction of representations, leading us through explanations of how students' representations are/could be (re)formed in educational contexts and how management education might influence students' knowledge, attitudes and/or behaviour. The explanations presented draw on social constructionist perspectives of knowledge construction. The section then goes through the construction of representations as mental representations evolving from very personal experiences involved in permanent interaction processes of reconstruction, which is a socially driven process, language- and myth-supported. The involvement of educational agents in the process is also considered.

### **What do students learn and How do they learn what they learn?**

#### **Social constructionist theories of learning and the construction of representations**

Management education is claimed (Schon, 1983: 39) not to deliver what it promises, nor to help managers to solve organizational or social problems. What, then, could its strengths and advantages be, as a provider of unique learning contexts and processes? Taking from Argyris (1982), Vaill (1989) and Whetton and Cameron (1983) their idea of the uniqueness of management situations, and drawing on social constructionist suppositions, I consider learning as a unique, complex and responsive process that

changes our ways of being, talking and acting. Learning occurs as we engage in internal and/or external dialogues in an attempt to make sense of our experience (Watson, 1994).

This way of reframing learning draws attention to its taken-for-granted aspects, questioning the way many management educators see their students' learning processes as happening according to universal, inherent, and pre-determined plans. Such a traditional notion of knowledge assumes that cognitive structures are representations of some given outside world. These structures might be erroneous, but can obtain accuracy through learning; that is through the assimilation of information.

In contrast to this notion, radical constructivism (von Foerster, 1984; von Glaserfeld, 1984; Watzlawick, 1984) suggests that 'the world is not a pre-given state to be represented, but that cognition is a creative act of bringing forth a world' (von Krogh, Roos and Slocum, 1994:58). In this view, knowledge is not a copy of reality but a construction of it (Watzlawick, 1984). These constructions guide action, define rationality and determine the evaluation of chances and risks. Whilst these constructions do not correspond to true knowledge<sup>62</sup>, they are the cognitive basis of action. In line with such a constructionist perspective, shared meanings generated within these learning processes in the academic context are constructed with the help of metaphors, which constitute important instruments of persuasion (Strati, 1998). Those who are able to define the life of the organisations persuade the others who operate within it, or on its behalf, that matters stand as they think they do, that facts are normal facts when they define them as such. The outcomes of these 'persuasion-supported' learning-processes are obtained through language-supported mechanisms (Bateson, 1971; Luhmann, 1986).

The knowledge constructed is subject to a selection which observes a criterion of 'viability' (Ford and Backoff, 1988; von Glaserfeld, 1984; von Glaserfeld and Cobb, 1983); that is, the outcomes of the learning-process, the knowledge produced, must enable its owner to survive. Myths and metaphors may be the fuel to drive these processes of social construction within management practice and management education contexts, actively participating in such processes of knowing and acting, alongside emotions.

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<sup>62</sup> In this view, learning, by means of information processing, cannot be expected to lead to 'true' knowledge

Management educators with a critical attitude typically accept the idea of individual action but interpret it as being restricted and compromised by social structures and processes that will be present in the students' day-to-day experience of their organization. Their typical aim is to bring the student-managers into a state whereby they can identify these structures and processes. In this way the critical management educator is able to prevent, to some extent, a singular lack of social or political inference. The concept of 'critical subjectivity' drawn from critical theory (Luke, 1992) and others, is thought to allow educational settings to become a site from which dominant values and the practices that embody them can be contested, even those ME contexts which are dedicated in most other ways to the reproduction of dominant socio-economic and cultural practices.

By standing with this latter approach on knowledge construction, it is argued here that knowledge constructed/transmitted within educational institutions, shared by institutional members, is based on social constructivism (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), with members producing and reproducing shared understandings through social interactions (Ford and Backoff, 1988). Social interactions, in turn, constitute, and are constituted by, communication (Ford and Ford, 1995; Luhmann, 1986, 1990). Through communication, educational agents and students mutually influence each other's views and create and change organizationally shared reality constructions. This way, social experience may be regulated through educational practices. Language is an active constituent of this regulation process (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000; Watson, 1995): social realities and students' sense of self are created within these interactions, with regard to educational dialogical practices between students and educational agents; that is, their everyday interactions and conversations (Prasad and Caproni, 1997; Shotter, 1997).

Teachers and students in ME contexts, as any other person in a learning situation, possess learning schemata which can be modified. Management students deal with schemata every day: those of their teachers, peers and certainly their own. Perriton and

Reynolds (2004), about the set of pedagogical beliefs which found critical management education, nowadays, remind us that this critical management education is

a perspective that is social rather than individual, just as the nature of our experience, as individuals, is social. Notions of community are likely to figure in critical pedagogies albeit with problematized interpretations of the construct;

That is why it is important to understand thoroughly the learning schemes, and influential factors of students' processes of knowledge construction and their mental representations. The full appreciation of student's learning schemes will aid a more conscious role as learning-facilitator.

Previous experiences of students are claimed to have their part in the process<sup>63</sup>; Prosser and Trigwell (1999) state that, when students enter an undergraduate level of management education in a certain school, they will have a unique perception of the subject studied; their perceptions of the manager and management practice, for instance, will be the result of their interactions with the learning context, which they will approach in a specific way, influenced by their previous experiences, and producing specific outcomes (including specific representations of the manager and management practice). Students' prior experiences, perceptions, approaches and outcomes are considered to be simultaneously present in their awareness.

From the view I present and defend here, learning involves the recognition of self-ability to shape situations: teacher and student may have to negotiate the spaces between everyday academic and management language (Bakhtin, 1986). This negotiation process appears to emerge in the spontaneous, taken-for-granted, subjective ways in which we respond to others. These ways are served by representational schemes (Prasad and Caproni, 1997; Shotter, 1997), since representations can reveal the ways in which languages (and spaces) are negotiated, as well as the ways we respond to others. Learning is redefined from being about discovering already existing objective entities, to becoming more aware of how we constitute and maintain our 'realities' and identities.

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<sup>63</sup> Since mental representations evolve from very personal experiences, each person must be considered as an independent 'learning mechanism', which works according to its own routines and at its own pace (Smiley, 1992).

Knowledge that is created or constructed incorporates knowing how to be a person of a certain kind and how to relate with others in particular circumstances (Shotter, 1993).

This investigation will provide insight into how students 'know how to be a manager', through exploring their representations of manager and management. Our 'realities' and identities are continually being re-constructed and updated (Cunliffe and Shotter, 1999), and I am particularly interested in exploring how students, as co-constructors of the learning process, create and reconstruct their pieces of knowledge of manager and management, throughout their experience of ME, and how agents of management education collaborate in it.

### **The representational process in the field of management and representations of management**

The previous section reinforced the idea that representations constitute a privileged conceptual vehicle to explore the impact of management education on students: representational thinking is considered (Kallinikos, 1996) an important orientation in the comprehension of the modern notion of management, a notion which, in turn, strongly influences the orientations of management education. Furthermore, its importance extends to the learning process, where constant negotiation of meanings and languages occur.

With regard to ideologies which underscore contemporary management practice, management knowledge and management education, the post-modern debate formulated some problems and assumptions (Giroux, 1988: 25) which argue in part that management is about control and surveillance (Barker, 1993; Knights and Willmott, 1995; Townley, 1994); that management knowledge is about developing ever more sophisticated forms and techniques of control (Kallinikos, 1996); and management education is about teaching and using those methods of control to create managers who are morally neutral technicians (MacIntyre, 1981; Roberts, 1996) and educated agents of progress. Management, as it is currently conceived and endorsed, needs these representational processes. Generally speaking, representational ways of thinking and acting come about through projective mechanisms of selection, perception and

investigation, of particular and limited aspects of the world. The world is thus endorsed and organised through this selective representational process.

In management and ME, the selection of specific aspects of the world is driven by the quest for objectivity; and this quest for objectivity is the quest for representation: the person distances him/herself from the world in ways that make it open to mastery and manipulation. ME has transformed the representation of manager into that of an expert of management, producing and/or legitimising specific forms of organising. Phenomena are external to participants and, therefore, to know and theorize the world is something which remains separate from our experience of it (Cunliffe, 2003). In this sense, representation is unproblematic because reality can be observed; causality can be identified and truthful; objective, empirically testable theories and explanatory models, which then form a basis for action can be developed. By following this method, people can develop confident knowledge (Samuels, 1991) and experience a sense of ontological and epistemological security because they know what they know and who they are.

Constructed representations of manager and management practice viewed in this way are supportive elements for students while making sense of the organisational world; it is a survival strategy, preparing them for that world. Poole (1983) points out the importance of formal education in developing and setting up future patterns of behaviour and expectations through areas of students' knowledge, influencing their perception of work roles and, consequently, their career preparation. He also states that the educational context performs a relevant role, influencing students regarding their professional future, defining their professional competence or how they carry out their tasks as managers, as well as being responsible for publicizing the ideal image for 'managers' and 'organisations'.

Boland and Richard (2001) go further, by arguing that such representations of knowledge drive actions, along with perception and expectations. Using Samuels' (1991) explanation, students also develop confident knowledge and experience a sense of security because they know what they know and who they are.

Knowledge is approached in this study as the result of a process of social construction, in a reflexive sense, not in the ‘objective’ way just described<sup>64</sup>. Although students can take their representations of manager and management to be ‘objective information about what to be and how to act, as managers, within this study representations will be approached as being constantly (re)constructed within the academic context, both by agents and students interacting and talking about each others’ experience. This, however, goes against the unproblematic character of representations, in the sense of ‘confident knowledge’ (Samuels, 1991). They are *social* constructions, knowledge structures comprised of beliefs consensually shared among a social group of people, within a culture (Stangor and Schaller 1996:64). This notion is in line with the social constructionist perspective of knowledge construction: knowledge is something people do together rather than something people possess in their heads; and the representations constructed under this process are thus partly product of informal understandings, negotiated among members of an organised intellectual collectivity (Blum, 1971) and represented by the course context; in this negotiation, not all beliefs are shared with equal effectiveness, depending on educational agents’ and students’ filters (Latane and Schaller, 1996). The crucial role of communication is emphasized: Latane and Schaller (1996) refer that the representations of manager and management evolve because of selective pressures on students, operating through the actions of persuasion, whether conscious or unconscious, of the educational agents involved.

During this process of construction of management and manager representations, and also of a professional identity, the previously mentioned ‘quest for objectivity’ remains a reason for a particular representation remaining in the individual’s mind. During the constitution of stereotypical representations, the utility the representation will have in defining a social group and distinguishing it from other groups dictates its permanence in students’ minds. The degree in which it contributes to the construction of a professional identity is another relevant reason for its permanence (Stangor and Schaller 1996, in Boland and Richard, 2001).

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<sup>64</sup> Reflexivity ‘unsettles’ representation by suggesting that we are constantly constructing meaning and social realities as we interact with others and talk about our experiences. We cannot ignore the contextual nature of that experience and the cultural, historical, and linguistic traditions that permeate our work (Jun, 1994). That is why Cunliffe (2003) calls our attention to the fact that reflexive work is always open to criticism.

In contrast, representations that do not correspond to expected and observable instances will probably be eliminated. This elimination process mirrors the human need for reducing uncertainty: representations of manager and management which guarantee a higher degree of environmental control, previewing events and consequences, will possibly be more desirable and more permanent in individuals' constructions than management representations characterized by uncertainties and unpredictability.

In line with these conclusions, it is accepted here that representations of the manager and management practice negotiated within a management education environment/situation, by management students, will be selected in terms of observed and confirmed feasibility. Thus, final students' representations disclosed in my findings seem likely to correspond to those which remain after such a process of selection, those which are considered by students as reality-confirmed or desired, revealing their view on, and expectations of, management practice. The 'viability' principle in constructed knowledge is likely to be at work here.

Students' previous experiences have also been presented here as performing a significant role in the process of constructing knowledge representations (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999). Therefore, it could be assumed that, in an initial moment of undergraduate management education, students will produce manager and management representations much more in line with experiences previous to those of their management education experience, than in an advanced moment, in their final academic year for instance, when produced representations would remain closer to the ESTG orientation, matching the model of management education that is chosen by the institution.

This section began by referring to the importance of knowing the answers to the questions: 'what are students' representations of manager and management?' and 'how do teachers, in a specific context of ME, influence the construction of these representations?'

Answers to these questions could/would help me to have a better awareness of my learning-facilitator role, pointing at changes that can be lead through, especially in what

concerns the possibilities for CME. I can gain better insight into my practice and comprehend the meanings of 'ME improvements' for me to take on.

### **Representations of management and reflexivity in ME**

I have already underlined my interest in implementing more critical and reflexive ways of teaching/learning management at undergraduate, more balanced relations teacher/students, as well as an awareness of the social nature of the ME process and the need for discussion by all the participants involved. With regard to this argument, I have emphasized the lack of/the need for creative and critical human elements in the classroom, since these elements seem to be important supports for changing the present state of learning contexts in management, which must aim, in Perriton and Reynolds' words (2004:65) towards:

a commitment to questioning the assumptions and taken-for-granted embodied in both theory and professional practice, and to raising questions about management and education that are moral as well as technical in nature, and are concerned with ends as least as much as with means; an insistence on foregrounding the processes of power and ideology that are subsumed within the social fabric of institutional structures, procedures and practices, and the ways that inequalities in power intersect with such factors as race, class, age or gender; a perspective that is social rather than individual, just as the nature of our experience, as individuals, is social.

But criticisms have to be paired with/accompanied by alternatives; as Beck (1994) argues, in order to criticize a perspective, an institution or a process, it is necessary to have a better alternative. Following Beck's idea, I only accept that traditional models of ME are not desirable for undergraduate ME because I believe that there are other ways of doing it, in order to develop ME contexts which have creative, critical and reflexive character, since these properties would help teachers and students learning from each other (Cunliffe, 2002). It would be irresponsible to attack rational models without presenting or suggesting alternatives, for criticizing with no alternatives leaves a space which may quickly be filled by other problematical beliefs, values and ideologies (Beck, 1994).

Emphasis should be put on interaction and experience as producing management 'knowledge'. Students could learn from teachers and teachers from students, while remaining faithful to their own situation. Such an approach is compatible with the currently popular idea that teaching and learning should be a *dialogue* in which teachers and students learn together.

Reflexivity has been presented or referred in previous sections of this thesis as one of the issues that supports the boundaries of CME. Learning would be *reflexive*, for the same reason that it should be dialogical: even when learning from each other neither would give up their own contextuality but, instead, would be aware of differences between them.

Reflexive scholars question the threads of philosophical and methodological certainty implicit in the goal of mainstream social science to provide an absolute view of the world. Therefore truth claims, assumptions about reality and the ways in which we generate accurate theories should be challenged to reveal the inherent instability of knowledge. The way forward for ME, in a critical manner, is to 'liberate individual and collective human potential', as Caproni and Arias (1997: 294) say; therefore, teachers need to encourage and develop critically reflexive readings and address the discursive structures that control, normalize, dominate, and support managerialism (Chia, 1996). The problem is, Chia states (1996), we typically do not turn these readings on ourselves.

A simple, inclusive and less 'arrogant' practice of criticism (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004) could be the fact that I want management students to 'grow' in their knowledge and experience about managers and management; my hope is that they will continuously upgrade their relevant schemata, including their learning schemata, and therefore be better prepared to perform more and better mental transformations. It could be said that the purpose of any form of education is to modify learners' schemata. One of the biggest errors in learning, however, is that the learners' existing schemata, those that will be called into use for thinking and reasoning, are neither known nor explored in advance. Besides, these schemata change with each new learning experience and, as I previously mentioned, management students deal with new experiences every day, such as teachers' schemata, peers' schemata and their own. Helping students grow is a matter of how they work with their schemata.

The process of ME could be improved (through reflexive dialogical practices) by calling our attention to the complexity and non-linearity of the learning process. But this implies that students and academics bring traces of broad discursive structures, ideologies, and power relations into the learning process (Katz and Shotter, 1996; Clifford, 1986), turning the readings on themselves, as Chia (1996a) argues.

Learning is a process which includes informal ways of making sense that are often taken for granted. For this reason, and because we lack reflexivity regarding ourselves, both conventional and critical approaches usually focus on realities and systems that exist independently from our personal involvement, using external frames of analysis and critique.

Recognition of the fact that local discourse both influences and is influenced by wider discursive structures (Shotter, 1994) can help students and educators think and act differently, by recognizing the part we play in constructing the 'realities', 'systems', 'structures', and practices we criticize. In other words: it is very important to recognize our own ability to shape knowledge, learning and organizational realities in order to take ME improvements forward, and this means a previous awareness of the processes happening in an ME context. Nevertheless, critical ME has been questioned, from Watson's claim for less moral superiority among its proponents (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004) to Freedman's (2002) argument that critical management should recover its confidence in its methods. Critics also reflect the ambivalence that many critical management educators feel in relation to the students they teach, which is clearly illustrated by the observation of a management educator who said

It's funny how management academics don't seem to like managers very much'  
(in Perriton and Reynolds, 2004, referring to McAulay and Sims, 1995: 27).

Freedman (2002:99) corroborates the idea

I have an ambiguous relation to managers, swinging from being broadly sympathetic to their plight, to a mild disdain for their activities.

This feeling can be a constraint to a more reciprocal relationship in the learning process, because it may lead us, teachers, to strategies of emotional defence, favouring our focus on realities and systems that exist independently from our personal involvement, instead of letting us recognize our own place and ability to shape knowledge, learning and, especially, organizational reality. Both educators and learners need to take a critical view of their daily practices in ME and understand what can constitute 'good' learning (Cunliffe, 2002; Prosser and Trigwell, 1999).

The notion of 'good' and 'bad' ME also emerges in literature (Freedman, 2002); students divide ME into 'good' and 'bad' as a way of psychologically defending themselves from the anxiety they are subject to during their ME experience.

Who they are and what they are about is revealed as contingent and they have to reconstruct new meanings for the past, a new sense of self and a new vision for the future. (...) they face a culture replete with, on the one hand, images of bureaucratic organizations and their managements as fatally, even morally flawed, and on the other hand idealised images of post-bureaucratic organizations (Freedman, 2002:93).

Since these particularities of the ME context generate anxiety, a strategy used by students to cope is to split organization and change, characterizing them as 'good' and 'bad'. According to Freedman (2002:93):

'Bad' management education is characterized as that which challenges the manager - self but remains practically irrelevant, which fails to deliver a clear set of recipes and levers to be pulled. 'Good' management education is the opposite - it enables change.

Educators seem to use a similar distinction in their practice to protect themselves from the anxiety resulting from the dualities of their role: a divide between the academic, imperative and commercial needs of management and ME, and their personal ideals of educating in a more beneficial way. This split and the consequent meaning of 'good' and 'bad' in relation to management and management education contrasts with critical

reflexive orientations for ME. When questions emerge on 'good' and 'bad' teaching, according to Prosser and Trigwell (1999) the good teaching is about becoming aware of one's own conceptions of learning and teaching, as well as approaches to teaching and teaching outcomes.

So, 'being aware of' is a key issue in teaching and learning in ME contexts and this is a theme that I will insist on. Reflexive constructionism offers a more critical and ethical basis for constructing meaning, identities, and the taken-for-granted workings of our institutions and language communities. It can offer valuable insights into ME by stimulating a critical exploration of how we constitute knowledge and enact our own practices as educators (Cunliffe, 2003), as it will help us to be conscious of the modes of domination that may exist within our own institutions and classrooms (Cunliffe, 2002). New 'methods' and ways of accounting for our experiences can be stimulated, thereby enriching our sociological imagination (Poliner, 1991)<sup>65</sup>.

Reflexive constructionism can also stimulate diverse perspectives and uncover taken-for-granted practices. Tacit knowing and explicit knowledge can be connected. As Cunliffe *et al.* (2003) state, if we take into consideration the ideas offered by critical ME, then we must do more than simply redesign our courses to incorporate critical theory or critical thinking. As Prasad and Cavanaugh (1997) suggest, we need to actively search for fundamental alternatives. The view of Cunliffe *et al.* (2002) is that this engagement must be turned upon ourselves, involving a rethinking and reshaping of practice, not only intellectual exercise. This requires a degree of self-reflexivity on our own part (Chia, 1996; Cunliffe, 2002), for how can we ask our students to be moral and critical practitioners if we are not? Similarly Frost (1997, 316), asked teachers to help their students 'to grasp the assumptions of a power-induced, politically sustained, socially constructed world', management educators can be challenged, with regard to the field of management education and their own role in it, to consider this role as power-induced, politically sustained and socially constructed.

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<sup>65</sup> Accepting the tentative, inter-subjective, and multiply-constructed nature of explanation can lead to more circumspect, critical and symmetrical relationships in researching, teaching, and practice (Poliner, 1991).

## **Summary:**

From a social constructionist perspective, learning is seen as a constitutive activity in which teachers and learners are participants and co-authors in the creative process of learning. The traditional notion of knowledge contrasts with constructivism by assuming that cognitive structures are representations of some given outside world (von Foerster, 1984; von Glaserfeld, 1984; Watzlawick, 1984); on the other hand, constructivism suggests that cognition is a creative act of bringing forth a world (von Krogh, Roos and Slocum, 1994: 58), and that knowledge is a construction of reality (Watzlawick, 1984).

A social constructionist stance reworks learning from a cognitive perspective into a process which involves constructing ‘practical theories’ (Shotter, 1993), ways of accounting for and shaping our experiences from within the experience itself. This means uncovering and thinking critically of aspects of our tacit knowing while acting as managers, learners and educators. We, therefore, need to focus on the singular events and conversations within which we construct practical accounts of our actions, identities and relationships with others, and which may guide our future action. It is this process that should be open to reflexive critique, because in helping students create new readings of their experience, we create possibilities for change in everyday interaction and, little by little, this can undermine the structures and practices of domination.

Whilst this thesis underlines the need for a more critical reflexive pedagogy in management education, the possible implications and practical consequences of adopting such pedagogy remain outside the aims of the present investigation; only the possibilities for its practice in a particular ME context will be explored.

Building on the basic understandings presented, I constructed a model that allows the collection of appropriate data, in order to describe the knowledge about manager and management constructed by students during their academic experience of management, as well as the processes and dynamics involved. That model explores knowledge constructions of the individuals directly involved in the educational process - manager and management representations - as well as the processes through which they partly develop those constructions, because it is believed that both constitute privileged

devices for exploring the general ME learning process, providing me with awareness on how teachers and students relate and negotiate meanings and actions within it.

Since constructs possessed by students about manager and management at the end of their management course refer to changes of institutional knowledge, it seems to me that, in addition to analyze students' and teachers' interactions, it seemed necessary to look at the constructions of reality that underlie these dialogical interactions. Presuming that management courses are aiming at an organization-environment fit, the relevant reality constructions are those about the organization itself, particularly those of the manager and management.

This process of knowledge construction, as with any other process of change, is a time-consuming process. It is a process in which 'something' turns into 'something else' (Ford and Ford, 1994; Kanter, Stein and Jick, 1992) and, in order to observe it, I have to compare between knowledge about manager and management presented by students in different moments of an academic experience in management. It was not possible for me to compare the same students at the beginning and end of their management course<sup>66</sup>, but I was able to gather relevant information from two groups of students, one starting and the other ending their management education process. Whilst this does not allow me to describe changes throughout a specific process of knowledge construction, it does allow me to compare between two processes which share contextual similarities and represent different moments of the same evolutionary process.

It should be clear, however, that I am not primarily interested in the specific results of a management education processes, but in the conditions it presumes, the ways it follows and the formative mechanisms it depends upon. Looking at the process of knowledge construction from this viewpoint, I explore the reality constructions of the institutional members. Through comparing and aggregating individual constructions, different and shared aspects of knowledge can be identified. Describing the observed learning process by means of the model should, thus, allow me to draw conclusions about the conditions under which shared reality constructions build up and change. I approach management as a theory and practice centrally concerned with the fabrication of myths whose

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<sup>66</sup> The reason was the 'time consuming' character of the process of knowledge construction.

particular function is to reduce uncertainty and subsequent anxiety and I view ME as a privileged context within which to produce these kinds of myths with the aim of helping students to cope with the uncertain character of MP. But the context of management education is simultaneously looked on as

a process of, at least potentially, the dismantling of the manager-self (...) in a context where the student of management is subject to new insecurities, new anxieties (Freedman, 2002:92).

It was, until recently, rare to find studies on the impact of the learning context in the cognitive and emotional processes of students, such as those focusing on the effects of anxiety and students' strategies to cope with such emotional processes. As my work is interested in these emotional effects during students' experience of a management course, I believe the course (should) provide(s) processes of knowledge construction which allow students to negotiate representations of management and manager consistent with these dualities and with the myths that sustain them (that is both the managerialist and the post-modern cultures/contexts of MP). I propose to understand this process in order to incorporate more reflexive practice in management learning as a way of developing more critical and responsive practitioners. Both educators and learners need to take a critical view of their daily practices in ME and understand what may constitute 'good' learning (Cunliffe, 2002; Prosser and Trigwell, 1999).

Although many agents of management education devote a great amount of time and energy to students' apprenticeship, often far too little effort is given to understanding why students learn and behave as they do, and even less to facilitating their learning. Thus, studying the subject seems important to me: the more the agents of management education understand and appreciate this process, the greater the possibility for making improvements in long-term learning and students' behaviour. Using Freedman's words, by improvements in ME I mean improvements in its role of 'providing new ways to be' (Freedman, 2002:92):

Negotiating management education is about overcoming the sense of failure to pursue new developmental pathways, meeting challenges and finding ways of

coping with future adversity. ‘Coming through’ education involves the creation of new meanings to replace the old.

Improvements relate to factors that might facilitate a satisfactory negotiation of management education; constraints relate to those that might run against it. Some of these constraints, as pointed out by Freedman (2002), are lack of alternative narratives available, the fact that management education takes place in group settings<sup>67</sup>, and gender limitations<sup>68</sup>.

In spite of all these problems, I believe, as some authors suggest, a critical and a social constructionist perspective allows us to reframe our notions of learning within an active and embodied process, allowing us to make sense of our experience in different ways (Cunliffe, 2002, 2003; Gabriel, 2002). This involves exploring how our own actions, conversational practices, and ways of making sense (as managers, educators, and learners) create and are sustained by particular ways of relating and by implicit or explicit representations and underpinning myths, resulting from power relationships. Some of these particular ways of relating, in ME contexts, are those dictated by management knowledge, ideology and interests. As knowledge, whether of individuals or organizations, is not directly observable, representations are needed to look into it, based on assertions.

The absence of a paradigmatic theory of management education, or sufficient research into students’ learning processes in ME contexts seems to suggest the need for an inductive theory-building approach to do this work. Hence, this study is exploratory in nature, moving from the description of the empirical phenomena to the interpretive and theory-building processes. Exploratory research of this kind demands moderation as the general processes of learning and knowledge construction are too vast. I need to define which part of the learning process and which results are to be explored. Drawing from social constructionist perspectives, I plan to investigate the way in which students form and reconstruct their representations of the manager and management, a significant part of their process of knowledge construction, which can explain and inform on this

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<sup>67</sup> In this context, embracing change may put someone in an invidious position with others who do not.

<sup>68</sup> Men and women appear to construct different accounts of management and management (Freedman, 2002)

learning process of knowledge construction; I am interested in how it happens and how we, teachers or other education agents, intervene during students' experience of ME.

### **Research questions**

Bearing in mind what has just been said, and considering my primary concern with understanding what is happening in undergraduate ME and how, my attention firstly goes to the question:

*What are students' representations, regarding the manager and management, in a specific context?*

The answer to this question will help me to comprehend the type and quality of relationships, including power relationships, that are established between elements that have a part in the ME process (teachers, students, and curriculum for example) through examining their representations. These representations, presumed to be formed under the influence of educational models and supported by dominant myths in management, will allow me to indirectly observe the knowledge of management and managers that is negotiated, created and sustained within an ME context. My research will try to answer this question through exploring the representations of managers and management construed by the students of a management course during their academic experience, as well as their teachers'; the processes/classroom dynamics through which they achieve those representations are also observed.

I argue that improvements in ME need reflexive ways of educating managers, and this implies self-reflexivity in order to become practitioners who are as moral and critical as we ask students to become. A previous requirement for this self-reflexivity is a deeper, conscious knowledge of this power-induced, politically sustained and socially constructed world, as well as the power-induced, politically sustained and socially constructed character of the field of management and of students' role in it. In line with these thoughts, another relevant question derives from the previous one; answers could contribute to improving the role of ME, making us more aware of the character of our role in ME:

*How are the students' representations of manager and management formed within a ME context, that is, how do agents influence it, participate in it, and how does it evolve, from the beginning to the end of an undergraduate management course?*

These main questions give rise to several secondary ones:

*Are first-year and final-year students' representations dissimilar in any way? If so, in which? Do these dissimilarities point at a closer meaning between the representations of educational agents (teachers, curriculum and so on) and students in the case of final-year students? What, then, are the representations of manager and management held by those agents?*

*Are the course's pedagogical preferences and teachers' representations of manager and management reflected in teachers' and/or students' representations of manager and management? Are they dissimilar? Are these differences of quantity or quality?*

*Are students' representations of manager included in Holman's ideal types of managers, or are they out of the range of Holman's proposed types?*

*How are students' representations and types of manager structured? Do they emerge as mutually exclusive types, in terms of constructs that form them, or do different types cohabit in a same student?*

In terms of the dominant myths involved in students' and agents' representations of management and managers:

*Is there a dominance of technical rationality in students' representations or in teachers' representations?*

*Which other management myths are involved in students' and teachers' representations?*

*Do these myths correspond with those that still dominate management thought and practice?*

*Is the emergence of new myths noted, apart from the dominant ones?*

*Do the dominant myths in students' and teachers' representations relate to the dominant myths in management course curricula?*

*How do students perceive ME relevance for their future practice or for other aspects of their life?*

*How do agents perceive the relevance of the course for themselves or for their students?*

Finally:

***How can conclusions formulated within the current investigation contribute to my own practice of ME and to ME practice in general? How can the processes studied here contribute to inform us of the main constraints and possibilities for the implementation of CME in the investigated context?***

The next two chapters (four and five) will describe my attempt to answer these questions. Chapter 4 details the design of the research and chapter 5 presents the data analysis and interpretation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PLANNING AND PERFORMING RESEARCH

You're walking. And you don't always realize it,  
But you're always falling.  
With each step, you fall forward slightly.  
And then catch yourself from falling.  
Over and over, you're falling.  
And then catching yourself from falling.  
And this is how you can be walking and falling  
At the same time.

Laurie Anderson, *Big Science*, 1982

#### Introduction

The practical part of a research represents the face, the head and the heart of its author, standing for the researcher's individual character. It is always a particular choice, which represents an attempt to go further within a specific subject matter, and is the result of questioning a certain subject and reviewing related literature. The word 'review' (re-view) clearly reveals the meaning of its implied action: to view in a new way what has been previously viewed by others, to construct new meanings upon earlier knowledge constructions. A similar interpretation can be applied to the word 'research' (re-search), the main theme of this chapter: whilst searching for what has been already sought, the perspective of research is an original one, in spite of 'walking and falling, and catching oneself from falling', a journey made by 'walking and falling, at the same time'.

The exploration of *the impact of a management course, at undergraduate, in a Portuguese school, particularly on management students' representations of manager and management, and the processes, interactions, dynamics, involved*, was the focus of the research; qualitative approach and strategies were the way in which I tried to obtain some answers, whilst research answers often remain in the shadow.

#### The nature of the research, main assumptions and aims

The present chapter addresses how the empirical work was carried out in ESTG. I have adopted a qualitative research approach that addresses the representations which first

and final year students in the management course have, regarding the manager and management. The research also addresses curriculum and teachers' representations; it seeks to identify and understand changes in students' representations in relation to the impact of a particular context of management education, the ESTG management course context; additionally, classroom dynamics are observed and interpreted, in relation to representations built and pedagogic models/strategies adopted.

The research explores structural elements of action in management education: in addition to students, it investigates the agents of 'legitimate' scientific knowledge such as teachers and curriculum mechanisms, some of the interactions developed during classes, thus the way these actors act about/impact on knowledge about managers and management. It is the meaning attributed to action by social actors that has to be captured. According to a constructivist approach, when individuals interact, they play a certain influential role and that role is meant to be adapted to each situation and audience. Whilst not ignoring the existence of a range of other opportunities for each student to learn from, that contribute to construct his/her perception of manager and management, during the course, the research focuses on management's teaching and learning processes in conventional terms, within a specific management course.

The ESTG educational context is a specific environment of social construction presumably supported by current management's myths, within particular models of ME; this context shapes the way students filter what is really important to acquire during their course and to take into their professional life. Learning experiences are context-dependent occurrences; they relate to the awareness of the learning environment. That is, approaches to learning are relational; not only during the process of academic education, but afterwards, in the contact with an organizational learning environment. Knowledge representations are intimately connected with the teacher and the learner. These representations are never complete or accurate since they can never replace the experience from which they derive. However, knowledge representations make ideas tangible and enable communication and negotiation of meanings.

Representations of the manager and management possessed by students of the management course in ESTG are a specific form of knowledge representation, to a certain extent negotiated within that educational context. The knowledge 'fabricated'

within the ESTG management course is influenced in its creation by myth-making processes and prevailing metaphors conveyed by educators and authors; they use myths and picture-making as themes for conversation or written material.

The current work explores the process of constructing representations in an academic context, from the following perspectives:

- How students develop representations of what is expected from managers and management practice, during their management course and how they construct predictions about management activities and the role of manager.
- What those representations are, at the beginning and at the end of that course.
- How educational agents participate in such a process, particularly staff and *curriculum*.
- Is there any possibility, in that context, for alternative pedagogic strategies, models, in line with CME?

It is presumed that, representations of manager and management generated by students under the described conditions:

- are produced in collaboration with ESTG management course's agents
- are associated with dominant models of management education, which are based on particular myths, metaphors and archetypes, of the manager
- will generate organisational processes partly as a consequence of this background; Boland and Richard (2001) argue that constructed representations will impact on later organisational life. Each provides a comprehensive view of management practice and manager through metaphors, generating important insights. Those metaphors shape this management reality<sup>69</sup>.

In addition to the students' representations of manager and management, those of educational agents are also crucial for the current research in order to understand the way in which they participate in the (re)construction of students' representations within the educational context. A comparison between teachers and students' representations is also intended, addressing the comprehension of similarities and differences; this comparison, together with the observation of class dynamics will facilitate the

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<sup>69</sup> 'Think structure' and they'll see structure, 'think culture', and they'll see all kinds of cultural dimensions (Morgan, 1997). People tend to find and realize what they're looking for.

comprehension of the processes through which actors negotiate their relative spaces of coexistence in the academic context.

An original methodology is proposed and applied to fulfil the specified aims; one goal of this work is the creation of a new methodology for approaching and investigating educational contexts, centring on the impact it may have on the construction of knowledge of individuals involved. The methodology comprises:

- Individual case study and repertory grids, and eventually interviews, with students, to appraise their constructs of manager and management, which will indicate the representations that the students have, of those two subjects.
- In-depth interviews, with teachers, to explore their representations of manager and management and the model of management education which underpins their educational practice.
- Direct observation of class dynamics and interactions
- Document analysis of management course curriculum, course self-evaluation('s) report and course brochure, to apprehend the main course's representations of management and manager, as well as, the prevalent pedagogic orientation which sustains course *curriculum*.

Methodology has been designed and applied within a qualitative approach; its choice is justified in the next section.

Results will disclose the way the context of management education acts upon the construction of students' representations, as well as constraints/viability for alternative teaching practices to be implemented (CME).

## **The Approach**

We cannot fully know or teach any subject matter by separating the learner from the teacher and both from the substance of what is to be known.

In the end, learner, teacher and subject matter are a whole. To treat them otherwise, through claims of objectivity and science rigor is to be unfaithful to their true nature.

Palmer (1983: 809)

There are concrete theoretical and methodological assumptions underpinning the choices made for research design; these are discussed in this and the following section. Mainstream management studies are largely positivist in character; the positivism of the mainstream is rarely explicitly argued for and defended. In general, some (often rather weak) version of positivism is simply assumed, there is no explicit reflection on epistemology and ontology, and discussion of methodology becomes limited to restricted issues of method and statistical technique (Ackroyd, 1996). Interpretivist researchers reject the positivists' view that objective, quantitative data are what count as knowledge and acceptable evidence. Interpretivist research often uses verbal data, which are analyzed mainly by means of qualitative methodology rather than statistical techniques favoured by positivists (Allan, 1998). When qualitative research methods are chosen, one must be aware that interpretation plays central role in data gathering, analysis and discussion: findings are much more "assertions" than findings.

The present study addresses research based on a qualitative approach. The 'Qualitative approach' refers to (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) research which produces findings that are not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification, even if some of the data can be quantified. The design, like the concepts, must be allowed to emerge during the research process<sup>70</sup>. The qualitative approach and methods chosen tend not to systematize existing concepts in a structured manner or in a systematic way (Shutz, 1979) being rather a nonmathematical process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organizing them into a theoretical explanatory scheme (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). In the continuity of this interactive process of obtaining and analysing data, initial premises are expanded, revised, or simply abandoned.

Such an approach allows not only to progressively shape methodological choices, but also to build theory from data, a process, as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998), that derives theory from data by offering insight, enhancing understanding, and providing meaningful guide to action.

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<sup>70</sup> In the current research it happened likewise.

Whilst central to many methodological discussions, the eternal debate on primacy of ‘qualitative vs. quantitative paradigms’ remain beyond the present work: because it is already sufficiently well illustrated in contemporary literature (see Strauss and Corbin, 1997; Morse, 1994; and Cassell and Symon, 1998); because my intention here is neither defending nor justifying the superiority of qualitative, although it has been elected to support current research; because I would rather focus only on what directly relates to my work, in view of the fact that the conditionings of applying a qualitative approach and the issues that generated the option go beyond all debates and arguments produced upon quantitative vs. qualitative debate. The following are the main issues and conditionings to note:

- The nature of the research should determine, to a great extent, the choice of the supportive paradigm
- The researcher characteristics and skills should influence choices made

Reasons of choice are important factors for the researcher to be aware of: Dreher (1994) considers that, among other sources, inadequate justification for the use of qualitative research strategies or inappropriate use of a qualitative paradigm, are the principal causes of problems in the validity and reliability of qualitative work.

Every initial theoretical approach is, above all, the expression of the researcher’s premises; my orientation and previous academic training (Psychology degree and previous investigations) influenced the choice I have made, in terms of approach; nevertheless, the strongest influence came from the nature of the research problem itself.

One major concern was to make the premises of my choice explicit, to the readers and to myself, with the aim of making myself aware of the constraints those premises impose on me as researcher and giving the readers the opportunity of knowing and judging the whole work process. The nature and goals of research indicate that:

- This investigation does not aim to attain any scientific and/or quantitative model of the impact of management education on individuals; that still needs to be developed.

- It rather seeks to understand how such an impact works on management students, shaping their representations of manager and management practice.

In sum, it does not look for explanations, but seeks understandings.

In order to accomplish such aims, a qualitative approach has been elected as it suits the nature and aims of the research in addition to the researcher's characteristics; I developed an exploratory case study research process in order to understand chosen phenomenon.

The fact that the focus of the present research has not yet been investigated from a similar perspective required an original design for methodology. In accordance with the nature of the research, some principles of the qualitative approach drove this investigation in an interpretive manner<sup>71</sup>, attempting to make sense of the accounts of individuals in terms that are appropriate to the actor's culture.

Within an interpretive perspective, research is perceived as a process of describing, interpreting and seeking understanding and possibilities in order to reach a shared meaning, and not as a search for causal relationships (Allan, 1998). The nature of the approach and the data collected preclude predictions being made on the basis of the research undertaken. Interpretivist research tends to centre on singularities, an account of particular events or a specific business or location.

Interpretivist research is therefore not generalizable to other situations in the same way as positivist research. However, the findings can be said to be 'relatable' (Bassey, 1990) and to have a wider resonance (Mason, 1996), such that they can shape the work of others in situations where there are sufficient similarities to the original research.

I have previously said that choosing a qualitative approach does not mean defending the primacy of this mode of doing research, but rather defending the adequacy of this kind of approach in relation to the nature of the problem in question, as well as to the natural and academic preferences of the researcher. The interpretive approach taken here treats the problem of the meaning of manager and management constructed by students as the problem of understanding how individuals use shared learned experiences, expectations

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<sup>71</sup> Interpretive methods share the common philosophy of phenomenology: methods that are used to describe the world of the person or the persons under study; researchers using this methodology hope to discover the major influences in the social world of a group of individuals, particularly the relations between an individual's intrapsychic experience and the surrounding world at a given time (Stern, 1994).

and rules built upon scientific/academic learning processes, as a resource for constructing representations and making their future professional role meaningful. It is assumed that rules do not determine their own application; so, the thesis explores how students strategically behave in relation to shared rules, e.g., by intentionally constructing an observance to particular expectations, adapting to what they expect of the management and organisational world.

The adoption of an interpretive study rests on the belief that management education cannot be understood independently from participants who construct that specific social reality and make sense of it, hence building their own representations of management and manager upon it. My investigation takes it for granted that all knowledge is socially constructed - for many practical purposes - and that managers should be made aware of the contingent nature of the knowledge they imbibe; it is also taken for granted that much of what passes for empirically-based knowledge in the social sciences in general, and ME in particular is shot through with hidden, unrealistic assumptions and un-stated conditions.

The presentation of a generalised theory about this knowledge construction is not a central concern of the current approach; theories will result from empirical evidence in the specific focused context and theories will be restructured, not because they are false, but because they are history and context-dependent, therefore vulnerable to changes in environment and human interests (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000); so, the ambition here is to offer interesting and useful ways of conceptualising and reading the investigated events, reflecting upon phenomena and organizing previous experiences in a meaningful mode. That is why the use of interpretation processes is so important.

The aims of this approach are both accurately describing the meanings of participants and being aware of the social processes and influences through which these meanings are produced; in addition, constraints to and facilitators of alternative pedagogies are observed. Meanings, knowledge constructions and representations, all change; in some cases, they change quickly and easily. Rather than trying to find out the 'real' meaning that a student has of, say, a 'manager', an interpretative research approach will examine how a particular social process generates different understandings of what a manager is/can be; nevertheless, we can not forget that the knowledge produced within the

research process is itself knowledge that has to be seen as a social product constructed by and resulting from researchers and participants' interactions and their negotiation processes. A knowledge which will allow me 'to understand how a specific group of people act and think'; this implies the act of interpreting, and qualitative methods focus on interpretation; hence my interest for this kind of approach to achieve the investigation's aims.

I need to be familiar with the representations that students and teachers hold regarding manager and management; I need to understand how the process of its construction is happening inside ESTG, under the influence of the school's management course. Thus I need to interpret data obtained with students and agents of education, in order to examine socially constructed relations and interactions between students and agents. Positivist approaches attempt to avoid the influence of subjective interpretation, claiming the danger of bias; at the heart of the criticism directed at qualitative methods is exactly the role of interpretation in the research process, because positivist scientists consider a biased approach which is influenced by the interpretations of the researcher or/and participants. Regardless of the positivists' view, interpretation is the fundamental engine of qualitative approaches and being subjective does not mean being of no value. It rather means that qualitative approaches have to acknowledge subjectivity and examine carefully the subjective nature of the interpretive process involved.

Knight (2002) affirms that, for those researchers who adopt a perspective of realities as socially constructed changes having features which are person and context specific, the major skill is to stand back from the data and get a new perspective; under such a perspective, when the researcher proceed with checking of data, checks are not so much to ensure that the interpretation is right, but to see if it is plausible.

Of course, in my work I was concerned to employ/with employing rigorous methods and to ensure validity of findings, but not so much with being "objective", distanced from the system's political networks, able to inquire independently and neutrally. Broussine and Fox (2003) argue that different actors in the system have different hopes for the research outcomes, as we are politically connected to the system that we are studying; this leads me to argue against the notion of research as an investigative

process that is value-free, objective and neutral. As I have commitments and values, my research cannot be value-free, objective and neutral. In spite of my commitments and interests I intended to be transparent about aims and methods with research participants; this was an ethical question.

Judging the validity of findings/representations involves some considerations. Are these representations:

- . Plausible for those involved with the process of creating them?
- . Related to individual and shared interpretations from which they originate?
- . Expressing the perspectives, claims, concerns and voices of all agents considered?
- . Raising awareness of one's and others' mental constructions?
- . Prompt action from people involved in the process of knowledge creation?

The first and third considerations (plausibility and expression of all agents' concerns) have been verified, while the other issues remain to prove. I was interested in interpreting data according to the basic guidelines of current research, rather than guaranteeing correspondence between the interpretations made by me during data analysis and those of subjects involved; thus to certify results' credibility was not a fundamental goal. Nevertheless, I contacted subjects and results were presented and discussed. More than testing the degree of agreement of interpretation, these contacts were useful for the emergence of new insights about findings. In research with a qualitative orientation, like the present one, where interpretation is the basic mechanism of data examination, we have to bear in mind that results derive from interpretation processes. The accuracy of results, in terms of *being right or wrong*, is not a primary methodological concern for me, as results and conclusions are generated by my interpretations of the process, based on students and agents' view (see Denzin , 1970).

The discussion on the validity and reliability of the qualitative approach is well illustrated by Dreher's (1994) idea of 'interpretation's democracy': the possible range of explanations produced within a qualitative support is under the control of the conscious care and creativity of the researcher. Therefore, as with all research, the product is only

as good as the researcher. Thus, that is problem originated by the researcher, not a methodology's one.

The socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape research are taken for granted here. Research like the current one seeks answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. In contrast, quantitative studies normally emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, rather than processes, purported to be within a value-free framework (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 8).

The arguments just presented emphasize the need for researchers' reflexivity. If politics and values reside in research, then what of 'truth'? The need to be honest and non-manipulative, of both our research participants, and of the data, is obvious. A critical issue is the role of our own bias and political predisposition as we carry out research.

The present study required me to be reflective, for example about what was coming out of the data, but also to be reflexive-to be aware of myself, individually, and in relation to each other in the process of researching. The starting point for understanding reflexivity is, as Easterby-Smith and Malina state (1999), the idea that it is not possible for social researchers to be detached from what they are observing. Much of the debate surrounding reflexivity focuses on philosophical issues about the nature of reality and knowledge, but reflexivity also raises fundamental questions about our ability as researchers to capture the complex, interactional and emergent nature of our social experience (Cunliffe, 2003). There are comparatively few discussions about the issues involved in reflexive research practice. Given the concerns reflexivity raises, can it offer anything to organizational researchers or does it so problematize the research process that it paralyzes the researcher?

By confronting these concerns, I can carry out 'reflexive' research that offers insights into how we constitute knowledge and realities. That requires me to be critical of my own assumptions and to avoid making excessive claims to authority<sup>72</sup>.

I was affected emotionally by the proximity with investigated students and by the previous contacts and knowledge I had of them. This previous contacts and knowledge resonated in relationships established and judgements I made, of their learning and representations. I had my own biases. My need to be reflexive means that I had to work consciously with my conflicts with each other and to access my respective underlying assumptions through dialogue. Olesen (1998) suggests that such deliberate working with our biases as researchers may be regarded as a valuable resource, which might create understanding of our interpretations and behaviours during the research. What is needed, she argues, is:

sufficient reflexivity to uncover what may be deep-seated but poorly recognized views on issues central to the research and a full account of the researchers' views, thinking, and conduct (p. 314)

## **Methodology**

Research practice alone, and research traditions, conventionalise and legitimate the paradigmatic presumptions of the researcher.

### The present investigation: A case for study

Besides having used a case study (of an enterprise) with students, in the class, as an instrument to get basic information about their vocabulary and associated concepts of management and managers, the whole investigation has been developed using the case study methodology.

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<sup>72</sup> These kinds of ideas have found expression in feminist and racial studies in which the right of researchers to impose frameworks on less powerful groups has been challenged. In my work, I also seek to accomplish these requirements

The case study has been a method frequently used within interpretive epistemology. It allows the investigation of the phenomenon to its full extent and depth, obtaining a contextual comprehension of underpinning factors (Cavaye, 1996). It makes use of a natural language narrative, describing and interpreting the actions of the individual within a plot over time, with the emphasis upon descriptions of process (Becker, 1992, in Butler, 1997). Becker draws our attention to the power of imagery in which the phenomenon under study is drawn into a holistic statement about its nature (Butler, 1997). Case study method in social sciences allows us to attain certain procedures of systematic observation and interpretation in order to gain legitimacy within a social scientific audience. When existing knowledge is found to be lacking in some way, the approach to new studies is to challenge deliberately, in order to create new perspectives.

Case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). The unit of analysis is a critical factor in the case study. It is typically a system of action rather than an individual or group of individuals, in which the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of the actors, but also of the relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them.

I have argued in favour of “triangulation” as a strategy to overcome some of my personal biases. Case study is known as a triangulated research strategy (Tellis, 2003). Snow and Anderson (cited in Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991) asserted, as well as Stake (1995), that triangulation can occur with data, investigators, theories, and even methodologies. Here, triangulation is used with the meaning of “conversation between data”, or as the protocols that are used to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations (Stake, 1995). The need for triangulation in the present work arises from the ethical need to confirm the plausibility of the processes. In case studies, this could be done by using multiple sources of data (Yin, 1984). The problem in case studies is to establish meaning rather than location.

The issue of generalization is one that has appeared in the literature of case studies with regularity. It is a frequent criticism of case study research that the results are not widely

applicable in real life. Yin (1984) refuted that criticism by presenting a well constructed explanation of the difference between analytic generalization and statistical generalization: "In analytic generalization, previously developed theory is used as a template against which to compare the empirical results of the case study" (Yin, 1984). The inappropriate manner of generalizing assumes that some sample of cases has been drawn from a larger universe of cases. Thus the incorrect terminology such as "small sample" arises, as though a single-case study were a single respondent.

Stake (1995) argued for another approach, focused on a more intuitive, empirically-grounded generalization. He termed it "naturalistic" generalization. His argument is based on the harmonious relationship between the reader's experiences and the case study itself. He expected that the data generated by case studies would often resonate experientially with a broad cross section of readers, thereby facilitating a greater understanding of the phenomenon.

My work is an investigation for promoting understanding, much more than one for making explanations. It does not intend to present constraints to CME, generalizable to other Portuguese management education contexts, rather aiming to know and understand more deeply the main constraints to its (CME) implementation in a context of most interest: that of my daily professional practice.

So, the work reaches that aim by investigating a Portuguese management course in a Management and Technology School, which constitutes my "case for study". The management course of ESTG is, thus, the "bounded system" of this research; Stake (1995) once said that the cases of interest in education are people and programs; my work privileges people, but also processes; processes fit the designation of "case" in a less good way, whilst remaining part of the integrated system, the case for study, itself. In this sense, it also can be considered an intrinsic case study, as the main need is for learning more about the case itself, instead of learning about other cases or general problems through the study of this particular case.

I apply an interpretive methodology, through a case study investigation; this methodology represents a reflexive analysis<sup>73</sup> of the representations of management and managers constructed by first year and final year management students, an analysis which considers the researcher's assumptions, interests and aims, in interaction with students' representations of managers, as well as teachers', thus interpreting the generating process of those representations, in order to understand and explain it.

As an investigator I aim for more than describing part of the cultural knowledge of studied subjects; the aim is to understand it and, if possible, to use that understanding to improve/change teaching practice.

But all description, understanding and explanations are based on two systems of disparate and presumptive knowledge: the knowledge of the subjects and the knowledge of the researcher. The combination of the insider and the outsider knowledge provides better insights than the knowledge of only the subjects or the researcher alone. In this way the researcher produces theory from the reflexive nature of the research method, which is more than description; it is a theoretical explanation.

The insider view, which is the informant's perspective of reality, is at the heart of the research, while the outsider framework, which is that of the researcher, with his/her abstractions and scientific explanations of reality, corresponds to what researchers see as they go about their work. Both perspectives help the researcher to develop concepts and theory, in order to understand why a particular group of subjects do what they do, in the way they do it. My work brings these two perspectives together, by collecting data from informants and trying to make sense of it with the outsider framework; that is, combining the informants' perspective with scientific analysis.

Two stages of work are designed in order to combine the above-mentioned perspectives: an initial stage considers evidence of the impact of the management course on students' representations of manager and management, thus representing the first step to evaluate these meanings (before/after course impact). A second stage of data collection follows, involving the application and discussion of a case study in management and repertory

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<sup>73</sup> Attributing a reflexive character to research or analysis means that the researcher is a part of the world that she or he studies/examines, being affected by it.

grid interviews (Kelly, 1991) to students, as well as informal short interviews to complement/discuss previous information, in-depth interviews to teachers, classroom observation, and document analysis to the *curriculum*, course brochure and self-evaluation report of ESTG management course.

The investigation uses these methods as a technique for appreciating in detail the meaning of manager that students possess, as well as, a way for better realizing the influence of agents involved in the process. The following sections will inform upon the methods by which the process of the thesis developed.

## **The instruments**

### **The case study discussion**

In the current research, the case study technique is used as if for teaching purposes; I apply a case study in management to both academic years, during classes; students have to discuss and resolve the case individually, by writing. My interest in applying the case study method to this research derives from the fact that, besides the need to connect more deeply with the actor's culture and explore their own vocabulary, there is little in the way of a homogeneous code of procedures for the demonstration of correctness. This does not mean lack of concern with method; on the contrary, the chosen design for the research demands hard work, explaining, justifying and persuading audiences as to the validity of what is obtained.

Within the qualitative approach used, the interactive processes of obtaining and analysing data allow initial premises to be expanded, revised, or abandoned. When the case study is applied with ESTG management students, new information appears and opens way to new ideas, influencing subsequent methodological design and choices. The initial purpose of case study's application was to apprehend some of the basic concepts of students on the subject of management and managers; I was interested in using these concepts in the repertory grid process of giving elements or eliciting questions. In spite of this first purpose, afterwards I decided to use data with additional purposes: to explore the differences revealed with this method, between the two groups of investigated students, regarding the concepts and meanings produced. Furthermore I

decided to use these results to combine them with those of the repertory grid application; the combined methods provide us with a more complete picture of students' representations of managers and management.

### The repertory grid

The interest in the application of the repertory grid it is to obtain the essentials of representations of manager and management through students' constructs, as well as, to disclose possible differences in construct meanings or representations between two specific moments of the management course, which correspond to different moments of representations' development in a same shared educational context.

Kelly's (1991) work on personal constructs and his repertory grid have made major contributions to the theory and the methodology for gaining access to a person's meaning system. The theory combines an overall philosophy of man and a technique of investigation consistent with that philosophy; each time man tries making sense of the world, his actions can only be construed according to his constructions of the world (Kelly, 1991). Individuals possess a mental representation or image of their surroundings, a mosaic of meaningful elements (Donnelly and Menzies, 1973). That mental image is continually put to test, in each new data collection, in each situation (Harrison and Sarre, 1971) and is changing every day, according to the feedback of each individual's actions.

The theoretical corollaries<sup>74</sup> of Kelly's theory explain how people build their own constructions of reality, how these constructions are liable to change and how people share experience and interact socially. Kelly (1991) sees reality as a construed product, from a psychological, individual perspective, with emphasis put on individualised 'placing and interpreting' processes. The process of knowledge construction refers to a 'psychological notion of constructing', not confined to verbal formulation, that is, having a wider range of convenience than people can express verbally. Discriminations used with objects are not necessarily conscious or verbal, like in any other metaphor or myth-involving process. Kelly's constructive alternativism (1991) says that every event

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<sup>74</sup> Construction, individualization, organization, dichotomy, choice, range, experience, modulation, fragmentation, commonality and sociality corollaries - see Kelly, 1991.

man faces each day is subject to a great variety of constructions and all our present perceptions are open to question and reconsideration. Although man continually changes his perspective of the world in relation to his experience (Kelly, 1991), there are constructs (superordinate) which are more stable and resistant to everyday experience's exchanges than others (subordinate), according to Donnelly and Menzies (1973). In addition, people differ from each other in their construction of events by using different approaches and/or experiencing different contexts but they can find common ground in construing experiences for them and for others (*individuality corollary*, Kelly, 1991).

It is meaning that this work looks for, specifically a particular set of meanings within a particular set of subjects. Interpretation, prioritisation and symbolism intervene so that we only make assumptions about what reality is, proceeding with validation or invalidation of those assumptions and supported by a perception of the world which implies a triadic relationship in which we have something which refers to something else and that is being interacting with someone (Bannister, 1971). The grid technique does not explore the nature of 'things' (elements) but rather uncovers the processes through which individuals render their experiences understandable and meaningful. Opposition and metaphor (similarity) processes are the language basis for processes of knowledge construction and the repertory grid technique is based on opposition and similarity mechanisms. Each time a student verbalizes how a specific chosen manager is similar to a second one, both being dissimilar from a third one, we are 'watching' opposition and similarity processes being put to work by the student. This is the basic tenet for repertory grid work.

Therefore, with the application of repertory grids I aim to gain insight into the structure of the students' meaning system, by observing the constructs that cluster around each other and those which are dissociated from them, based on the supposition of meaning being achieved via association and clustering (similarity) or opposition and contrast (Deese, 1965). We need to observe how students put these meanings into practice: meaning lies in function, thus we only know what the words mean if we see how the person uses it them, and repertory grid application does not ignore this fact.

Contrary to Kelly's constructionism, the social variant of the constructionism approach draws special attention to the socially constituted nature of psychological realities; personal constructions of reality are supposed to be constrained by the social milieu. To consider reality as somehow residing in the minds of single individuals fails to recognize the degree to which reality is socially constituted. This contradicts Kelly's position and work, for his individualist cognitive approach reduces reality to the acts of the individuals' constructions; objects of reality are seen as products of individual cognitive operations rather than products of social and historical construction.

I position myself and my work within a social constructionist perspective of learning, which sees knowledge as something people construct together rather than something people possess in their heads, where individual belief is constructed out of the matrix of shared experiences and beliefs pertaining to the social group of which the individual is part of, and shared schemas cohere into behaviour patterns that define a reality external to each individual. Patterns are the result of negotiation processes among participants in the learning situation in question.

In spite of defending this view and standing within a social constructionist perspective of knowledge construction and the learning process, I accept, and apply in my research, an instrument stemming from an individual perspective of constructionism: the repertory grid from Kelly. Theoretical and practical reasons justify its application within the present work. When planning research design, the in-depth individual interview seemed the logical alternative to repertory grid; nevertheless, data analysis of the case study showed me afterwards, the lack of knowledge possessed by first year students about management. This alerted me to the fact that the interview could be a discouraging effort to process with these students (lack of relevant information at the end of a resource-demanding interviewing process). On the contrary, Stewart argues that the grid is a powerful empty procedure (2000); according to the author, whenever you do a grid you will obtain data.

I also decided to use repertory grids because I believed I needed a technique that counters the great proximity I already have with investigated students, who are my students too, something that in-depth interviews could not give me. Intimacy with

students could be overcome in a better way with repertory grids; hence, reflexivity could be more easily achieved.

Nevertheless, the option of using repertory grids with my students' sample provided me with a single meaning in a specific moment of time, which correspond to a limited representation or meaning about the elicited elements, as the meaning ascribed to each element is anchored in its antecedents and consequents.

This limitation of the technique may be overcome by adding other ways to get the meanings which I'm interested in, as well as by combining action of different researchers, to interpret the meanings obtained through the various methods; strategies like triangulation can be used to resolve this problem. For qualitative researchers, like Denzin (1972) and others, the protocol of triangulation have come to be the search for additional interpretations, more than the confirmation of a single meaning (Flick, 1992). In this investigation, triangulation has been made, of methods; triangulation may be of data/researchers/theory/methods (Stake, 1995). I will come to triangulation again, when developing the case study theme.

The time that can be saved by using grids instead of in-depth interviews was also an important resource-economy reason: I had two samples of 20 students each to investigate. Another motive which supported the choice of the instrument was the attempt to overcome some of the inherent observer bias, due to my professional commitment/proximity to the organisational work field in question. Aiming to appraise students' interpretation of the world implies my involvement with participants' daily routine, developing confidence and empathy during the process<sup>75</sup>.

The technique provides us with a mental map of the students' perception of the world and it allows writing this map with the minimum of observer bias (Stewart, 2000:3). It provides researchers with an effective method for indirect questioning therefore earning its place in management research (Goffin, 1999). The instrument reveals little interference from the researcher during the student's act of producing data, while the application occurs (Stewart, 2000).

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<sup>75</sup> My situation at ESTG as institution's staff at same time as researcher in current work represents an advantage, besides a bias factor, as it facilitated such an involvement.

Besides the practical advantages of repertory grid yet to be discussed, the research design itself may diminish the criticisms) of applying the grid to a study supported by a social constructionist view of the learning process and the knowledge construction process in general. Overcoming Kelly's individual perspective of constructionism and his philosophical explanations of meaning as the result of an interaction between the person and the object, the present work considers and explores the participation of the educational agents in students' construction of knowledge. It extends the interaction between person and object to other actors' participation. The educational context is a shared experience; the management course context represents an important source of shared experiences for students to construct their own knowledge about management.

It is assumed that management education imposes its boundaries and conditionings on the students' construction of knowledge, in a process underpinned by myths and metaphors of management and manager. Kelly's philosophical principles support the idea that constructs are commonly viewed as a way to express shared expectations and rules, rules to follow (or not) and expectations as ways to negotiate between different types of interactions and requests (Mishel, 1964; Gofman, 1971) But shared experience does not mean shared meaning. The crucial questions that make the difference are how the subject *sees* things, and what validations he reaps from them. Educational agents provide students with validating experiences directly affecting the implications of their elaborative choices about manager; moreover, these agents allow the development of a construct system reflecting a validated ideology, which constrains students to act in a relatively limited set of possible ways. There is a commitment represented by student on one pole and educational setting on the other. Making use of Kelly's idea on labelling, it can be stated that the labelling process in educational context is ideologically controlled by educational agents, remaining dependent on the authority of the labeller, the agent.

Within this labelling process, conveyed myths and metaphors may distort and mislead as well as inform and make sense of aspects of manager and management. It is necessary to consider 'in what ways it is misleading or inappropriate to consider a given manager to be like another, or a given construct to be like another'. Kelly's commonality corollary assumes that, to the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his

psychological processes are similar to those of the other person; the corollary assumes that it is the similarity in the construction of events that provides the basis for similar action, more than the events' similarity themselves. To inquire into the way students construe their stimuli may therefore be illustrative of the labelling process occurring, much more than taking the labels' own construction for granted<sup>76</sup>.

Personal construct theory, as it stands, is still in danger of oversimplifying the effect of social factors on development (Procter and Parry, 1978). But labelling is a sociological process involving the maintenance of the social system and has to be interpreted within this consideration. The fact that students' data is combined with educational agents' data attenuates the possible oversimplifying effects of applying a repertory grid to analyse the processes involved in representation construction<sup>77</sup>. Therefore the research combines students' representations with agents' involvement in a research design which offers an adequate methodology to fulfil this aim.

The repertory grid technique seems to provide this research with a useful way of accessing individual's models of expectations; through the grid process, subjects can apparently demonstrate their capability to differentiate among types of management practices and kinds of managers, in terms of specific expectations.

The case study provided me with the first concepts and elements about the focus of the investigation; the grid offered a way of exploring more deeply a number of constructs, in the second stage of research; moreover it allowed the integration of data coming from diverse ways of collecting information from students, a triangulation according to Denzin (1970). This concept, as well as the strategy it refers to, may be seen within this investigation as a conversation between data (Freedman, 2002), more than as a technique for diminishing bias; it intends to be a combination of data stemming from the same subjects and generated with the help of different methods, which, together, provide us with an integrated perspective of the investigated reality; the procedure

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<sup>76</sup> For some authors, *constructs* of Kelly's theory are much more than labels in a repertory grid (Procter and Parry, 1978). They are choices, whose validation makes vary change process's direction. Even being vague, these implications make certain sets of actions appear reasonable and others less so.

<sup>77</sup> Other methods could be applied to students in order to reach their management and manager's meanings in a deep way avoiding the oversimplifying effects of applying a repertory grid; interviews, as used with teachers, appeared as an alternative, but economy of time and resources was important for me and played an important role in eliciting methods to reach students' meanings.

consists of a pragmatic way of linking methods/results via association and conversation, rather than a way of confirming they are measuring the same thing using different techniques. The previous explanation represents the meaning of *triangulation*, as used in these pages.

### **Classroom Observation \_ classes dynamics and learning processes**

In addition to case study discussion, grids, interviews and documentary data, I collected a significant amount of observation data (direct/participant). This has been decided and done in a subsequent phase of data collection; having already applied the other instruments, I decided that the data obtained was not sufficient to inform me about the dynamics developed by teacher/students, during classes, hence I needed more and different data to understand the processes and the limits to CMS in that context.

As investigator I had a privileged position to get that kind of data: I found myself at the core of the course design and delivery experience and thus admirably positioned to absorb a rich flow of qualitative data from students and teachers. Absorption was also facilitated by the easy way I got to be present at my colleagues' classes, which gave me physical presence at the work site. Students offered a lot of verbal feedback as well as teachers, during classes.

This fact then took me to decide not to engage in interviews with those students, further on, because I had enough data to analyse, to inform me on pedagogic models and representations of agents and students, as well as to illustrate the processes and to allow me surfacing barriers to critical models; I only carried on some conversations with them, to clarify specific areas of information about the pedagogic process they were involved in, or fulfil some information gaps.

According to Tellis (1997) direct observation in a case study occurs when the investigator makes a site visit to gather data. The observations could be formal or casual activities, but the reliability of the observation is the main concern. Using multiple observers is one way to guard against this problem. Participant observation is a unique mode of observation in which the researcher may actually participate in the events being studied. This technique could be used in studies of neighbourhoods or organizations,

and frequently in anthropological studies. While the information may not be available in any other way, the drawbacks should be carefully considered by the researcher.

Some interests/advantages and limits to the use of the technique are the fact that we cover events in real time and event context. Nevertheless, it is a time consuming technique that is why I only proceeded with 8 observation's sessions. As well, the way I looked to the context and dynamics is always selective: on one hand, because I was not able to gather all the informing stimuli at same time, and because I was there with a specific intention: to look for indicators of traditional/reflexive and critical pedagogic practices, reason that conditioned my perception and attention to the facts offered by the observed context. Finally, reflexivity is a reality in observation's techniques which researcher must take care with, i.e., observer's presence might cause change. I always had this in mind, as I tried to interpret data from observation's sessions: class dynamics, during observation's sessions, were not exactly as if the investigator was absent, and my way of perceiving and constructing class dynamics information was done according to a limited construct system: that of my own.

Besides addressing the pedagogical process (approach, methods and assessment) and the representations of the teachers of management and managers, the in-depth interviews carried out with the teaching staff were also intended to collect data on the distance and/or proximity that such processes, approach, methodologies and attitudes as those involved reveal to a critical approach; the classroom observation sessions would complete this information.

In order to reach the above-mentioned aims, I used the questions of Reynolds (2003) about the critical contexts of education<sup>78</sup> (among others), as guides with the teachers, to verify the extent to which their methods and didactic attitudes are critical, and how strong/weak their perception and self-awareness of this is..

The questions focussed on themes such as basic suppositions about the teaching and learning of management, the social and educational values underpinning the teachers' practice, their approach and attitude to the process (if the teachers subscribe to the course subjects or if they leave room for other perspectives and/or practices).

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<sup>78</sup> See p. 93.

The data gathered also provided information about the constraints represented by these teachers in the case of a CME process being implemented in the future in the Management course of ESTG.

With regard to the perceptions of the students of the pedagogical process in which they are involved, the data collected through the classroom observations responded to my initial needs; however, I also added to this information that came from more informal meetings with the students who had been observed, which took place after those sessions and recording of data from them. The main aim of these conversations was to complete the information obtained from the classroom observations and, for this, I asked the students three questions: “How would you like to study?”; “Do you like your classes?”; and “How does the assessment process work?”.

In the same way as with the teachers, the data gathered also provided me with information about the obstacles that these students could represent to the possible implementation of a CME process in the future.

There was a total of eight classroom observation sessions; two sessions for the class of each of the teachers interviewed (four teachers had been interviewed before in this research).

The observations provided me with information about the interactions developed, the four teachers' preferred approaches and methodologies, the way in which the students participate in the educational process, their acceptance of and/or resistance to it, as well as how they perceive that process.

The results from the observations were grouped by themes, each one corresponding to each of Reynolds' questions – approach(es) to management (orthodox, managerialist vs. critical), teaching methods and assessment strategies, asymmetries of power, margin of freedom to negotiate the contents and methods, and the conflictive or confrontational representations.

The data from the observations was recorded with the help of a grid made up of items based on the literature review of CMS and CME, with special emphasis given to Reynolds' (2003) guidelines on critical educational environments/contexts. During the sessions I tried to gather indicators of the pedagogical processes employed, (recording

events of critical reflection , or the lack of them; moments of dialogue or their absence; favoured forms of presenting information about management e managers, and when this happened), self-awareness of the methods and techniques used, design/structure of the classes (group work, trust-developing strategies), as well as the opportunities given for students to question the information provided and to influence the pre-defined design of the classes.

### **The in-depth interviews**

The way the construction of students' representations of manager and management is regarded here accepts that individuals have an active role in the creation of the personal and social realities to which they respond; furthermore they are permanently involved in relational processes of social exchange and symbolic interaction that constrain personal categories of understanding.

It is believed that a commitment exists between the educational institution and the student, concerning the construction of management and manager's representations. The development of these meanings is partly based on internal representations and partly performed in the interactions with various educational agents. Thus, besides the occurrence of individual and internal processes (similarity and opposition ones) individual constructions are never 'only individual' but rather 'social' ones, taking place within the interaction of social interferences. These considerations call for interviewing teachers and analysing curriculum. The aim is to compare students' representations and agents' representations, with the purpose of disclosing how agents and pedagogical orientation intervene in students' processes of knowledge construction.

This investigation uses individual in-depth interviews<sup>79</sup> with teachers, in a non-structured manner, which aims to understand the investigated phenomenon thoroughly by gathering information on two main issues:

- Teachers' representations of manager and management
- Teachers' pedagogical orientation<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>79</sup> Interviewing is a technique mainly used for obtaining detailed information on a subject's perspective regarding relevant issues. The technique may have a more or less structured orientation.

<sup>80</sup> This pedagogic orientation may be related to management education models, from Holman (2000).

The technique imposes no restrictions on topics previously defined for exploration, this being one of its major advantages; the fact that teachers are ‘handy’ to be interviewed is also an advantage, because any need for checking information or for completing any theme is easy to perform<sup>81</sup>.

There are many manuals on interviewing technique; within the present work, interviewing technique is supported by Rubin and Rubin’s work (1995).

Data derived from teachers and curriculum observation can inform me about socially privileged organisational structures and dynamics, methods and assessment, thus integrating a model of education in management favoured by this institution, which partly drives the construction of knowledge in students during their academic experience in a management course.

The analysis of other documents completes this information: written material is analysed.

### **The document analysis**

Secondary analysis refers to data already collected and analysed for purposes other than this research’s ones, according to Saunders et al (1997); it is used in this investigation as it created a powerful opportunity for contributions within the qualitative research tradition, in situations where the investigator is more remote from data sources.

In my investigation, secondary analysis is applied mainly to perform the *cross-validation* process, one of the five discrete varieties of research involving this kind of analysis according to Thorne (1994), in which existing data sets are employed to confirm or discount new findings and suggest patterns beyond the scope of the sample in which the researcher has been immersed personally: to be precise in this case, existing data were the *curriculum* analysis, the self-evaluation report analysis and the course brochure analysis).

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<sup>81</sup> Whilst an already existing relationship with interviewed subjects could interfere negatively, the fact is that a positive effect has been observed: informal conversation occurred easily between interviewer/interviewee due to existing/developing relationship.

Many researches' questions are answered using a combination of primary and secondary data (Saunders et al., 1997). The use of secondary data within present research is based on the fact that it can provide a useful source for answering some of my research questions, through the use of data already collected and serving purposes diverse from current ones, but being relevant to the current work; secondary data may also help triangulation with the findings obtained with repertory grid, case study (Saunders et al, 1997) and interviews; it refers to ESTG management course's curriculum, course brochure and self-evaluation report.

A specific advantage of using this data in the current research is the easy permission I have to access it, as I am a member of the institution. Secondary analysis is sometimes less popular in qualitative approaches, as the potential for researcher bias is well understood. Secondary analysis needs formal and rigorous principles: bias will always exist within data sets, as well as within the interpretive methods used, to convert them into research findings, and secondary analysis holds the potential to intensify these bias effects. A residual danger of secondary analysis is the influence of certain features of the original data set that are not so obvious to the researcher removed from the data: the immediacy of the researcher's role in data construction gives the researcher access to tacit understandings and nuances that may be very difficult to reconstruct at a latter date. In addition, data sets which have been prepared or analysed with purposes distinct from those who are now using it, can confront the researcher with ethical dilemmas<sup>82</sup>.

### **The research context**

ESTG of the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo is the organisational field selected to be investigated, more specifically its management course. The institution is my daily work field too; I have been a lecturer there for the last fourteen years.

The preliminary idea of exploring students' construed reality about 'manager' and 'management' was transformed in a proposal presented in Bournemouth University, where the aim was to get a suitable supervisor for the project. Once this had been accomplished the proposal was then discussed with the project supervisors.

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<sup>82</sup> For instance, the self evaluation report was prepared for governmental purposes and had financial implications (fund-distribution) resulting from the evaluation; the course brochure had purposes of client-gathering adopting a 'propaganda-style'.

Finally, a conversation about the implications of the project took place in ESTG, with a member of the board and the management course coordinator.

### **Research design**

This section informs about the way the research was carried out, the practical process through which data was collected.

### **Sampling**

From a population of 288 management students (with 71 enrolled students in 1<sup>st</sup> year plus 53 enrolled students in 5<sup>th</sup> year) and 20 management teachers, a sampling procedure emerged naturally.

The method used for sampling, a non-probability sampling method, was the *self-selection sampling* (according to Saunders and all, 1997). The techniques for selecting samples do not have to be all statistically chosen at random; non-probability sampling provides a range of alternative techniques based on researchers' subjective judgement. In exploratory researches, a non-probability sample may be very practical, although it will not allow the extent of the problem to be determined. Subsequent to this, probability sample techniques may be used. The research questions, objectives and choice of strategy, for certain management projects, may dictate non-probability sampling.

The present research reveals characteristics suitable for this kind of sampling methods: to answer the research questions and meet research objectives requires an in-depth study, which focuses on a small sample selected purposefully. This will provide me with an information-rich case study in which to explore the research question. Alternatively, limited resources or the inability to specify a sampling frame may dictate the use of one or a number of non-probability sampling techniques.

The *self-selection sampling* method occurs when the researcher allow a case, usually an individual, to identify their desire to take part in the research (Saunders and all, 1997). This is what happened with sampling procedures in current investigation.

Proceedings have been:

-Publicising the researcher's need for cases, asking them to take part

-Collecting data from those who have responded

At some stage in this study, subjects (students) were told:

'I am exploring the management course in order to understand how management students see managers, in the beginning and at the end of their course; I need volunteers (at least 20, in each academic year) to collaborate in this research; each volunteer has to spend between 45' and 1h 30' working with me, individually, in a sort of interview. I will give you a grid to write your names, available daily periods, and contacts, in. Thanks for your collaboration, which is precious for the development of this work'.

This call for cooperation happened during students' classes, with the agreement of the teacher in class, who actively persuaded students to participate, especially the beginners (1<sup>st</sup> year), whose motivation to engage with this project was weaker. Final year students revealed more motivation to collaborate than beginners- there has been no need to persuade them to participate, as they promptly volunteered. Students completed the list with names, contacts and daily availability periods.

I profited from a periodical course meeting to bring my colleagues up to date about the need for their collaboration, as well as the aims of the investigation. Teachers showed readiness to collaborate in the research.

At times, planned deadlines became very difficult to meet, as it was a part-time investigation that involved a target population with very specific availability periods.

Along with case study data analysis, new research directions came up, opening novel investigation lines to explore, which conditioned subsequent methodological choices.

Vaughan (1995) emphasizes that the existence of data from individual cases which reveals previously unconsidered issues within a theoretical notion can provide the basis for adding to or reformulating an understanding. In the beginning of this work, the management course of ESTG supplied the boundaries within which the sample was represented. However, this does not mean that, as research developed over time,

understated issues within the initial established boundaries of the process could not be identified.

The research was supported by the descriptions, statements and reality constructions of a total of 40 management students (to whom repertory grid has been applied) equally coming from first and fifth academic years of management course in ESTG, and 4 of their teachers (to whom in-depth interviews have been applied). In the students' case, the number of investigated individuals refers to 13% of total population (management course's students in ESTG); in teachers' case, it corresponds to 20% of total population. Earlier, in case study application, an initial sample of 35 first year students and 40 fifth year students was tested (the number of students that were attending classes when the researcher applied the case study). The second samples of students, 20 first year plus 20 fifth year students subjected to repertory grid, derive from previous ones.

Twenty (20) was the total of teachers in the management course; four (4) were interviewed; they came from different academic areas and were some of the earliest teachers of the management course.

### **The process**

Research began with each group on the following dates: first year students, on the 21st October 2000 (case study), fifth year students, on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2000 (case study), and teachers, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2002 (interviews).

The process of data collecting did not correspond to a discrete period spent with each group, but it was rather a process extended over time, with me moving around and revisiting groups to check obtained results and/or collect more data. This kind of approach was possible due to a very close relationship between me and the institution; it has also been enhanced by the accessibility demonstrated by students and teachers themselves.

Case study analysis was carried out before the application of repertory grid; this enabled me not only to prepare eliciting questions and qualifiers for the grid (if needed), but also to enrich my cultural experience by sharing language terms (during discussion of case study).

Repertory grid application gave me the opportunity to capture some aspects of 'manager' reality for each subject, even before building the grids, when choosing elements, subjects expressed themselves in terms of cultural rules for eliciting 'their managers', information which as been compared and contrasted with the one stemming from other subjects or with information from the same subject obtained earlier with case study.

Whilst repertory grid was chosen partly for its objectivity, interactions with participants are always part of a methodology underpinned by a qualitative research approach, as these interactions occur in circumstances that are somehow unique. In addition, students and teachers were asked to reflect on 'managers' and 'management' in a specific environment, sometimes behaving as if their 'scientific knowledge' was being evaluated. This evaluation feeling seemed to have more impact on first year students, who frequently asked:

Is this correct...? Am I right...?

They seemed to test the validity of the rationale produced within each triangulation. The researcher impact has to be considered when analysing data.

The case study application only took me one morning with each group (a two hour class); teachers' help made cooperation easier. The grid took me much more time; the individual application went from 45' to one hour and an half, two hours maximum, with each subject (for a total of 40 subjects); subsequently, I spent some time in individual contacts with each student, in order to get feed-back on the categories of constructs coming up from the computer analysis of grids. These periods of time were variable, depending on grids results and level of agreement between subjects' constructs and computer results. Methods for collecting data are discussed in more detail, later.

Data gathering started in October 2000 and extended until June 2002; are-adjustment on data needs took me to a new data collecting moment afterwards, between October 2005 and April 2006-08-29

Recalling the different moments of data collection:

The first moment; the case study discussion and individual writing, involved all first and fifth year students attending classes that day (35 1<sup>st</sup> year students and 30 5<sup>th</sup> year students).

At the end of case study application I discussed with subjects the possibility of their collaboration in a forthcoming stage of data collection, the grid process. A list for completion with names, contacts, and availability was presented to them; they showed agreement with the proposal made by completing the list until the 20<sup>th</sup> name.

Before starting the second stage of data collection, specifically from December 2000 to early March 2001, time was spent analysing the data from case study and preparing the individual application of repertory grid. The design of this second moment was conceived to obtain and comprehend students' constructs of 'manager' and 'management', both for comparison purposes (of students and staff groups) and triangulation of data with previous case study results.

Application of repertory grids began with first year students (March 2001), followed by fifth year students (April 2001); a total of 14 first year students was investigated (6 missed the application); 19 5<sup>th</sup> year students participated in the grid's application (only one missed the application).

The first contact with students during repertory grids application was face-to-face; appointments scheduling were made by phone. It has been rather difficult to assure commitment of all the participants to the project; thus, I had to reject some initial volunteers, whose unavailability made scheduling very hard to plan. This is not a critical observation of their unavailability, but a mere reflection on the implications of getting enough participants. Applications were conducted in a private room, for quiet individual work. The saturation of data with repertory grid made the application periods shorter than previously planned.

Subsequent to grid analysis, the contacts with students happened between November and December 2001, in order to discuss results. During this period, I had to analyse all the data from grids application. This took a lot of analysis work, through computer

analysis and the individual face to face contacts with subjects. Besides that, complementary interviews with some of the previously investigated students happened, in a posterior moment of data collection, due to the need for developing interpretations about classroom dynamics.

When collecting new data, later on, (sessions of classes' observation) students have been inquired on some issues regarding the pedagogic process they were involved in.

Teachers' interviews were conducted between May/June 2002.

Curriculum document analysis and other institutional information analysis went from July to December 2002, in order to complement interviews.

Classroom observations were conducted and registered later, when it has been recognised that information about learning processes and dynamics was still lacking.

So, as described in these lines, reviewing and reforming research design during the investigation period has been a common strategy, instead of planning it totally before data collection.

Stages of data collection allowed me to explore and make sure of a range of interpretive knowledge, progressively acquired during the research process. Benefits of similar processes are discussed (Denzin, 1970): the comparison between results produced by different methods in the same setting can provide data with more credibility. Whilst not providing evidence about the unbiased character of methods used, the comparison acknowledges the 'rigour' of the interpretations of both samples (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, in Llewellyn, 1998).

### **Problems /difficulties/advantages of methods**

#### **The constraints/advantages of qualitative research**

The principal constraints of qualitative research have been already discussed, particularly concerning validity and reliability of interpretations. Main topics on this matter can be subsumed under a broader idea, the 'soundness' of qualitative research (Morse, 1994), which has to do with the certainty of the qualitative results, the

acceptability of the qualitative approach and the softness of the method. The question ‘Are you sure?’ represents the concern with certainty and permeates the entire process of research, from topics selection, to publication, implementation and beyond.

The confidence I have in qualitative methods chosen and the way I trust the value of my interpretations, affect my investigator condition: what I have been studying and why have I studied it. No matter what constraints I might face, one condition remains present during the whole research process: trying to be clear, be it regarding scientific integrity, or what has been done, or even the observance of ethical issues. Nevertheless, some problems in using interpretive research always emerge.

One major criticism relates to the gap between theory and practice<sup>83</sup>, which interpretive research preserves. Avoiding the separation between understanding and application could help us bypass the problem. Constructs found should emerge from the data and should not be imposed on the observations; in line with this view, my study makes an effort to begin with no preconceived hypothesis to test and with but a general frame of reference to guide it. Gaining trust and acceptance is also an important part of the research process, thus ‘going native’ is also a process that challenges separation, specifically the separation of researcher and researched; the present study has a researcher who is already ‘native’ of the studied situation; this fact can contribute to the loss of objectivity, but offers the advantage of an easy access to the context, the subjects and the information needed; it also guarantees a trustworthy relationship, regarding investigated actors and situation.

As researchers, we need to be able to challenge our chosen basic principles on methodology, when this allows us to move toward emancipatory aims; this often means to engage in dialogue with actors, to interfere instead of only observing and interpreting, taking the risk of biasing results, but gaining from interaction with the subjects’ perspective. To be aware of the reflexive character of the research/ of any research is an

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<sup>83</sup>It institutionalizes the separation between theory and practice in the separate roles of the researcher-theorist and the practitioner.

Interpretive studies are more interested in cultural meaning than in social action, which means that trying not to compromise the integrity of the research often implies having little influence on actor’s consciousness of their actions, or changing needs for those actions. Consciousness-raising or change of any sort only occurs when researchers formulate problems through a dialogue that considers and critiques both the ‘subject’s’ and the ‘researcher’s’ view of reality. Main advantage should be, then, the fact that the understanding of the phenomenon gained from the study should help other involved actors (educational agents, in this particular case) avoid some educational strategies, while promoting others instead.

important way to prevent the researcher from having ‘serious beliefs in research’s complete objectivity’.

In my specific case, whilst there was some increased risk of subjectivity in data collection and partiality in data treatment and interpretation, as I possessed previous expectations regarding students’ behaviour and the school’s background, at same time it assured the knowledge and experience of institutional cultural setting and background, and gained ease of access and contacts. Avoiding constraints might not be possible, even using a process of joint/parallel data analysis involving a colleague of mine (he also being a lecturer in same institution and course as I), which I have done. A better way of getting unbiased data should be being aware of the interpretations’ generating process rather than avoiding interactions or interpretations, which are central to the present investigation<sup>84</sup>.

The interpretive model recognises that interpretations are subjective. Tomorrow, or in a different place, or with a different researcher investigating the same situation, someone might say something completely different. Besides, the type of information revealed in a case study is different from that which can be obtained with individual and face-to-face repertory grids, or with in-depth interviewing. The social processes operating in the group influence the interpretations revealed in each situation. The attempt is to examine not only what is said, but also how the interpretation is generated.

There are a number of ways of dealing with this problem including triangulation, reflexivity, thick description, and checking the credibility of findings with participants. I have focused on the reflexivity issue with some detail. As well, triangulation and the checking of data with participants have been attempted. Efforts were surely made to prevent significant deviations in current work; the fact that the grid is one ‘protected observer bias’ method of obtaining subjects’ construed reality, contributed to diminish this concern.

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<sup>84</sup> About the ‘native’ subject, its advantages and constraints, Dreher (1994) states that a fundamental dimension of contextual research is the quality of the relationship between the observer and the observed – the quantity, validity and reliability of the data are grounded in the skill of the investigator to establish relationships with informants. Contrasting with other studies, the bias is reduced not by standardizing observations or observers but by integrating the investigator in the social field so that his/her presence no longer generates special behaviour. Issues such as validity or reliability are not unimportant in such approaches but are reached through different conditions of research. In line with these arguments, my situation/role (educational agent/researcher) in the investigation can be considered an advantage rather than a constraint.

It's the only format where the interviewer is a pair of eyes and (y)ears with a pencil, at the start, at least! He (sic) can do nothing except phrase the question, persist, and ask the interviewee for perceptions of the subject matter (Stewart, 2001).

Methods drawn on during this work intended to reduce possible bias<sup>85</sup>. The checking of the credibility of findings with participants has been done. This checking was carried out after data treatment and interpretations of results with each subject (grid results for students; interview results for teachers), as I mentioned previously.

When subjects did not agree with interpretations made, this was taken into consideration, in order to be aware of existing interpretation divergences between subject and researcher rather than to change interpretations made; the discussion was used as a moment for new insights to be produced, new information and views to emerge, which were reintroduced and reconsidered in data analysis.

#### Other particular constraints of current work

A long period of research activity in ESTG was taken to obtain the data; this process of data collecting was complicated because academic terms had to be respected, and there were periods with complete absence of collaboration (tests and examination periods, holidays...). Thus, data interpretations were not always checked with subjects at moments sufficiently close to data interpretation moments.

My own frame of reference and the consequent particular labelling process also introduce a source of biasing. An additional source of bias is my perception about which data is 'important data' for planning the investigation. This perception can be rather divergent from data considered important to investigated subjects. Finally, the assumption that the needs, perceptions and meanings held by the people investigated can be found in a single or a pair of instrument applications is an added risk for biasing data.

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<sup>85</sup>There are many ways of dealing with subjectivity problems; behind many of these responses is a more general attempt to examine not only what is said, but also how the interpretation is generated; in line with these concerns, to combine data obtained through different means regarding same subject matter can be one way of diminishing bias; more than trying to objectify data, this means to improve data quality by completing information on target.

## **Collecting and analysing data with case study**

Case study analysis was supported by what Cassell and Symon (1998) call the template analysis method (see Crabtree and Miller, 1992). Template analysis is one way (among several others) of approaching research data in an interpretive manner (Stern, 1994). This is a creative process: the method is the ritual that ensures that the culture of the school will be preserved.

The essence of the process is the production, by the researcher, of a list of codes (a template) representing themes identified in their textual data. Some of these themes will usually be defined *a priori*. But they will be modified and added to as the researcher reads and interprets the texts.

The template analysis can thus be seen as occupying a position between content analysis (Weber, 1985), where codes are all predetermined and their distribution is analysed statistically, and grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), where there is no *a priori* definition of codes. Within this middle ground, there is scope for wide variation in analytical techniques, from those which are very close to content analysis, with tightly defined and largely predetermined codes, allowing statistical as well as qualitative analyses of the same data, to those which start with only a few defined codes, and which use the template in a highly flexible way to produce an interpretation of the texts. Such differences reflect differing philosophical orientations of researchers using template analysis techniques, from soft-nosed logical positivism (Miles and Huberman, 1984) to a purely phenomenological position (Hycner, 1985).

The main reason to apply template analysis to this case study was philosophical, if comparing with the possibility of grounded theory use: while it has been argued that grounded theory is not wedded to one epistemological approach (Charmaz, 1995) it has been developed and utilized largely as a realist methodology. That is to say, its users have mostly claimed to be uncovering the ‘real’ beliefs, attitudes, values and so on of the participants in their research.

As a qualitative researcher supported by a social constructionist (Burr, 1995) view of knowledge construction, I felt that template analysis could be more conducive to the main goal of my investigation. Being unopposed to the assumptions of grounded theory,

I found it too prescriptive in that it specifies procedures for data gathering and analysis, which must be observed in 80 case study examples to analyse.

The analysis asked for the development of an initial template, which was done together with a colleague of mine, who was asked for collaboration at that moment of the project. He has an academic preparation analogous to mine and knew the aims of the project. Each of us examined a subset of the transcript data of three or four written discussions of the case study and defined codes in the light of the stated aims of the project. Then, each one's suggestions have been considered and a provisional template to be used on the full data set has been agreed upon. This kind of collaborative strategy is valuable as it forced me to justify the inclusion of each code and to define clearly how it should be used. It serves as an important counter to the tendency to allow one's own assumptions and expectations to shape the way a template develops, a tendency that is by no means restricted to inexperienced researchers (Cassell and Symon, 1998).

### **Revising the template**

Once the initial template has been constructed, my colleague and I worked systematically through the full set of transcripts, and we identified sections of text which were relevant to the project aims, marking them with one or more appropriate codes from the initial template. In the course of this process, some inadequacies in the initial template were revealed. Subsequently, changes of various kinds were implemented. These could be included in the four main types of modification likely to be made whilst revising an initial template (insertion, deletion, changing scope and changing higher-order definition; for a detailed definition, see Cassel and Symon, 1998).

Illustrative examples from modifications made to the initial template are presented below:

Issues in the text were identified as relevant to the research question, not covered by any of the existing codes; thus, it was necessary to add new codes (insertion); for instance, the subcategory '*1.3. Degree of responsibility*' (according to structural position) did not exist in the initial template; it was created later on, from the necessity to include sections of transcripts not pertaining to existing codes.

Some of the codes initially defined were deleted at the end of the process of template construction simply because we have found no need to use them. The code ‘2.5. *Image*’ was useful for the first year’s transcripts analysis, but had no use (and has been deleted) for fifth year’s data analysis (deletion).

The code ‘2.3. Power’ was too broadly defined to be useful, thus it had to be redefined at a lower level, as ‘2.3.1 *Importance to the organisation* and 2.3.2. *Dependence from the organisation*’ (changing scope).

The code ‘2.4. *Training needs*’, initially classified as a subcategory of ‘2. *Role*’, changed to ‘1.4....’ a subcategory of code ‘1. *Manager in organisational structure and career*’ (changing higher-order definition).

These are some examples of the four types of main changes made in the template, at some stage in the analysis. Some changes belong to more than one type of modification. We stopped the revising process when we were sure that no sections of the text that were clearly relevant to the research question remained uncoded. We read it twice, before concluding that we could stop revising it. We were still working together at this point, conforming to the point of view held by Cassell and Symon, (1998), who argue that it is easier to make a confident judgement that the point has been reached to stop the development of the template where two or more researchers are collaborating on the analysis.

### **Interpreting results of template analysis**

Firstly, a complete list of codes occurring in each transcript was collected, with indication of frequency. As coding has been entirely done by hand, codes were marked in margins with colour coding (this method facilitates the codifying process).

Qualitative research by definition does not make any attempt to standardize or measure units of analysis and for this reason some qualitative researchers argue that no attempt should be made to count codes. A danger can be that the researcher will make the assumption that differences in frequencies of codes automatically correspond to meaningful differences within or between transcripts. Such an assumption is invalid in a qualitative perspective.

Anyway, in this template analysis, codes were counted and frequencies mentioned; comparisons of frequencies can be very helpful in suggesting areas which deserve additional attention. What is crucial is to recognize that quantitative patterns in coding in and of themselves can never tell us anything meaningful about textual data. The fact that code A appears in three out of ten transcripts whilst code B appears in seven out of ten on its own tells us nothing of interest in a qualitative study. On the other hand, attempting to examine and interpret every code to an equal degree of depth is an opposing danger. Having an open mind in this kind of analysis is a fundamental need, but that cannot transform itself into non-selectiveness, even for the best reasons.

The themes of most central relevance provide me with an understanding of the phenomena under investigation, which can be translated into some fundamental questions:

What are ‘manager’ and ‘management’ representations for these students?

What are the most relevant categories which constitute these representations?

Do differences in such representations emerge, between first year’s students and final students?

Do apparent reasons for these differences become visible, with the analysis?<sup>86</sup>

Items of text that were selected under single headings have been systematically compared and evaluated with items of text both within the same category and between different categories. For example, through preliminary coding processes the common use of the term ‘centralised’ was identified. Collecting items of texts within a group enabled us to identify different ways in which the term *centralised* was used. This appears to be indicative of a distinction between eliciting an organisation’s characteristic and holding a more general belief about the meaning of such way of acting for a manager; the evidence indicates a distinction between what students theoretically learn and the meaning they already possess in regard to management; in the course they learn these concepts in a scientific or technical way, but they still may use the early meaning they possess about the concept.

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<sup>86</sup> Openness towards data must be retained. I must not be so strongly guided by the initial research’s questions that themes that are not obviously of direct relevance be disregarded; these themes can play a useful role in adding to the background detail of the study without requiring lengthy explication.

The contrast is then explored in relation to data of different categories, in order to look at the extent to which it provides a way of making sense of other data, a technique discussed by Strauss & Corbin (1998). Iterating around this process generates what Rose (1982) calls 'key indicators' that develop to inform upon the interpretive decision-making process and provide support for emergent concepts and categories.

Further coding procedures generate support for different categories; for example, there are many categories of *development strategies* including prevision and anticipation, acquisitions, merges... Those features constituting *development strategies* are linked in subgroups; data appears to demonstrate students' belief that some are better than others to achieve organisational success. Sub-categories emerged, which reflect distinctions between socially constructed roles based on these strategies. This coding process was driven by the need to express the 'decision making trail' (Holloway and Wheeler, 1996), or what Rose (1982) calls 'explicit concept indicators' that inform upon the interpretations made during the process of analysis. The decision-taking trail is presented by Holloway & Wheeler (1996) with regards to the 'trustworthiness' of qualitative research. These authors argue that key-interpretive decisions should be expressed clearly so the reader can decipher the logic of the researchers.

Results have taken the form of a report, an account structured around the main themes identified and drawing illustrative examples from each transcript, as required. Disadvantages were considered: drifting towards generalisations and losing sight of the individual experiences from which the themes are drawn is always a risk. Using a single case study to illustrate each main theme could help reduce the problem, but selecting significant illustrative case studies of each theme was not an easier task to carry out. Direct quotes taken from the participants' cases were used when necessary.

Some of the advantages experienced with the technique were: its adaptability, without the heavy baggage of procedures and prescriptions, the possibility of using a phenomenological and experimental approach, with background principles easily grasped (it was the first time that this technique was applied by me). Another advantage was the work discipline induced by the need of producing the template, which led to a well-structured approach for handling the data.

Nevertheless, there is always some risk of over-descriptiveness and losing participants 'voices' in the analysis of combined themes. This difficulty and the risk of oversimplification of data has been diminished by the use of further qualitative techniques (the repertory grid), integrating obtained results with those derived from template analysis. Much of the later analysis was driven by an interest in interpreting the relationships between categories and concepts that had been developed through the early case study analysis. A tentative framework flows, based around the identification of a range of expectations constructed in order to make sense of managers and management, as well as, success in organisation. Themes like *development strategies*, *hierarchical influence* or *actions for success*, emerged, supported by explicit decision-making trails, and sustained by large amounts of qualitative data. The repertory grid technique was then applied to evaluate this framework and to explore, in more detail, the nature of these complex relationships. The technique is designed in such a way that may have clearly contradicted the indicators developed within the initial research.

### **Collecting and analysing data with repertory grid technique**

#### **Repertory Grid Application**

The repertory grid technique involves presenting respondents with three elements (Kelly, 1991), though a number of varieties exist (Fransella and Bannister, 1977).

First, respondents were told:

' I would like you to think about managers, all kinds of managers that you can possibly know; they can be men or women, managing any kinds of organisations/institutions, Portuguese or other; the only condition is that you must know something about her/him, how they are, what they are, their work; I don't need to know them, but you do.  
Now, could you write the name of nine managers, in these conditions, on the cards; one name per card, please.'

After the introduction, respondents produced and wrote 9 managers' names on the cards, at the same time as they generated some observations on task nature and demands. These moments were very useful to register the respondents' observations, which often revealed student expectations regarding manager.

Then, the respondents were asked to think of a way in which two of the three elements were alike and different from the third (Stewart & Stewart, 1981). All the respondents worked with triadic comparisons<sup>87</sup>.

Discussions around the triads were sometimes in-depth, involving follow-up questions. According to Schutz's (1979) postulate of adequacy, interpretive research should develop concepts and categories that are sensitive to the actor's common-sense thinking and knowledge; the individuals' sense of contrast (Fransella, 1989) produces the construct that is expressed in their own language.

The contrasting poles were written down on either side of the elements thus forming the grid. This process continued with different combinations of cards; the research used the following sequenced combinations of elements: 123, 456, 789, 147, 258, 369, and 159, 269, 348.

Options were used, between laddering (Hinke, 1966) and pyramiding (Fransella and Bannister, 1977), when responses became descriptive<sup>88</sup>. Normally, individuals would develop between ten and twelve constructs before they commented that it was difficult to come up with new constructs. Some authors (Reason and Rowan, 1981; Leininger, 1994; Creswell, 1994) discuss data saturation process as fundamental in developing robustness of qualitative research.

Before the grid interviews took place, I had to decide whether to elicit all the constructs using the triad method or whether to supply any or all of the constructs (Smith, 1986). Fransella and Bannister (1977) argue that the validity of supplying constructs rests upon evidence that particular expectations fall in what Kelly (1991) calls the 'range of convenience', i.e., respondents should perceive that the construct provides an appropriate way of distinguishing between a certain set of elements.

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<sup>87</sup> For some people in some contexts this task proves too demanding (Ryle and Lunghi, 1970); if so, the suggestion is for a dyadic approach, where respondents are asked to distinguish between only two elements. It was not the case with these students.

<sup>88</sup> The former involves asking the respondent to state which of the two options they find preferable and why, i.e., 'do you prefer dealing with complex organisational situations or with routine ones? Why'? The latter involves exploring the nature of the construct in order to evaluate the extent to which deeper meanings are underneath the simple description.

In the present investigation I decided not to give any elements, just ask the subjects to produce at least nine managers' names. The decision led to a more demanding eliciting task for subjects (especially for those in the first academic year), because most of them were asked to consider such theme for the very first time; consequently, many of them took a little longer to finish the first part of their task.

By giving elements I run the risk of elicited managers<sup>89</sup> representing my reality regarding manager or representing my assumptions/expectations related to students' reality about manager, not theirs. Thus it was decided not to supply constructs unless strictly necessary. All the respondents produced constructs to inform upon features and activities expected from managers, and approximately more than half the sample produced constructs that brought up to date expected successful strategies/attitudes for managers.

During the application, some students ask for my approval regarding their answers, i.e., they need to prove that they already possess some 'scientific knowledge' about management and managers, in the face of a question asked by a management teacher (which they knew I was). I took this into consideration because it could represent a source of bias; nevertheless, the inherent characteristics of the technique attenuate biasing effects, as grids generate descriptions, labels and language terms produced only by students.

Individuals were asked to give each manager a rating between the two poles of each construct (Kelly, 1991). A rating scale of one to five (1, 5) was chosen to give respondents the ability to distinguish between the elements as recommended by Stewart (2000). A five-point scale seemed to help students sufficiently to discriminate constructs during the rating process. A seven point-scale would be far too demanding in discrimination detail for these subjects.

As recommended by Stewart and Stewart (1981:44), respondents were taken through the grid, taking each construct at a time. They were asked: '...would you expect this manager/these managers to be more (similarity pole) or more (contrast pole). A score towards five would indicate that you expect him/her to be more (similarity pole) whilst

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<sup>89</sup> Elicited by me

a score towards one would indicate that you expect him/her to be more (contrast pole) A score of three would indicates that he/she falls in-between'.

The rating procedure was conducted upon each construct until a grid was produced. The whole process of completing a grid took between forty-five minutes and one and a half hour with each subject.

Repertory grids can be used within both positivist and phenomenological approaches (Fransella, 1989); the method itself does not predispose the researcher to one style of explanation. To fit this work, the instrument has been used in the following manner: its aim is to explain actions by generating culturally appropriate understandings of them (Little, 1991). The grid technique enables the researcher to generate descriptions of action and interaction in terms that are sensitive to the respondents' culture, incorporating students' own labels and language terms; it produces accounts suitable for interpretive analysis by generating subjectively meaningful descriptions/explanations that uncover the expectations students have and the use of manager and management representations.

The quality of interpretations made here depends on my awareness of the theoretical difficulties and explanations of constructs given by students, more than on hypotheses confirmation or refutation. Questions to be aware of, during and after grid application, were/are:

- What theories and what practical experience shaped students' practice as elicitors?
- Why should they stick to their usual ways of thinking and acting?
- What frameworks have they used to inform their action in the present situation?  
Why?
- How effective is their communication?
- What feelings have been present in interactions?

The Repertory Grid can be both helpful and obstructive at this stage. Because of its flexibility and its ability to generate detailed, structured information about individuals' ways of seeing the world, it can be used very successfully to explore a whole range of evaluation issues, including the criteria we and others are using to assess the value of

training. The extent to which trainees' behaviours are seen as different, at the end of a course exposure, what people have learned/construed during training, what training people think should be offered, or how individual behaviour is seen to relate to business achievement, may represent some of these criteria.

The repertory grid can provide us with many different kinds of information; however, one runs the risk of being swamped by data that one cannot use and forgetting that grids do not make decisions for us, i.e., someone still has to interpret, assess and use what has been found. These issues have to be remembered, during the work process, with the intention of not losing the main purpose of our investigation: to use repertory grid for gathering relevant information on the theme we are interested in, and to find ways in which this information could be used to achieve investigation purposes.

### **Repertory grid's processes of data analysis**

The preference here is for simple measures. The grids analysis firstly required the ATLAS Ti software, in order to fulfil the need for deep qualitative analysis of constructs, one by one. Later on, constructs were analysed using the WEBGRID III package, supported by the Internet services of Calgary University, for cluster analysis, whilst many complex computer packages exist to conduct grid analysis (e.g., Ingrid 96, Circum-grid, Omni-grid and Flexi-grid; for a review, see Sewell *et al.*, 1991); clusters of constructs were defined through Webgrid III Focus Clustering process, in order to identify types (and archetypes) of manager, as well as, myths of management beneath each type.

This research takes the practical view that some interest must be shown in strong relationships between constructs that give new insights into the research attempt. However, the relationships between particular expectations are not expressed within an unusual model. A strong relationship between expected levels of 'hierarchical well defined functions' and 'organisational success for manager' could simply indicate that the respondent, in the main, expects being in traditional organisations, as he thinks most organisations in the north of Portugal still are. The constructs revealed with the grids provide an understanding of what students expect to do in organisations as managers.

334 constructs had to be dealt with (140 from first year's students and 194 from 5<sup>th</sup> year's students), in result of elicitation with the grid technique. Some way of turning this general set into more handy sections was required. After constructs were separated in two subgroups (first year and fifth year ones), each group of constructs (1<sup>st</sup> year: 140 constructs; 5<sup>th</sup> year: 194 constructs) has been broken down into main groupings that informed upon different characteristics of managers. This process follows principles of the template analysis combined with some principles of grounded theory, both previously described (Cassell and Symon, 1998, in this chapter).

With Atlas/TI software, a process of categorisation was applied; it started with some pre-established categories, from case study analysis, and then new categories for many situations not covered by the pre-established ones were created. However, this procedure seemed not to fit entirely into current data/constructs. As a consequence of this, a new process of categorisation is driven, starting from zero; although, categories from case study template were applied each time it seemed adequate to use it. Constructs could integrate several categories at once.

The process was used continuously by me and my colleague (the same collaborator of case study analysis); then, separate categories were developed with explicit 'indicators' that provide a useful way of separating the data to make it more manageable. These categories could be broken down further into sub-categories that informed upon the role of the manager. Through this process, supported by ATLAS/Ti workbench for qualitative analysis, files with data that related to each category were developed. Code-families and networks were built up.

Each data set was then analysed against the framework developed in the initial template. Sections of text that supported or provided some contrast to the prepositional indicators identified during the initial template analysis were coded. Through this process, the interpretive decisions from the initial analysis were applied to the second set of data for evaluation and possible refinement. However, the framework was not imposed upon the analysis in such a way that stopped contrary themes emerging.

It is argued (Kockelmanns, 1975) that external frameworks should not be introduced into interpretive data analysis processes, that meanings should be developed from the data,

that imposition of conceptual structures should not be made. The argument refers to the imposition of frameworks developed from other sources or cultural contexts, but the second stage of this work attempted to evaluate an approach that had developed out of an initial empirical stage in the same cultural setting, to increase the robustness of interpretive research. There is a broader concern with the fact that, by combining data from two different methods, the researcher is not comparing like with like, with different research methods producing results that are not equivalent or comparable. Such concerns arise due to the relationship between research methods and the philosophical issues that underpin them. It is assumed that methods used within the current research are supported by similar philosophical issues and the idea was to establish a sort of 'data conversation'. Anyway, the linkages between particular methods and underlying assumptions are often complex and ambiguous and to speak of 'the' epistemological status ascribed to one method is not always particularly helpful.<sup>90</sup> After grids data analysis, the process of clustering constructs through Webgrid III was achieved, and clusters interpreted according to manager types.

The present work produced a picture of types of managers and a depiction of expectations about management practice that may provide a way of understanding and explaining the influence of management education in the construction of these representations, and the way people involved with management, in any of its fields, act in situations related to management.

### **Collecting data from education agents: interviews and document analysis**

The current research considers that the impact of management education on students' representations of manager and management is better understood when data on students' representations is related with data informing about educational context and agents, because the process of constructing representations in the context of a management course, for students, is negotiated within social interactions with the educational agents in question.

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<sup>90</sup> Halfpenny (1979:802) highlights the problematic nature of making dogmatic linkages between method and philosophical position by discussing some techniques through which researchers can analyse interview transcripts to generate positivist accounts. Whilst Bryman (Williams and May, 1996) argues that Whyte's (1943) famous study of participant observation demonstrates many of the traits of positivism by linking bowling score to group structure within a causal model. Identical research methods can often be analysed within the conventions of different philosophical traditions to develop different types of explanations.

I have already revealed the preference for qualitative methods and interpretive techniques, in order to fulfil the goals of the research. Thus, in order to approach the representations and pedagogic preferences of the educational agents, two qualitative techniques were elected: an in-depth interview, to collect teachers' verbal data; and document analysis, to analyse information of written documents (course curriculum, course self-evaluation report and course brochure). Data treatment of the two techniques was supported by Atlas/Ti software.

### **The interviewing process**

In-depth interviews, together with the written documents' analysis, represent final strategies for testing and refining preliminary theory, constructed upon case study and repertory grids data. This data, together with my previous knowledge of the institution and the teachers, provided me with good knowledge of the technical language in use and the relevant activities carried out by interviewees. In spite of the availability initially revealed by all the management teachers in the course (20), only four teachers promptly demonstrated their availability when asked for collaboration (25% of total population); they were elected for their immediate availability; they have all maintained professional cooperation with the management course of ESTG since its early existence.

The construction of the interview guidelines was based on the fundamental theoretical issues of the work, the results of previous techniques and the need for complementary information on explored themes. The interview aims to be sufficiently open in structure, to allow participants to express ideas different from explored theory, but with sufficient orientation towards aimed topics. The guidelines reveal usefulness and correct orientation, in the sense that people approach the same themes; but, at the same time, different ways of orientating pedagogical work and of conceiving manager and management practice were revealed by teachers. Furthermore, the interviewees felt comfortable exploring subject matters that they were interested in.

The free course taken by the interviews did not allow the aimed themes to be completely explored in one specific case, and a second meeting occurred, to explore remaining issues. Permission for recording has been asked for and authorized; all the interviews have been recorded, fully transcribed, and then analysed with Atlas/Ti software. Interviews took one hour, more or less, and transcripts between three/four

hours each. Before data analysis, the transcripts were shown to the interviewed teachers, who checked and corrected them, if necessary.

### **Classroom observation**

One additional aim of this research was to evaluate critically the teaching process presently working at ESTG management course and to observe the limits revealed by that process, regarding the possible implementation of a CME process.

This has been achieved by analysing and interpreting part of the obtained data, more precisely of data from the in-depth interviews with staff, informal “conversations” with students and classroom observation; this allowed me to determine/confirm the pedagogic process involved and the constraints that present education’s context can offer to a CME implementation.

Interviews had already provided me with information on:

- what the teaching staff perceived was their current teaching process, what would be their aimed process of teaching and which were the main constraints to that ideal process
- what the students perceived was the current pedagogic process<sup>91</sup> adopted by teachers in the context of education they were immersed

The purpose of classroom observations was to “live” the teaching/learning process, to register events/critical incidents that characterize the current pedagogic process “happening” there, permitting to differentiate between a more “traditional” and a more “critical” process and checking “in loco” the main constraints to a CME in the investigated context. To re-assemble some of the interviews data will also contribute to add information on this matter.

In the case of my study, observational data were collected in management course’s classes, of 4 teachers (who also voluntarily participated in the staff interviewing).

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<sup>91</sup> The “pedagogic process” both in students and teachers’ interviews, means methods, resources, and assessment.

The observational data for each observation period, collected through the time-sampling procedure, was expressed in minutes.

Next, the students and teacher behaviour within each category on the instrument was averaged to produce means per category for each class and teacher, for each observation. Finally, the observations in each subject area, economics, sociology, accounting and project management, were treated and it was recognised that the observational variables were/were not independent of each other: coding an event into one category excludes/does not exclude all other categories at the same time interval.

For the observational data, collected by the rating procedure, subscales were defined and categories of interactions identified, according to *traditional* vs. *critical* attitudes and behaviours of teachers and students, as defined by authors such as Alvesson and Willmot (1992; 1996), Grey and Fournier (2003), Reynolds (1997), and Perriton and Reynolds (2004)<sup>92</sup>.

The unit of analysis was the class or teacher. The observational data are based upon 8 observations (4 classes x 2 lessons each) Detailed description of data collection procedures is on the CD file of data treatment.

Research approach included a reflexive perspective on the research as part of a knowledge validation process (which has previously tended to reflect the concerns of dominant groups) involving participants and engaging critical friends.

### **The document analysis**

Secondary data included in this research is mostly qualitative. In reference to types of secondary data, according to Saunders et al (1997), the research essentially explores *documentary data* in one of its variants: written materials.

The main goal for looking into documentary data within this research is to explore privileged institutional model(s) of management education, as well as the prevailing management myths and metaphors enclosed, always bearing in mind the usefulness of the information considered, for further triangulation processes.

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<sup>92</sup> See chapter 2, p89-96

Locating and accessing relevant documentary data has not been a problem: its existence and origin were well known to me; I already owned a copy of all these investigated documents, as well.

It is always important to look at the initial purposes of collecting this data, as this may constitute a source of bias information; normally, data is initially collected with purposes other than ours, which conditions information choice and presentation. In the particular case of this investigation, the self-evaluation report could raise doubts about more objective data, somehow biasing data in order to correspond to institutional requirements. Jacob (1994) states that data collected to further the interests of a particular group are more likely to be suspect, as the purpose of the study may be to reach a pre-determined conclusion. Measurement of bias resulting from deliberate distortion is difficult to detect (Saunders et al., 1997).

Information from the self-evaluation report, referring to students' employment or success percentages, may be questionable (it is produced for governmental purposes, for the ministerial evaluation of the course); but the main purpose for using this data in the present research (identifying education model and management myths of ESTG management course), ensures that referred possibility of bias is not significant.

The course brochure is a document produced for persuading clients to get into ESTG management course; its 'propaganda' character can be considered a bias source, so attention has to be paid to this constraint when using data from the document.

Document analysis gathers data from the three sources and proceeds with coding and categorisation of written data, supported by ATLAS/ti software, towards the presentation of a list of common-code categories to which it adds a full description of each category of codes. The same colleague of mine, who participated in previous analysis, collaborates in the document analysis, coding and comparing code categories within documentary data treatment.

## **Summary**

I recognize the advantages of using the present methodology: the interest in processes of reality construction has been long time constrained by the dominance of the functionalist paradigm in organizational research (Burrell and Morgan, 1979); thus,

there is a lack of in-depth studies of specific acts, events and processes (Knights and Willmott 1992; Alvesson and Willmot, 1996). Concepts such as systems and structures, cultures, identities and actors are treated as if they were things or thing-like phenomena.

Contrary to such dominating approach, the approach used here focuses on a specific institutional event, which is described in some detail. Apart from bringing new perspectives to previously explored phenomenon, the attempt is for contributing to a situational understanding of investigated occurrence, ‘closer’ to the empirical phenomena, to the daily practice.

Upcoming research can gain from this thesis’ results and conclusions: the fact that I look at students’ representations of manager and management together with teachers and curriculum representations and related pedagogical orientation provides us with combined findings and agree to forthcoming researchers to start ahead, in this area of interest. My own research developed in that same way: I started the work about types of managers with reference to Holman’s types; however, data analysis identified more types of managers in students’ findings than only Holman’s. Thus, results alert me to the fact that combining perspectives<sup>93</sup>, differently and ahead, provides us with new information on the phenomenon.

Aware of the rare existence of previously proposed or applied methodological combinations, in the field, I had to get going somewhere in research design and see where it would go, as it is an underexplored field of research. Combining methods from diverse constructionist approaches on knowledge construction was the answer for me, only a possibility among others (almost everything was to do, yet); nevertheless, the design of research followed a globally qualitative and interpretive common basis, which underpinned methodological choices made along the research development.

Whilst divergences exist in theoretical foundations of each elicited method, bringing together Kelly’s grid data, interviews’ data and documentary data was a natural process of continuity and integration to which triangulation (Denzin, 1970) much contributed. Apart from this, the combination of the three methods facilitated the underneath of the rhetoric of the answers, not taking answers as is. Differently from presenting results of

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<sup>93</sup> Staff, written information and students

repertory grids and case study as ‘this is the truth about students’ representations of manager and management’, the intention was to detect where/when did data results ‘interrupt the flow’, so that interpretations, derived from students’ and teachers’ own expressions, could reveal incoherence and allow questions; such a process works by finding contrasts instead of flow. And this was done by contrasting subjects’ own words, not researchers’ ones.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **EXPLORING NOTIONS OF THE MANAGER AND MANAGEMENT**

#### **Introduction**

I began this research with the aim of obtaining better knowledge of the representations that management students have of management and managers, in order to be able to understand the influence of Management Education (ME), and its respective agents, on the construction of these representations and their meanings.

In this study, I used several data collection techniques: discussion of a case study, individual repertory grids, and classroom observation sessions. My intention was to better understand, from the results, the culture of the actors/participants and the perceptions/constructs they have of manager and management; I also wanted to develop a vocabulary that was suited to the participants' reality so that they could speak about this in an efficient way during the different stages of the research where there was contact between researcher and participant. Finally, I wanted to have a better understanding of how this specific representative language is employed by the educational agents involved in the process.

The design of the research allowed me to recreate the constructions and representations of the actors involved in the ME process with regard to "manager" and "management", besides showing how these representations reflect the models of ME and MP whether these are more traditional or flexible. The results also provided information about the models which support the specific context under study, as well as on the educational processes involved and the limits/constraints presented by the actual context in terms of the possible implementation of a more critical educational process (CME).

I analysed the data obtained with each instrument (case study, repertory grids and classroom observation) separately for each of the two groups of students that made up the study sample (first-year students and fifth-year students). Using this separate analysis by group of students facilitates the emergence of possible differences between first-year and final-year students. After analysing the data obtained with each of the research instruments, what could be called "a conversation between data" (Rosenwald,

1988) took place, in which the data from each of those instruments were brought together.

This “conversation” proved to be very useful: it revealed contradictions as well as areas of agreement that are subject to interpretation; it also made it possible to gain insight into the processes and tensions that underlie the construction of the meanings of the words “manager” and “management” by the actors involved in this specific ME experience.

In-depth interviews were also carried out with some of the educational agents directly involved in the process – the teachers on the management course; relevant documents were also analysed. The data thrown up by the interviews, the analysis of documents and the direct observation sessions<sup>94</sup> were interpreted and then combined with the data from the students, in order to get a more complete view of the phenomenon with the integration of all the parts.

In this research, the representations are considered to be “devices” that are used to interpret knowledge that is created and contained within the heart of the educational contexts; these “devices” are seen as the result of the relationships that are established between the actors taking part in the process (students, teachers and other agents), these being relationships of power.

The representations of “manager” produced in an ME context are not an exception to the considerations that I have just mentioned about “representations”: constructed under the influence of educational models supported by the dominant myths of management, these representations can provide precious information on the creation/negotiation of knowledge about “management” and “manager” in the specific context of ME in which such construction/negotiation occurs.

Therefore, “*What representations of manager and management are constructed by students in a specific ME context such as that of ESTG?*” was obviously one of the main questions of this research.

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<sup>94</sup> The same sessions that had provided data on the students

The answer to this question brings with it new questions: how are these representations constructed; how do the agents involved influence this process; how are these representations developed or modified from the beginning to the end of the management course studied? These were all questions that would shed light on the process in which the representations are negotiated. In this way, these representations would constitute important devices that would allow me to indirectly observe the knowledge, and the cognitive and emotional constructs, of management and manager that are created, maintained and negotiated within the specific ME context of this study.

In previous chapters, I discussed the fact that the will to improve ME, from my point of view, requires reflexive ways of educating managers; hence the need also for self-reflexive practice on the part of those who teach management so that they become practitioners who are as moral and critical as they ask students to become. A prerequisite for becoming self-reflexive is a deeper, conscious, knowledge of the world as power-induced, politically sustained and socially constructed; in addition, we need to be aware of the same power-induced, politically sustained and socially constructed character of the field of management and of students' roles in it. I believe that the answers now offered by this investigation will facilitate, besides better comprehension of ME process and students' role in the process, future improvements in ME by making us, teachers, more aware and vigilant of our own role as teachers and of our participation in, and contribution to, the process of educating in management.

Exploring the representations of manager and management that the students have when they begin, and when they finish, a degree course in Management at ESTG was not an aim that devoid of expectations since, from the outset, I was led by the review of literature and particularly by that regarding the social role of ME and contemporary myths of management, to expect differences in the representations held by the two groups of students (beginners and finalists). This was due to the respective differences in academic experience of management between the groups, given that the final year students would have been exposed to/influenced by four years of the myths that predominate in the present day panorama of management.

Knowledge of the actual case for study, the ESTG, enables initial expectations to be created about the type of representations that would be transmitted to the students, or

that they could construct, given the nature and orientation of the educational models preferred by the institution, on the one hand, and, on the other, the context of the development of ME in Portugal. Therefore, what follows is a description of the development and present situation of ME in Portugal and then of the specific context in which the research took place (institution/course) in order to provide a background to the case.

### **The context**

The ESTG of the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo is an institution created and developed within the Portuguese context of education, specifically of ME. Here I describe the Portuguese reality in this regard, with the aim of situating the case studied (the ESTG itself) within its educational background, as well as trying to show the similarities found between Portuguese and English contexts or, more broadly, European contexts, of ME.

In the last twenty years, Portugal saw a dramatic increase in the number and variety of ME courses on offer at undergraduate level. In other European countries, the investments made in this type of education were already relevant before the 1980s while, in Portugal, interest in ME ‘was awakened’ somewhat later due to the socio-political conditions of the time. The revolution of April 25<sup>th</sup> 1974 has been a reference mark for many political, economic and social changes in Portugal, including significant changes and developments in education.

The earliest actions in the Portuguese context of higher education leading to ME developments refer to the early 1960s. At the beginning of that decade, a group of engineers who were members of the administrative board of the INII<sup>95</sup> (a Portuguese association of industrial research), visited European schools of management in France and Germany to get specialized training in management. When they returned, they started an internal movement of “management education”, by integrating management classes into Engineering and Economics courses, thus bringing to Portuguese schools the influence of German and French schools of management. This is the earliest

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<sup>95</sup>The 'Instituto Nacional de Investigaçāo Industrial' (National Institute of Industrial Research), no longer in existence.

academic achievement in management education formally detected in the Portuguese higher education sector. However, there are no other records<sup>96</sup> of developments in ME in Portugal until the early 1980s.

The first existing degree in management in Portugal (an Honours programme in Business Sciences) was created in 1979 by the ‘Universidade Católica’; contrary to the earlier French and German influences brought by the INNI engineers, the course was based on an Anglo-Saxon philosophy and approach. However, most of the Portuguese schools that later created management courses presented strong influences from German or French schools in their courses, as a result of accumulated experiences in other areas, such as Economic Sciences, where management is frequently part of the course so as to address the needs of an ever-demanding job market.

In 1989, constitutional changes led to a major programme of privatisation. The large number of privatisations taking place as a result stimulated the importance of the role of managers and management in organisations, and created a number of educational offers in the management area, and a significant number of problems that needed to be solved increased the need for such offers. As a consequence of the immediate industrial reorganisation of the time and the number of lay-offs due to the privatisation of public companies, many workers lost their jobs, finding it very difficult to get new ones. However, the nominal growth of salaries in the entrepreneurial sector remained high and many managers enjoyed a significant package of fringe benefits. This situation attracted many interests, from students who were looking for a future professional activity, to schools trying to offer educational clients what they would possibly need or be interested in: the eternal question of supply-demand. Using ideas of consumerism, students became more and more interested in obtaining a good degree which would lead to a well-paid job (Grisoni and Wilkinson, 2005) and this became the ultimate consumer goal for students to achieve, and for schools to offer. In addition, Portuguese legislation, which permitted organisational investment in education and training, promoted the appearance of new education/development offers for managers.

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<sup>96</sup> At the moment, the ISCTE (the second Portuguese school to create and still run a degree course in management) has a team starting research into the evolution of ME; interviews with the INII’s engineers are planned as part of this study.

Since then, the offer of higher education courses in that area has experienced a boom, characterized by dozens of courses, post-graduate university degrees, MBAs, doctorate programmes in management, or “management of something”. This situation is similar to that of other European countries: as Cannon stressed (1996), formal academic business and management education is, perhaps, the most successful sector of higher education in the industrial world, or, paraphrasing Pfeffer and Fong (2002), it is not the commercial successes of business schools that is doubted, the question rather being the relevance of its educational product or effects.

With the Maastricht treaty at the beginning of the 1990s, concerns such as developing the manager's role, creating strategic positions for managers in organisations, recruiting adaptable people and maintaining key-people in organisations through their permanent development, influenced investments in management education as well as in *curriculum* programmes, guided by vocationalist models and utilitarian principles. From then on, offers underpinned by vocationalist concerns and orientation<sup>97</sup> multiplied.

The way ME has evolved from the 1980s to the present, under the influence of business and political guidelines, reveals an economic interests-orientation; new legislation on training and the need for managers to develop specific management skills or to get an academic degree in management promoted the increase in ME courses on offer for those already in professional activity. Some of these conditions directly influenced the development of ME offers at an undergraduate level: the existence of clients interested in a well-paid profession in a social context of significant unemployment; an adequate degree to get such a profession; the fact that business schools could easily provide a solution to these clients' needs, through the creation of low-priced courses, in terms of structural conditions and resources (management courses, at undergraduate, are “talk

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<sup>97</sup> In 1991, the state university with the largest number of management students (ISCTE) had 2300 students in the area, which represented 70% of the total of students of the institute. New courses have been developed since then, in formal academic education and in a more specialised one. Presently, there are 77 courses, among undergraduate and postgraduate. According to Sá (1991), the offers vary among seven fundamental products: a general MBA, a specialised MBA, honours, BA and technical courses, general post-graduate courses, specialised post-graduate courses and business oriented courses, each with specific aims. The first one (the general MBA) aims to prepare those who have acted as managers but without formal academic qualifications quickly and intensively, whereas the specialised MBA is meant for people with an academic education in the area of management and who wish to improve their knowledge. The BA and technical courses aim at satisfying the needs of specialised technicians who will take on roles as middle managers. Finally, the post-graduate courses (the general and the specialised ones) have the basic objective of updating the knowledge of managers who wish to re-enter university.

and chalk” courses, not very expensive or resource-demanding, for the institutions who create them).

Parallel to the conditions described, where there is not much to differentiate between the Portuguese and other European contexts where ME developed, some specific conditions characterizing the Portuguese context of higher education impacted on the structure and functioning of management and business schools in Portugal. One is institutional diversity, which characterizes the Portuguese context of higher education, constituted by different institutions, some public, some private and others with a very specific statute<sup>98</sup>. A highly flexible system with a wide range of structural diversity and more responsibility being ascribed to the chancellors and heads of department would be the best model for higher education in this country (Grilo, 2002). Besides, with the “Autonomy Decree”, which has governed these institutions since 1988, providing a certain degree of autonomy to institutions of higher education, it is only a matter of using what exists already, revising the decree to make it more flexible and the institutions more liable.

Apart from diversity, debates underline a few key-areas of concern. The first one is ‘what type of image the public has, of higher education’. A study of the role played by higher education in the media, carried out three years ago, showed that 70% of the news dealt with higher education and more than half of that percentage was concerned with the financing of the subsystem. It is therefore clear that higher education dominates the topic of education in general. Here, it is also possible to identify three major areas of concern: financing (what is nearly always highlighted is insufficient funding), the transformation of the Polytechnic Institutes into Universities (a recurring theme, where regional and political interests are very much present) and the quality of the private higher education institutes (where the media make strong criticism of the lack of quality in that educational subsystem). The institutions and their executive bodies hold much of the responsibility for the bad image transmitted by the media, which results from their inability to publicise the valuable projects they develop. In order to do so, it is necessary to adopt strategies to disclose the real capacities and potential of schools, their projects, teaching and research bodies.

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<sup>98</sup> This is the case of the ‘Universidade Católica’ (which has a concordant statute) or the military education of the Armed Forces (an important subsystem of the Portuguese higher education).

Internal statutes represent another area of concern for higher education institutions. The statutes should present a project aimed at the students (and not at the teachers), and it is the institutions that have to bear in mind the objectives they set to achieve and that are directly related to the students. Apart from that, there is the need to conciliate the professionalism of management and the democracy and representativeness of the different elements that make up the schools. Even though it is not shared by all the institutions, there is a characteristic that is somewhat relevant: the difficulty that the higher education institutions have in accepting change and running risks. Nowadays, it is vital that they take chances, and those who do not are left behind in terms of students admissions. A critical discourse is no longer sufficient; it is necessary to accept the responsibilities and to define the rules that will conciliate the requirements and openness. The majority of higher education institutions and Portuguese education in general, present very critical discourses, which are close to revolutionary, but have highly conservative practices. The question is less an ideological one and more the ability to take chances, which is closely connected to the internal decision making process of the institutions.

The third area of concern is the relationship between the Portuguese government and the public institutions. There is a “Board of Deans” and a “Coordinating Council for the Polytechnic Institutes” that guarantee the connection between the government and higher education institutions in terms of universities and polytechnic institutes, respectively. The main risk factors are linked to the excessive uniformity of criteria applied by each of those two entities, sometimes in an indiscriminate way. If those entities have the responsibility to find solutions based on the “greatest common measure”, it is also true that diversity and diversifying should be respected. Sometimes the adoption of the same criteria is obligatory for different institutions, just because they are included in the same educational system. If the Portuguese higher education system is characterised by diversity, it is important to take the chance and find adequate solutions for each situation; what is different should be treated differently. On the one hand, we have the argument for the creation of a formula of funding for the institutions, but, on the other, there is the need to take whatever is different as separate from that formula. The Portuguese government is now moving towards deregulation and

responsibility of the executive bodies, and making public the results of their assessments and the audits which each institution has undergone since 1996.

The consequences of those assessment processes are another of the areas of concern to be mentioned here. When these processes were set up, the law required a political agreement, where it was made clear that they would not be directly related to the funding system. However, it would, in fact, be important that the results were reflected in the future funding system. Nowadays, important data such as the degree of quality/relevance of a course and/or of an institution is not taken into consideration in the granting of material, financial and human resources to each institution.

Finally, there is the matter of the Private or Cooperative Higher Education System, which is a part of the Portuguese system and should be treated as such. The main question arises from the way those institutions are organised and how they take care of themselves. Once again, this is a question of diversity and the need to treat differently whatever is different. There are private institutions which are very distinct in terms of the levels of quality, aims and the working methods they offer. Those who are assessing these institutions should be able to see the differences and to distance themselves from those that have no quality and, thus, may transfer their lack of credibility to those with quality.

Some of the essential proposals from politicians and analysts are:

To guarantee diversity

In the present day scenario, it would be simplistic to put every institution (private/public education; universities/polytechnics; new/old universities) in the same legal system. This diversification is opposed, in a certain way, to the emerging homogenisation made visible in recent proposals, mainly after the Sorbonne Declaration (1998) or the Bologna Treaty (1999). The "European space of higher education" which is the objective of the latter, also aims at maintaining all over Europe the distinct institutions, whose organisational and working models are completely different. This idea of "non-obedience" to a single model may guarantee, in the Portuguese case, a coherent and cohesive, though not homogeneous, set. One of the greatest challenges facing the Portuguese universities is the Bologna Declaration, as far as the structure of the degrees and diplomas conferred are concerned. The perspective of setting a single

degree in Portugal, which implies the extinction of the *bachelorato* (BA) and the *licenciatura* (Honour's) degree, may also imply the creation of a diploma to certify short-duration courses. This was already proposed in the 1970s, when an attempt was made to create professionalised courses, with a maximum duration of 3 or 4 semesters. These tendencies to shorten the duration of courses may lead to the previously mentioned risk of uniformity of the Portuguese higher education system, and which may imply the disappearance of the differences between the polytechnics and the universities. There is still another risk: the uniformity of European universities. Such a process, carried out for political reasons, would deny European diversity, which can become a serious mistake. However, the Bologna Treaty does not presuppose uniformity; it aims at inter-university agreements and institutional networks.

To stimulate excellence:

The democratisation process of the educational system led to the inescapable decrease in the quality of the teaching. The improvement of teaching quality implies measures and policies centred around two main objectives: to create the necessary conditions to improve teaching for all and to invest in those who are already good (invest in excellence centres). Improvements in the assessment systems are vital to the achievement of such objectives.

To reach a strategic sense/ implement a strategy:

One of the biggest weaknesses of Portuguese higher education institutions is the lack of a strategy: they are unable to put the future into some kind of perspective, assuming priorities and differentiating between what is important and what is not; they cannot define strategic objectives. If one accepts that the strategy is the structure itself and that the structure reflects the strategy, one can go on to conclude that thinking about the strategy of the universities is thinking about the power structure and about the decision-making mechanisms inside the universities. In 1976, Portuguese universities were handed over to those who had a Ph.D., which contrasted strongly with the chaotic climate experienced between 1974 and 1976. However, 25 years later, that legislation has become an instrument used by the “corporation” of those with a Ph.D., with no other use than that of maintaining or expanding the privileges of these professors, and doing no good to the institutions. This situation should be re-evaluated; some suggestions (Grilo, 2002) point to the need to break up the existing structures, which are

responsible for the most complicated problems. Here it is possible to give as examples the difficulty to establish a relationship with the civil society, the lack of mobility of the teaching staff and the marginalisation of those who do not accept the rules of the “corporation”. Some of the strategies for change would include changes in the legislation and in the election of the executive bodies, namely the Scientific Boards and the Executive Boards of higher education institutions.

To innovate and educate:

To improve the quality of teaching in the institutions of higher education; university education, apart from the learning of a profession, means the acquisition of a specific set of competencies and ways of being/ acting that will allow the graduate to integrate into a certain number of career possibilities. This implies concern with competitiveness in distance learning and with the close connection between research and teaching.

To mobilise resources:

The resources of an institution are the result of the negotiations between the executive bodies and government, as the money coming from tuition is not significant (there is a need to re-evaluate the value of tuition fees – Grilo 2002). The next challenge facing the public universities is to find financial funding from outside the national budget. This may be done through the maximization of their capabilities and the definition of strategies to find ways to create revenues (some suggestions are fund-raising services rendered to the business world, using sponsorship or valuation of post-graduate courses).

To promote mobility:

In Portugal, mobility is not a characteristic of the higher education teaching staff. This results from the excessively corporate and group policy present in our universities, as well as from the way the institutions organise their staff lists. The promotion of mobility may, therefore, result from needed changes being made to the statute of the teaching career. As far as students are concerned, the mobility has been developed through programmes such as Erasmus and Socrates, but they do not yet reach a large number of Portuguese students.

To internationalise the institutions:

When the opportunity came in the 1960s for some students to attend foreign universities, this marked a process of internationalisation of the Portuguese universities, which was also the result of the relationships, contacts and the project integration of those Portuguese students attending foreign universities. Nowadays there are a great number of teachers and researchers who maintain close relations with foreign departments and research teams, developing varied research projects and organising courses, seminars, congresses and debates in certain scientific areas. The question today is one of internationalising the institutions themselves: to define a strategy that aims at creating tools and favourable conditions to promote institutional relations between the Portuguese universities and their counterparts in Europe and North America.

To share responsibilities:

The Portuguese universities are “addicted” to what may be called the “passing of the buck” of responsibility to the government and central administration in many situations where the institutions should assume their own responsibility. This policy is typical of countries where the central government has a lot of weight, a tradition that is difficult to overcome in southern European countries. The sharing of responsibilities will imply assuming those same responsibilities, and this in turn will lead to the re-thinking of the decision-making mechanisms in the institutions and to the restructuring of the mechanisms through which the executive bodies are nominated. The definition of the selection criteria and access rules of the students is also a strategy to be considered.

The present scenario of higher education in Portugal influences the related context of management education; management schools develop within these orientations and constraints. Even though characterization of the birth and evolution of ME in Portugal, especially at undergraduate level, was necessary to contextualize the institution that constitutes the case for study within this research, the ESTG, its conditions do not appear to be significantly different from those of the rest of Europe.

Nevertheless, there are two aspects that differentiate the present curriculum of most management courses in Portugal from those offered in other European countries: first, there is no close connection between the institutions and, second, the fact that at least two foreign languages have to be studied. Other aspects that can be underlined, although to a lesser extent, are much mathematised curricula with very quantitative subjects

(Gonçalves, 1991); the fact that the honour degree courses are five years long, compared to four in most European countries<sup>99</sup>; and the fact that there is no work placement element at the end of the courses. In fact, ESTG was an exception to the latter because there was a work placement period at the end of the BCs, but when the course was restructured, this was no longer included and the course is now in line with its national peers.

The need for changes in ME is emphasized in political and educational discourse, but as I have emphasized throughout this thesis, those changes cannot be limited to mere improvements in pedagogical techniques; taking chances is needed, questioning the strong functional relationship between management education, and management practice and knowledge is required; critical discourse is not sufficient, and Portuguese schools - management schools included - present very critical discourse but highly conservative practice. Portugal does not formally have a past or a history in critical movements in education; neither has it followed an obvious path through the development of such movements or even provided a background for such an approach to management and related education. Nevertheless, an early social condition to the emergence of critical management education (CMS) in Portugal might have been the growing use of management as a 'value' in the political domain, and the increasingly unrestrained managerial power of the private and public sectors. In the 1980s and 1990s, management became elevated to a more significant and visible position, also becoming the object of increasing attention from those concerned with the analysis of work and organizations. Most of this growing interest was not of a 'critical nature' and much of the analysis of management conducted in those decades simply reproduced the iconic status of management. However, the enmeshment of management with contested changes, like public sector restructuring, downsizing, or cultural re-engineering, offered a fertile ground for a more critical appreciation of management.

Other circumstances could have been particularly conducive to some authors' and practitioners' interest in CME: contrary to the US (where business schools had existed since the late nineteenth century and had only a limited contact with social science faculties) and similarly to the UK and other European countries, in Portugal there were no business schools until the 1960s; moreover, the first trials to include management classes in existing courses (engineering) only happened at that time also. In the UK, a

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<sup>99</sup> France does have five year (3+2) courses. However, the Bologna Treaty makes this aspect irrelevant.

country with a much more relevant and critical tradition in education, there were two schools of management by then (Whitley et al, 1981).

In the 1980s and 1990s, however, most universities developed a business or management school or course, and management became the single most popular undergraduate subject, with MBA provision rapidly increasing also. These developments reflected the changing ideological landscape and view of what universities should be, and offered universities a source of income in the face of spending freezes and cuts. Besides, social scientists could find employment in these schools, as these were often configured as part of social sciences faculties.

The proposal of changes in curricular and pedagogical approaches to ME, and the attitude of taking chances are closely linked to the internal decision-making process of the institutions; such an attitude can constitute a major force or a main constraint in the implementation of more critical models of education (like the CME) in management schools.

One of these schools is ESTG, our case; it is a higher educations institution, which forms part of the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo, along with four other schools. Founded in 1989, this school now receives a total of 1575 students, among the ten courses offered<sup>100</sup>, supported by a total number of 137 teachers. The management course opened in 1989 also, with twenty-seven students; the total number of management students is now 261 and there is a teaching staff of twenty, almost equally divided between male and female staff. This data has been collected in 2003 and revised in 2005 through direct information, self-evaluation reports, and the course manual for students, although this does not mean it depicts the present situation with total accuracy.

The course leading to a BSc in Management is divided into six semesters. In the first year, the course subjects are somewhat generic and mathematical<sup>101</sup>; as students advance through the course, these subjects become mainly financial and accounting in character. When the transition of the course to an Honours degree was being prepared, along with a longer duration (to ten semesters), the subjects, themes and study programmes were also being restructured. With the exception of the aspects that distinguish the preparation of a BSc student and an Honours one, such as the

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<sup>100</sup> Name the courses

<sup>101</sup> See p. 195, fig. 5.1

suppression of the work placement period at the end of the BSc degree, the methodologies, the assessment strategies and the general objectives of the course were not altered. One of the changes brought about some discussion between those involved in the restructuring process, and that was the three-month work placement at the end of the BSc degree (the distinguishing element in polytechnic courses) no longer being necessary to obtain the Honours degree. At that time, the choice for a two-phase Honours degree was dictated by marketing reasons and it was detrimental to the aims of the type of teaching specific to polytechnics in Portugal, upheld by the teachers. Changes in Portuguese legislation made it possible for polytechnics to offer the same type of degree offered by universities. Consequently, the polytechnics felt compelled to take this opportunity, to avoid being left behind in the choices of the possible clients/students. They feared that keeping to specific BSc degrees was not enough to survive in the “teaching business”. Therefore, almost every Portuguese polytechnic adopted the new degree format.

In terms of internal structure, the course is headed by a coordinator, who is supported by a course committee and a placement committee (justified only by the fact that the work placement was kept as an element at the end of the BSc). An internal regulation supervises every activity of the course. The majority of the placements take place in the administrative area, related to finance and accounting. The course also develops extra-curricular activities in partnership with other institutions and with the community.

The programmes of the course subjects are organised along three main areas:

- Economics and Management
- Accounting and Finance
- Framing/Framework and Support

The balance between these three areas is achieved in the following manner: from the beginning to the end of the course the training in Economics/ Management and in Accounting/ Finance is increasingly stressed. The latter is the area with the greatest percentage at the end of the course in terms of relevance. The course structure strongly reflects the early influence of the German and French schools of management as passed on by the INI engineers in the early 1960s.

The teaching staff is made up of an almost equal number of men and women, with an average age of thirty-nine who have mostly been part of the staff for eight years. More than half hold post-graduate and a third combine their teaching duties with professional business activities.

Three-quarters of the students made this course their first choice when applying for entry into higher education, but this information cannot be accepted at face value, as the students fill in their applications bearing in mind the real chances they have of being accepted in a certain course at the first phase of enrolment, and not their actual preference. 273 of those admitted to the course are eighteen- to nineteen-year-old females residing in the north of Portugal.

The subjects of Mathematics, Accounting and Budgeting Control are those which have the largest number of students failing. Two-thirds of the students are able to complete the course in the minimum time required. There is no concrete structure either in the school or in the course to help students when they are trying to enter the labour market. However, from the very beginning of the course, students are made to realise that it is very difficult to find a job in existing companies, making it necessary for students to develop strategies that will help them find a company for their placement at the end of the course. One out of every three students has been able to find a job in less than six months after graduation, which should be seen in light of the national unemployment rate of 9%. Last year was representative of the present economic situation, as only 8% of the graduates were able to find a job in that period of time, but the unemployment rate remained steady. The number of employees per activity sector shows that 50% of the graduates found a job in an independent company, followed by 25% who work for insurance companies or banks.

The above describes, therefore, the specific context of management education where this research was carried out. The description made it clear that a majority of the students who made up the study sample may be participating in this educational experience mostly due to the fact that the policy of restricting access to higher education led them there, in addition to the fact that the guarantee of future employment after completing the course at ESTG has, up to now, been a reality for an acceptable percentage of graduates. This point is particularly relevant in the region of Portugal

where the school is situated. The teaching staff reveals balanced characteristics with regard to gender distribution and full-time teaching.

The specific conditions of the Portuguese educational context have certainly influenced the ME courses that are on offer at ESTG, and at other Portuguese institutions. Some of the concerns in the Portuguese educational context at the moment are the need to promote excellence and, consequently, to improve teaching quality. This could favour the interest that exists at a national level to better ME provision, and the results of research such as the present study could contribute to the trialling of more critical and reflexive educational models in this area. It must also be born in mind that Portugal does not have a recent history of significant traditions or movements in terms of critical management education.

Added to this is the lack of a strategy that higher education institutions in Portugal are accused of; hence the need for them to establish strategic objectives; these arguments call our attention also to the need to know more about the relationship between strategies and power structures in such institutions, which corroborates the interest in gaining a deeper understanding of the interconnections between the knowledge conveyed by the school, and the relationships of power that are implicit and explicit in these processes.

Knowledge of the Portuguese social and educational context in general, and of the specific context of ESTG that was provided by the background details above, certainly condition some of the expectations that both I and the reader might have regarding the principal representations of management and manager that are operationalised through ME, in Portugal, and specifically regarding those transmitted by the management course at ESTG: the markedly vocationalist concerns on the part of educational institutions, the background of noticeably German and/or French origin that is the case of most management courses – with their strict orthodox structure and curriculum – work on the basis of Economics and Accounting, more than any other training basis. This is also the case of ESTG, and the fact that students are more interested in a good degree classification leading to a well-paid job or the guarantees social status that comes with the degree, constitute a premise for predicting that the representations will be rationalist and managerialist, with managers characterized by performative roles.

However, these are just reasonable initial assumptions, and it is necessary to find out what the results of the study show. First, I will make an analysis of the course, with regard to the curriculum – its contents and aims; the proposals detailed in the course prospectus; and the annual course report that is drawn up for self-assessment purposes. Such an analysis provides us with knowledge about the context in which the educational process happens, along with the conditions in which the knowledge-building process occurs. It also informs about the context in which the representations of the students that make up the study sample are “manufactured/negotiated”, and about the influences brought on these students as well as the directions in which these influences can take their representations of manager and management. Then, I will go on to analyse in some detail other educational agents that directly and actively take part in this construction/negotiation: the teachers.

It is only then that I will begin to analyse and discuss the representations of the students themselves, in the discussion of these results where the framework of the specific ME context has already been given. This context has characteristics that condition the nature and orientation of the educational process in question; therefore, at this point, we have a better understanding of the results obtained in light of the combination of different influences on the process of constructing the representations.

I will start with the ESTG Management course itself, following on from the outline given above of what the course aims to offer students, how it develops the intended skills in students, and how it has fared in those respects. For this, the respective curricular proposals, prospectuses and self-assessment reports were analysed. In order to interpret the information taken from those documents, I used the pedagogical models of Holman (2000) which were presented in Chapter 2 as a theoretical support to identify the main pedagogical orientation of the ESTG management course. The interpretations I make characterise the course in these terms.

Some of the available documentation introduces what management is; for example, at the beginning of the course curriculum and in the prospectus:

All human activities seek to reach the highest level when achieving any result, using the least amount of resources, given their scarcity and associated costs. On the other hand, most of these activities take place in profit and non-profit making institutions, public and private, covering the most varied wealth-creating sectors (Curriculum and prospectus of ESTG management course, 2005).

This definition of management alone reveals a conceptual base rooted in managerialism and in the contemporary management conceptions of rationalism and economics – maximum profit with minimum resources is still the art of the manager and management students will be prepared to follow this concept. It is to be noted that the present course director has a background in Economics, which might strengthen and support the economist and rationalist orientation of the present curriculum.

The course's final aim is to train professionals, and it is described in the following general terms:

To train specialised technicians at two levels - diploma and degree - (...) who are able to: diagnose situations, intervene in/comply with specific aims, assess performance in the different areas of management (...) acquire the scientific and technical tools/skills that will guarantee (management) activities/tasks required by employers and by the setting up of their own company; to provide skills in the domains of Financial Management, Human Resources Management, Operational and Production Management, Commercial Management, Accountancy and Bookkeeping, so that they are capable of revitalising and re-qualifying the region and the country, making them more competitive and productive; to develop their ability to become agents of change in organisations, as well as to carry out business activities leading to the establishment of independent projects.

(in the curriculum presentation's doc)

When the background to the course was described, some significant particularities were already noted, such as the emphasis on theoretical orientation (even more so with the disappearance of the three-month work placement), the strong influence of German /French schools seen through the rigid curricular structure and favoured subject areas

and contents, the number of weekly contact hours, the changes that were implemented when the course changed to an honours degree with added value only at a deeper theoretical level regarding subject contents, whilst favouring strategic themes. Corroborating this argument is also the fact that staff feared that keeping to specific BSc degrees was not enough to survive in the “teaching business”, hence adopting a new degree format pointing at functional vocationalist goals leading the change in plans and actions.

This functional character of the manager’s role can also be confirmed through the descriptions of the management professionals found in the course prospectus:

(The BCs is) expected to apply specific management strategies (...) preparing and processing data (...) leading technical work teams (...) supporting executive decisions (...) (The graduate) implements structural interventions and makes decisions (...) gives strategic support in the decision-making process  
(ESTG Management course prospectus, 2005)

At the end of the text presented in the prospectus the following statement is made:

In any of the cases, the graduate will feel prepared to start his/ her own entrepreneurial activity

However, data from the self-assessment report contradicts the “promises” made in this statement, because the report shows that recent graduates say that they do not feel prepared to start their own professional activities. The very small numbers of graduates involved in such activities, on a countrywide basis, agree with this feeling of “lacking preparation to start their own business”.

If we analyse the restructuring of the course, it is possible to see that the technical and interpersonal aspects of the first six semesters (corresponding to the BCs programme) did not undergo significant changes and that the final four semesters (those which comprise the “upgrade” to an Honours Degree) show an increase, whilst slight, in the

strategic training element<sup>102</sup>. Furthermore, this confirms the large number of quantitative subjects, or the “mathematised curriculum” mentioned previously, that are quite common in management courses in Portugal. Close observation of the curriculum reveals the French and German influences already referred to, and this can lead to the assumption that there is a link in teaching methods to the stricter regime of those schools.

Some of the characteristics of each of the courses (degree and honours degree) were noted when the functional and career-oriented aspect of the course was referred to but the full description of the course profiles, as set down in the prospectus, shows the distinguishing features between the two courses (BSc and BSc Hons):

A BSc graduate is expected to perform the duties of an assistant manager in a large company where he/she is expected to apply specific management strategies as well as lead work teams; a research analyst capable of backing up decision-making, preparing and processing data; a director in a small or medium-sized company, responsible for managing different departments, leading technical work teams and giving support to executive decisions; and positions of a Senior Accounts Officer.

The BSc (Hons) graduate is qualified to be: a director in a large company, with the authority to implement structuring intervention and make decisions; a highly-skilled research analyst, able to give strategic support in the decision-making process and to bring an added value; as well as an Official Auditor (after successful examination); a secondary or higher education teacher.

In any of the cases, the graduate will feel prepared to start his/ her own entrepreneurial activity.

Bearing in mind the differences between the two management degree courses that are pointed out in the prospectus, here is the relationship between those differences and the actual curriculum, with particular emphasis on what varies between the degree course and the honours course. If we consider the skills presented in the profiles above that describe the corresponding graduates, to the study programme that they have to

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<sup>102</sup> See p. 195, fig. 5.1

complete, we see that the “upgrade” year of the honours degree course (in terms of the subjects added) does not seem to guarantee the development of the skills that are supposed to differentiate graduates of this course from those of the three-year basic degree course.

Fig. 5.1. Course Contents

<b>Degree Course – 1<sup>st</sup> year</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>T/P</b>	<b>P</b>
Introduction to Management	s1	-	4	-
Financial Calculus	s1	2	-	2
Linear Algebra	s1	2	-	2
Information Technology	s1	2	-	2
Fundamental Notions of Law	s1	3	-	-
Behavioural Skills	s1	-	4	-
Microeconomics	s2	2	-	4
English I	s2	-	4	-
Statistics	s2	2	-	2
Infinitesimal Calculus	s2	2	-	2
Financial Accountancy I	s2	2	-	4

<b>Degree Course – 2<sup>nd</sup> year</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>T/P</b>	<b>P</b>
Macroeconomics	s1	2	-	4
Organisational Psychosociology	s1	-	4	-
Financial Accountancy II	s1	2	-	4
Corporate Tax Law I	s1	-	3	-
English II	s1	-	4	-
Corporate Law	s2	4	-	-
Health and Safety in the Workplace	s2	-	2	-
Statistical Inference & Operational Research	s2	2	-	4
Management Accountancy I	s2	2	-	4
Operational Management	s2	-	4	-

<b>Degree Course – 3<sup>rd</sup> year</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>T/P</b>	<b>P</b>
Corporate Tax Law II	s1	-	3	-
Accountancy of society	s1	2	-	3
Human Resource Management	s1	-	4	-
Industrial and Corporate Economics	s1	-	4	-
Corporate Strategy	s1	-	4	-
Management Accountancy II	s1	2	-	2
Operational Management	s2	-	4	-
Financial Analysis	s2	2	-	4
Budgeting	s2	2	-	2
Marketing	s2	-	4	-
Small and Medium Business Management	s2	-	6	-

<b>Honours Course – 1<sup>st</sup> year</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>T/P</b>	<b>P</b>
Financial Management	s1	2	-	4
Analysis and Assessment of Investment Projects	s1	-	4	-
Management Planning and Control	s1	-	4	-
Public Accountancy	s1	2	-	2
Marketing Accountancy	s2	-	4	-
Economic Politics	s2	-	4	-
Information Systems Management	s2	-	4	-
Auditing	s2	-	4	-
Business Project / Work Placement	s2	-	4	-
			12	-

The table above shows that the additional subjects are: Financial Management, Analysis and Assessment of Investment Projects, Management Planning and Control, Public Accountancy, Marketing Accountancy, Economic Politics, Information Systems Management, Auditing, and Business Project/ Work Placement. If we analyse the curricular contents of the two courses, we can see that there is, in fact, more investment in terms of Accountancy, which can qualify graduates to exercise as accountants. However, when it comes to differences of a strategic nature, such as being trained for middle-management and technical support at the decision-making level to being trained for top management intervening in structural decisions, it is difficult to see how the extra year of study will make a difference in terms of skills development.

If we add to this what was learned through the classroom observations carried out, it is clear that there is an interest in developing students' accounting, commercial and financial tools and skills further, in order to fulfil the demands of an immediate labour market. Nevertheless, in the classes observed, there was no evidence of concern with developing strategic thought to include more critical and reflexive thinking.

Class observation also revealed that individual written work on exercises was alternated with the teacher's oral explanations or solutions of them, this being a similar situation in the subjects whose classes I observed (Accountancy, Auditing, and Financial Management). I saw no instances where the teaching strategies gave opportunities for discussion or critical reflection, or even for the development of forms of dialogue other than the clearing up of doubts (these consisted of students' questions and teachers' answers on the exercises that were being working on, or the teacher checking whether there were doubts, such as "Do you understand?" and "Does anyone have any doubts?", to which the students answered affirmatively or not accordingly). Here I am referring to

fifth-year subjects, where it would be more understandable for there to be more place for reflection and critical thinking, where different and/or alternative forms of thinking could be understood and developed, thus contributing to more critical teaching. It would be virtually impossible to create such moments in the first year of the course, due to the lack of preparation that students would have had in their previous schooling. However, the absence of these teaching strategies is the confirmation of a whole educational route taken through a management course where there has been no investment or preparation in critical teaching processes that are alternatives to the managerial and rational way of doing things.

In sum, the analysis of the ESTG's management course pedagogical model, based on the above-mentioned documents, in light of Holman's (2000) ME models points to a orientation that lies somewhere between 'academic liberalism' and 'experiential vocationalism' because, in its aims and objectives, the course states the need to practice 'academic freedom' and 'scientific knowledge and skills development', and also because the methodologies and procedures observed in the classroom confirm that. The course seeks to:

Provide it students with knowledge of an objective, scientific, true and permanent nature (...) it aims to promote learning through the active acquisition of formal theoretical knowledge, and of skills that allow critical thinking with regard to that knowledge; and for that knowledge to be integrated through experience. We hope that, in the future, the students will act on that knowledge; (in introduction to course prospectus).

Returning now to the curriculum to look at the contemporary management myths that basically underlie such a structure and curricular orientation, following Bowles' (1997) approach, it can be seen that the orientation and contents are based on the myth of technical rationality; the structure and programme of the course aims for the acquisition of technical and scientific knowledge which give the students the control which is necessary in the world of management. This 'rationality' comes combined with the 'myth of competition', this myth being underlined through the course aims when, for example, it guarantees competitive training, or the 'provision of skills' in order to face 'all types of problems in management situations' at the beginning of the introductory text in the course prospectus. These aims, like the changes previously envisioned for the

institution and its courses, allow us a glimpse of a pedagogical inclination towards ‘experiential vocationalism’. Together with this curricular structure, predominantly rationalist in its pedagogic orientation and rooted in academic liberalism, are methodologies that consist mainly of lectures, case studies, and seminars that reflect academic liberalism.

We can, through this information, identify the institution’s academic and cultural role, given that the course aims to offer students accurate knowledge of the subjects in question and thorough understanding of what Management is, in terms of the processes and activities related to its practice in today’s professional world. The introduction to the prospectus says that the courses aim to:

Provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to maintain a competitive economy (...) to combine the interests of ESTG with those of businesses/organisations or professional groups (...)

The course’s pedagogical orientation, underpinned by models that are more in line with a mixture of academic liberalism and experiential vocationalism, is also confirmed by the information given by the teachers on the course who I was able to interview<sup>103</sup>:

I want students to know that management is a technique that moves in tune with an analysis of reality, a social analysis specifically studied by the social sciences. A technique in which decision is crucial and, because the economy is a social science that studies humans as decision-makers choosing among scarce resources to satisfy their needs, we find the production of wealth, and the choice of other alternatives to those scarce resources. So the aim is to frame management within social analysis; from a point of view of economics, of decision, and of the way in which human beings manage this lack of resources to fulfil their needs (...) T2

We can identify, both in the words of the course programme and of the lecturers themselves, that those responsible for the course attribute it with a direct vocational role, so that students develop skills that respond directly to the needs of

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<sup>103</sup> Teachers are labeled T1, T2, T3 and T4

companies/organizations and also to the needs of society in general. As well, strategic decisions taken by ESTG are more and more directly related to market competition and economic reasoning. Decision of letting down the training period, for instance, was made so as not to lose any advantage to other schools, since many had already made that change. Although many teachers on the course did not agree with this change for pedagogical reasons, the fact is that ‘having customers’ is an increasingly important reason why such decisions have to be made. The reality in Portugal is that many higher education institutions have ‘lost’ customers in recent years, with the exception of those that already have a good reputation through tradition and through their ‘teaching of excellence’. Therefore, strategic changes must be made in order to respond to, and meet, the needs of businesses and managers, and these needs determine the curricular changes that are made.

The situation is such that the school has to take into account both organisational and social needs and the needs for the institution itself to survive in the educational market that has evolved in the last few years. The outcome is that pedagogical and educational perspectives alone cannot determine the decisions that need to be made. The present relevance given to Accounting, both in the new curricular structure and statements made by the students, which I have transcribed, has to do with several issues. For the institution, it is a response to the interests of the potential job market and also a way of attracting students to the course as part of a regional drive, since this subject area is of interest for employers in the north of the country.

Furthermore, investing in Accounting points to another way of looking at management and managers, in line with the pedagogical models of a rational and economist nature referred to previously. One of the teachers had this to say about the relative importance of each of the course subjects:

Financial management is definitely much more important because businesses do not live on their own capital (...) that of others does not come cheaply so it is essential that students have an idea of how to obtain other financial backing, where this can be found, how much it costs and what the impact of these costs is going to be in terms of the company’s own financial viability (...) knowing that in order to invest, they are going to have use capital that is not theirs. and they

will have to establish a relationship between the viability of that investment and the financial cost of the investment (T2)

Management accountancy is fundamental, it is beginning to gain the importance it should have always had, and the proof is that here in the school we have cost studies and that shows its importance; costs are evaluated in companies too but it is at a little higher level (...) they want to plan; it is essential to have an idea of how to project cost because it is an increasingly variable market and businesses have to consider whether selling at a certain price will allow them to produce at a cost that puts them at an advantage in that market and gives them scope for growth (T1)

(...) they (the students) have to make a plan, see what fixed costs they will have, that these can be predicted in terms of amount and time, and then they have to see how much they will have to sell to justify this. They can only make this calculation if they can grasp the basic concepts of what fixed costs are and how they reflect on the market (...) some call (this subject) strategic accountancy. Going from a strategic cost, to a projection, to the definition of scenarios, and this is really a new vision, and that is why they call it strategic accountancy (...) The first thing that you have to know are the actual scenarios in terms of costs and the market impact to be able to choose later (T1).

Through analysing the documents that were included in this study, it can be seen that this management course considers Management to be a process that allows managers to guarantee the aims of an organisation through the effective use of administrative, human and productive resources, along with interpersonal, conceptual, moral and technical resources. The teachers' words corroborate the introduction to the curriculum:

A manager is someone who, in the presence of a set of resources that are necessarily scarce, (...) who is capable of bringing these resources together, and I mean human and non-human resources, in fact human resources are more and more important now in a business, so a manager has to be able to select people and, with all these resources, decide, assume responsibilities and take forward the institution, the organisation, its work, what it is developing (T1)

A manager is a technician, someone who must have the necessary and sufficient tools to solve the problems involved in pursuing aims, so a manager has to have the tools that allow him/her to do this with the resources they have, and they have to be able to solve the company's problems like any other agent who uses the scarce resources at their disposal to fulfil its many needs (T2)

Without recurring to the classic definitions found in the literature, a manager should be someone who knows how to achieve a balance between the different factors that come into play in the product of a particular organisation, whether it is for profit or not, who can attend to all those factors so as to be effective, without wasting too many resources or time, but making all these factors work in benefit of the organisation that manager represents (T4)

Consequently, and using the words and work of Holman (2000), in the Management course of ESTG, both by the curriculum and teachers, a manager is represented with an image that is a combination of ‘management scientist’ and ‘competent manager’, the ‘ideal managers’ of academic liberalism and experiential vocationalism, respectively. The main obstacles to this way of managing, which according to Holman (2000), are the “lack of scientific knowledge” and “lack of competence”, correspond to the main problems that the course aims to overcome in terms of the training its students receive. However, throughout the descriptions given of the various curricular contents, different phrases appear that repeatedly focus on aspects related to the development of creativity and the critical spirit of the students, as well as the need to motivate learning through experience. Here are some of them (S refers to Subject taught; 1, 2, 3..., are the identifying numbers attributed to each one):

The students should be able to find creative solutions to the problems that arise  
(...) S3

It is hoped that, with learning environments in which opportunities for debate and real problem solving are provided, where students can apply more clearly the knowledge acquired in this subject to problems that have been faced by those students who already have experience in the workplace (...) S1

The intention is to promote critical discussion (...) S5

Statements made by the teachers themselves, during the interviews, about “actual teaching practices versus ideal practices”, are along the same lines: they defend critical teaching supported by action, aiming for action learning and/or critical thinking

(...) It is good that they (students) have a minimum of knowledge of the social and economic environment in which they will be working and putting the skills they acquire to use (...) it is important so that they understand the state as another economic agent; that people, when they are in business, and are also economic agents, can be on an equal footing, legally, as states (...) T3

The aim is that they develop critical awareness, a certain level of analytical ability, giving them a certain level of theoretical knowledge, so that they can then make the choices necessary and have a certain perspective of what management and administration of a very important area is, what HR is, and what the relationships between the different people in an organisation are; all of this makes them more critical (...) T4

Nevertheless, both the course contents analysed and the methodologies adopted by the teachers in their daily practice, as described in their interviews, do not facilitate the achievement of critical thinking moments, nor the development of creative ideas and attitudes: when looking at the methodologies mentioned in the syllabuses that make up the course's curricular structure, we had already referred to the fact that there were excessively theoretical study programmes, much descriptive methods or study cases, with many examination situations of “single solution” (there are even administrative demands for the existence of grids for exam correction). In addition, the teachers described the methods that are most used in their classroom:

My approach is exclusively theoretical when I first introduce the subject; I use overhead transparencies to talk about the different trends and authors etc. Then, over the semester, I try to link real situations to the initial theoretical approach, bringing in day-to-day work situations and calling their attention at the same time to the subject being taught (...) T3

There are colleagues who bring me concrete cases of real companies; for the moment, that is what we use, but the idea is to use software more (it saves time) as a support when analysing real business situations. In Management Accounting, what I have done is, to give them cases they have to know the production processes, they have to know, so although I describe the case, the situations, the processes are real and are in clearly identified markets, and the company exists; they try and identify the environment it is in; what we do not have is the whole reality, it is not possible to study that. I have recurred to other cases that have been dealt with and identified in certain markets and that people use for this, that are simulations but very close to being real situations. That is what we have at the moment (...) T1

(...) group work, specific studies of businesses or sectors, in which they apply what they have learnt, or an exercise given to students can be for them to read some articles from magazines for them to study, or summarise, or for them to answer some questions on those articles; this is something done in both the subjects I am responsible for (...) T2

Thus, these statements confirm that there is a set of generally traditional methodologies used in liaison with the most orthodox models.

The interactions between students and teachers that were observed also confirm what I have just described with regard to the preferred pedagogical model; they occur in a pedagogical model that does not always offer the opportunity for dialogue, which in turn can impede the emergence of hostile behaviours by either teachers or students. This, however, may not have been the only reason why there were no conflictive situations; if we consider the following statements, taken from the informal conversations I had with students after the observations, about those classes<sup>104</sup>:

There are classes I do not even go to (...) some are so boring, but there are others that, if we miss, we are marked absent, and that is not good ... (...) some teachers, even when the classes are not compulsory, appreciate the fact that we attend when they assess us (...) but I also go to some classes because I really

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<sup>104</sup> Students are identified by the number 1 or 5, which indicating the academic year to which the student belongs, and a letter, which indicates his/her position as investigated subject \_ A, B, C, D...so on.

like them, the subject is interesting, other have teachers who motivate you, it depends a lot on how they give the class, some subjects are useful, look at accounting for example, that can be hard work but it is very useful ... (5.E)

I do not normally miss, but then I live locally, there are students who miss who live far away but it is usually classes that they do not have to attend later in the week (Thursday/Friday) I do not miss either because I can apply the subject in class when we do exercises and the teacher can help me when I need it, at home there is no one who can explain things to me if I cannot do an exercise or a practical case, so it is worth going to class for that (...) (5.K)

(The classes) are not very dynamic, they could be more, but in some cases I do feel that I am more prepared for the profession, Project for example, and Accounting too ..., we are almost finishing, aren't we?, and then we have to start work, if it is in this area, ... I have to feel more confident ... (5B)

We see that the students express some positive opinions about the classes, describing them as "interesting" or "worthwhile". However, the value of taking part in a class is seen in light of how it will reflect on their assessment, and not in terms of their development in that subject, or in the course as a whole:

There are teachers who do not treat those who go to class differently to those who do not, but others...! (1.F)

Going to class helps me a lot (...) to be up-to-date, for when we have exams (...) (1.J)

It is easier to study and be prepared for exams if I go to classes (...) (5E)

Not all of them take this perspective of classes being only, or mainly, a direct line to positive assessment. Two of the fifth-year students had this to say about the Project classes:

(...) they have been very important for my preparation (...) 5P

(...) they are classes that have changed my understanding of management situations, because I can see how they will work (5B)

It will help us to understand interactions with people, how organizations sort of grow and develop, what can influence this; how cultures become embedded in organizations and how you can become involved with them (5N)

One of the teachers corroborates these comments:

(...) maybe teachers could motivate students with certain classroom strategies, but creativity and problem-solving is more complicated, we cannot do this fully in the 5th year in the Project class, or in the 3rd year with SME management, where we do a little bit of that, where students also have a project, there are various teachers that students can go to and the students find this out; but that is limited, I think our system is still far off being a promoter of free action (T2)

These aspects are related to the question raised by the teachers regarding the fact that, throughout the educational process in which they are involved in ESTG, they are controlled by the assessment process; this conditions to a large extent the course dynamics and structure:

(...) perhaps I am spending more time assessing them, which means correcting their work, than actually working directly with them. It should be the opposite; assessment should be a natural progression from the work done (T1)

(...) If I had the time (...) I would prefer (...) to assess them through work that would be a true idea of what they know, whether they had acquired this knowledge or not, but that is completely impossible because we have classes with sixty students, and I would have to assess each one individually for each topic sector of the subject, and there are ten or twelve of those; with the number of teaching hours I have that would be impossible (T3)

(...) I would have a more defined idea of each student, because most of them prepare themselves exclusively for exams and then, if we go back to those questions later, they do not remember anything. In the subject I give in management there is not so much danger of that happening, because it is a subject that has to be repeated, and so they are always being reminded of it, It would be more useful for me to see if the students are really learning and making

an effort to study in a more continuous way, over the semester and not just when they have exams. But with the number of students we have in classes at the moment, it is not possible (T4)

(...) with smaller classes, I would do text analysis and simple tests. with questions to analyse in detail, every fortnight, I think I would do that; what happens is that not many students attend classes, but if they knew that they would be assessed more frequently, they would, and then you couldn't do that type of assessment in those conditions; so I think this is the most balanced system now (T2)

(...) The Portuguese are used to being controlled, policed, and students are motivated by control, not freedom, in work; they come here and, if you gave them a certificate without having to do anything for it, they would accept that, so they don't have a philosophy of being here to learn, if we let them loose –and I think that would be an interesting experiment – perhaps the first ones would surprise us with buying jobs, administrative paths, or they would try to get through without doing anything – that is also because of other reasons: when employers take someone on, they look more at the degree than at skills; if they started to look at skills more, that would make schools do more in terms of getting students to actually learn something and not just use their influences.

In spite of these arguments, teachers end up going along with a curriculum that offers general, scientific knowledge to their students, in line with the principles of academic liberalism, with the intention of creating a “management scientist” capable of managing any situation, with the required scientific knowledge and competence. The specific competencies could be acquired through the practice of management:

The course curriculum should be generalist; specific strategies and techniques should be acquired somewhere else, on specialised courses or even in the organisational field (T2)

Nevertheless, this leaning towards contents and methods such as I have described, is justified on the basis that it is, in practice, not possible to teach in any other way at

ESTG, even though the theory identifies more with other models; at certain moments in their interviews, the teachers show that they are aware of the difficulties in conciliating the demands of economics and educational survival with the pedagogical interests and ethics of staff and institution:

If there was versatility, they themselves (students) would get used to adapting and knowing that every case is different, that the environment, the scenario , is different, the variables of a case today could have appeared in previous cases (...) The school we have is nothing like that (...) it is more the teacher who dictates, who says, who projects, writes on the board, uses transparencies, powerpoint presentations, and continues to give those famous theoretical lessons that students usually refer to as “a real bore” (...) because even the simulations are very limited (...) T1

We don't really have the conditions for students to go after information, the number of classes they have is perhaps stopping them from doing field work, or necessary research (...) students are not used to researching, they are not prepared for it, for working outside class time (...) teachers are like that too T4

I have some students who I know will be excellent professionals and they are not the best students, they are not those who have the best marks, but it is true that they cannot get away from marks, because they go out into the labour market and very often what counts is the curriculum, the mark, the course average, and we do not have the conditions to assess students differently, there is now chance of changing things now (...) T3

The solution would be to have tutorials, smaller classes (...) even if the resources were not the best (...)

The number of candidates is decreasing and, if that does not reflect severely on the school's finances, then it will make it easier to accompany the students' progress on a more individual scale. Also, if the staff at ESTG were more stable, because in management it has been a constant to-and-fro with systematic changes, it might be possible to do that (...) T2

With fewer students and a more stable teaching staff, that get to know each other, we could improve a little, but we are so far from that (...) T1

The analysis of data underlines further the contradictions that exist between teachers' daily practice and what they would want to do, what would be the "ideal" for them to achieve their aims, rather than emphasising differences between the teachers studied in terms of the teaching practices defended and/or employed. In theory, the teachers defend the daily implementation and use of pedagogical and methodological strategies that form part of models such as experiential liberalism and/or critical studies.

Creative techniques, developing critical thought, freedom in the organisation and management of classes and in the strategies used for the acquisition of knowledge, management laboratories where students could learn about, and with, real situations – all these would be crucial factors in teaching, but they're very difficult to attain (...) (T3)

However, the daily practice that these teachers develop contradicts the pedagogy referred to as desired, or even "ideal". According to them, the practice of desired strategies is not possible:

Extending the curriculum, the excessive number of students in classes, the heavy workload of teachers, the lack of a culture of motivation for learning, and the prevailing concern with marks, are all problems that hinder the development of the teaching strategies necessary for a desirable learning context, not to say ideal (T2).

Examining this information in a way that will go a little further than just considering teaching practices, reveals that there is still a clear concern with harmonising the objectives of the school, and the course, with the objectives and needs of potential employers, leading the staff and the school to be faced with the impossibility of completely conciliating the interests of both groups. The teachers' perspectives in this regard are supported by contemporary myths of management similar to those of the curriculum; these match those that support the teachers' representations of management

and manager. Both point to the dominance of competition, of the manager-hero, and technical rationality.

The statements of teachers that were transcribed here further underline the belief in competition and in the economic primacy of markets and profits, in the way that they define management, although with some variations. Words or expressions such as “preferential target markets”, “maximising the use of scarce resources”, “living on others’ capital finances”, “balance between factors that contribute to organisational production” characterise this practice. What also underlies the phrases teachers use to describe the activity of manager is the notion of the ethics of competition, characterised by the power principle that, in a simplistic way (Bowles, 1997), signifies imposing one’s will on others. This competitive ethic is present in teachers’ references to ‘exaggerated ambition’, or to ‘lobbies/pressure groups’ as being common problems in management practice; these references characterise the worlds of management and business, where competitive logic dominates and imposes its rhythm.

What the teachers had to say about the activity of a manager show images of a manager-hero who is ‘defending the position of superiority of their organisation’, ‘in a climate of competitive relationships between organisations’, gathering resources’ and ‘developing strategic management’. This manager-hero is also someone who ‘decides’, ‘is responsible for’, ‘develops the organisation with his/her work’, ‘makes predictions’, ‘has strategic skills’, ‘develops strategic plans’, ‘is competent’, ‘gathers resources’, ‘selects and manages scarce resources’.

The myth of technical rationality supports the management/manager representations of the teachers, as it does those of the curriculum, although not in such a clear way as the myth of competition and of manager-hero. The phrases describe competencies and activities of a manager as ‘the development of strategic planning’, analytical processes where decision is fundamental’, ‘necessary tools for problem-solving’, ‘well-defined organisational aims to reach’.

The good management practices described by the teachers focus again and again, as we have seen in the excerpts, on strategic dimensions, planning and prevision, analytical skills and scientific knowledge, in order to be able to solve all kinds of management

problems, that is what technical rationality demands. Besides technical rationality, principles of Social Darwinism<sup>105</sup> stand out. The uncommon contradictions between the myths of the teachers and the types of manager they conceive are, as I have already said, given by the ‘human’ character of the managers represented by the teachers, which could eventually be in opposition to rational control on one hand, and the power principle on the other. Nevertheless, we cannot forget that these types appear within a context of management of economics and of principles based on the markets, which can make ‘human’ manager profiles merely instrumental.

We can, therefore, say that, to the clear concern of these teachers with bringing the aims of the school and the course in line with the aims and needs of potential employers, and the impossibility of completely conciliating the interests of both groups, is further added the internal pressure exercised by a set of management myths which shape and transform these same interests and aims..

This requires, on the part of the teaching staff, an accumulated effort, in the management of their own role, a management of contradictions that the role of teacher implies, in a context where institutional and personal interests have to be conciliated with broader economic and social interests, and where principles and the educational mission have to be brought in line with the educational aims that result from them. This all forms part of the game of survival at an emotional and economic level.

With regard to constraints to ‘ideal’ teaching practice, or what they teachers would want it to be, the classroom observation sessions confirm some of the arguments that the teachers had presented in their interviews<sup>106</sup>: in the classes which I observed, the number of students was not usually below thirty or forty, with the norm being between

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<sup>105</sup> Considering that their pedagogical orientation is mainly guided by the models of academic liberalism and experiential vocationalism, with their images of a ‘management scientist’ and a ‘competent manager’.

<sup>106</sup> Facts and impressions from these observations regarding the dynamics of each class, were recorded on the basis of a set of information categories which I established previously, from what authors on this matter see to be pertinent to observe in a classroom; namely based on the questions set down by Reynolds (2001) when trying to find out whether an educational environment is critical or traditionalist: these indicators informed me about the type of pedagogical process taking place - class format (lecture, seminar, case study discussion); information presented about manager or management practice in classes; methods used and self-awareness of methods and techniques used; the class structure/design (teamwork, individual work, strategies for developing confidence, critical moments of conversation); opportunities for questioning information provided and for influencing class design.

thirty and sixty. The class dynamics were conditioned, in part, by these constraints of a logistical order so that classes were more ‘chalk and talk’, controlled in terms of communication channels by the teacher and passivity/lack of participation on the part of the students if not directly asked for. Even in classes where more practical work was developed, as was the case of Accounting or Project, the teacher always exercised a significant amount of control over space/time/topics/channels of communication.

The interactions observed between teachers and students, although apparently harmonious, take place within a strong power differential, which was observed through the logo of interventions among them in each session, with marked dominance on the part of the teachers and habitual passivity on the part of the students.

Fig. 5.2. Table of interventions in the classroom

Sessions	Number and type of interventions	
	STUDENTS	TEACHERS
1st (C1) <sup>107</sup>	18 minutes: 12' of questions and/or requests for clarification and 5' of statements	102': 70' theme presentations and explanations, 20' of answers to questions and 12' of answers
2nd (C2)	13 minutes: 11' of questions and/or requests for clarification and 2' of statements	107 total: 69' theme presentations and explanations, 23' of answers to questions and 15' of answers
3rd (C3)	30 minutes: 12' of questions and/or requests for clarification and 17' of statements	90 total: 65 theme presentations and explanations, 13' of answers to questions and 12' of answers
4th (C4)	6 minutes of questions and/or requests for clarification	114 total: 80' theme presentations and explanations, 21' of answers to questions and 13' of answers
5th (C1)	21 minutes: 15' of questions and/or requests for clarification and 6' of statements	99 total: 75' theme presentations and explanations, 18' of answers to questions and 12' of answers
6th (C3)	11 minutes: 7' of questions and/or requests for clarification and 4' of statements of ideas	109 total 71' theme presentations and explanations, 20' of answers to questions and 18' of answers
7th (C2)	27 minutes: 12' of questions and/or requests for clarification and 2' of statements and 15' of work presentation	93 total: 66 theme presentations and explanations, 14' of answers to questions and 13' of answers
8th (C4)	16 minutes: 6' of questions and/or requests for clarification and 10' of statements	104 total: 78' theme presentations and explanations, 15' of answers to questions and 11' of answers

If we look at the times regarding the occupation of channels of communication, the teachers’ interventions occupied, on average, 85% of the total time of each class compared to 15% of the students’ interventions, which means that the latter had a constant attitude of passive acceptance of the ideas put forward by the teachers. It was

<sup>107</sup> C means classroom observation and the number indicates the number of the session, 1st, 2<sup>nd</sup>...

also observed that, every time a teacher created an opportunity for dialogue, it was rarely taken advantage of by the students.

In the rare situations when this happened, the same students always intervened, which seems to indicate that participation in these dialogues depends less on the teachers' strategies or teaching than on the students' normal character/attitude – true moments of dialogue require assured/confident students. The students needed to feel safe about the consequences their interventions might have on the class dynamics but mainly in terms of not prejudicing them with that teacher at a future moment of assessment (this was mentioned by the students in the informal conversations when I asked them why they intervened so infrequently).

What we can see through this information from the class observations is that there are some aspects of dynamics that are processed in a way that constitutes a constraint for a more critical pedagogical model (such as the almost total occupation of the communication space, by the teacher, or the absence of reflexive and critical moments during the classes, as well as of work that develops aspects of solidarity and smoothes over difference, even though it is recognised). Nevertheless, the question I raise is this: If these are just aspects of dynamics that follow a plan and a strategy that leads to certain educational results in a class or school, and if these aspects depend more on the intention and motivation of those responsible for the educational process for putting them into practice than on the actual physical and logistical conditions, could such strategies not develop in a different way, if teachers really wanted them to? Are we not being presented with 'false constraints' to a more reflexive and critical practice, when we consider those that are signalled by the teachers, because the real reasons have more to do with teacher's internal insecurities, their lack of preparation or ability to practice self-reflection and reflexive processes with their students, or even fears regarding more wide-ranging institutional pressures?

All this means that, besides confirming the absence of a climate that is conducive to the practice of critical pedagogy, we can suppose that what is also missing is real motivation to implement it; if we look further, we find ourselves faced with a context where, apart from spaces and moments of critical reflection and work on difference, what is missing is an atmosphere of cooperation that Reynolds (2003) claims is necessary to do critical pedagogical work in a classroom without going down the route

of exaltation or exploitation of difference, ‘tout court’, and the preparation and/or motivation of those responsible for managing the respective process to implement some alternatives that will probably be viable, under the same justifications that, in fact, make so many other unviable.

Although differences have been recorded in the way that each teacher led the teaching process in their classes, these are neither significant nor sufficient enough to differentiate the pedagogical approach of one or the other, in terms of their nature or orientation or dominant pedagogical method. All the teachers whose classes were observed were ‘theoretically’ critical but, in practice, very orthodox or traditionalist. According to what I observed, the teachers established a lesson plan that they usually follow; the incidents that occur in the class – which could eventually be used to change the route or rhythm of the class- are ignored or treated like a constraint to the planned course of the lesson, to be overlooked and not utilised. In the session observed, there were no episodes in which changes to the planned course of a class were dealt with as a variable that could be taken advantage of.

I did not record, in any of the sessions, the negotiation of contents, although comments had been made, on the part of the students, about the topic of the class being ‘so boring’ or ‘heavy-going’. With regard to methods, I recorded changes in the techniques planned for the class in two different sessions: on both occasions, the teacher responsible for the educational process changed the pre-planned strategy (an analysis of a case study in one, and an individual reading followed by a written summary in the other), as a consequence of listening to the students’ suggestions on the matter (in the first case - C3, 6<sup>th</sup> session – the individual work was substituted by group work; in the second case - C4, 8<sup>th</sup> session – the written summary was substituted by a longer verbal discussion). This information shows that there is a margin for freedom of negotiation, albeit very limited, because of a total of eight sessions observed, there were only two moments of negotiation of methods and not one of contents. No verbalisation of the possibility of doing so was recorded in any of the classes, on the part of the teacher or of the students.

Corroborating what has been said, the following episode also took place during observation: at a particular moment in the discussion of a case study (C2, 2nd session), the teacher was answering a question (s)he had already asked, having requested individual written answers to that question; one of the students proposed reading his/her

answer, which was a solution to the problem under discussion, and that was different to the one offered by the teacher. (S)he did not accept this alternative, not even a possibility for discussion nor as an element that would allow approaches to be compared, nor as an element of assistance in understanding what not to do and why, if that is show the student's suggestion was interpreted; it was simply ignored and the advantages of the solution presented by the teacher continued to be offered.

In another session, two students showed their disagreement to an idea put forward by the teacher (C4, 4th session); (s)he had asked the students to keep their comments until later in the class, when there would be an opportunity for dialogue on the topic that was being discussed at that moment; when that chance for dialogue did arise, (the last fifteen minutes of the class), neither of the students took advantage of it to discuss the ideas they had tried to put forward earlier.

Later, in one of the conversations I had with students, I asked the protagonists of this episode about what had happened, specifically about why they did not take part when they were given the chance for dialogue, having previously shown interest in doing so. One of them justified this by simply saying that

(...) it was too long to keep the ideas I wanted to discuss (...) 5.D

On the other hand, the other student explained that the teacher's comment

(...) seemed more like a criticism and so I did not feel I could confront him/her as that was not my intention (...) I thought it best to keep quiet, and not antagonise the teacher (...) I have already failed this subject once (...) 5.F

Both teachers and students comment on the distortion that the assessment process causes throughout their course, especially in terms of what the main aims of the course should be; here is what they had to say about that. According to them, the way in which the course is organised around assessment means that learning and development (of knowledge, skills, tools) are no the most important thing; instead, it is passing exams and getting the highest marks possible. The most common assessment strategies used by the teachers on the ESTG Management course are traditional forms of assessment – tests and exams; such strategies do not promote continuous study and class participation, nor do they motivate students to take part in dialogue where discussion

and disagreement can constitute a risk that students will be perceived as impertinent by the teachers, thus possibly antagonising them.

The attitudes that I have described with regard to the two students who declined to take part in dialogue can corroborate the argument of teachers and students mentioned above about the dangers of assessment dominating the whole teaching learning process, ‘contaminating’ so many of the aims of learning, such as class dynamics. In this specific case, it inhibited true dialogue and critical discussion, on the part of the students.

In fact, in one of the interviews, a teacher commented the following:

Most of the students who come here have an attitude that is not at all critical, not only with regard to the course, or the subjects they are taught, but also to their position as people; for them it is like this and they do not challenge or doubt anything; they accept, they toe the line, they reproduce – that is how things are. I am always trying to get them to challenge and, fortunately, there are always one or two who disagree with what is being said in class, and that leads to some heated discussions, which do bring in the others (T3).

However, in spite of the awareness of this phenomenon on the part of the teachers, and the attempt to goad the students, in the classes that I observed, I did not record any attempt to overcome this passivity or other obstacles to participation, in terms of “more democratic interactions”. It was usual for the teachers to control the channels of communication almost all the time, and to present information or knowledge as being the “only one that counts” or “the truth”; the absence of attempts to “deconstruct” a theory meant that the process was normally along the lines of instrumentality and of the managerial interests involved, these being real constraints to more critical teaching.

The conclusion drawn, therefore, is that the educational context of the Management course at ESTG does not normally allow critic reflection, dialogue or negotiation of class structure; but more importantly, the teachers do not show real awareness of this in their own teaching practice. The information gathered emphasises the fact that the obstacles to an ideal pedagogy pointed out by the teachers themselves – the extensive curriculum, the large umbers of students per class, the lack of a culture of motivation to learn, and the exaggerated dominance of assessment over every aspect, with students’

overriding concern with marks – my all be subconscious ‘excuses’ that shield these teachers from taking necessary action in terms of change. These are excuses because the context and process observed, although it show that there are constraints to a different, more critical, practice also show resources that are not explored and could be used in the development of a more critical process. These are, specifically, the relationships/types of interaction that could be developed, and communication strategies conducive to dialogue (that could take place if teachers let them do so); some group activities could be developed (although in some classes the number of students is high), as well as reflexive and self-reflexive activities, which could be cultivated if teachers were motivated and prepared to do them.

Internal and external pressures, of which teachers are sometimes not fully aware, are often the reason why they avoid doing anything that leads to change, and why they excuse themselves for not taking the lead in terms of more critical strategies or pedagogical changes that introduce more reflexive and participative teaching learning processes.

This way of acting pedagogically, the difficulties of altering practice, or at least of being more flexible, can be justified in part, and underpinned, by a set of representations about knowledge and practice of Management and its most direct interveners – the managers – that these teachers have or construct. Due to the results found, regarding the predominant ME models in ESTG, I had some expectations about the teachers in the sample studies, in terms of the fact that they would have, or at least transmit, representations of manager anchored or linked to those of the ‘ideal managers’ of academic liberalism and experiential vocationalism, which underpin the course pedagogical practice. The data collected in the in-depth interviews provided insight into these representations of management and manager, corroborating or opposing such expectations.

After treatment, the data from the interviews were grouped together in four categories of information: manager’s basic skills, description of manager, preparation for manager, and constraints to management practice.

Fig. 5.3. Contents of teachers’interviews

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Manager's basic skills</b>	<p>Analytical skills  Distinguish between essential and secondary information to work with situations  Identify major influence factors in organisational situations  Creativity, innovation  Honesty, ethics  Trustworthy, good reputation  More up to date motivated and less knowledge  Work availability  Flexible in terms of organisational characteristics and goals (health, industry, education)  Capable of solving any kind of problems and attending to any kind of organisational demands</p>	<p>Human relations skills (fundamental) and communication skills  Technical skills in account and finance, in product markets  Prevision and strategic skills  Decision skills (besides collecting and selecting resources)  Time managing, besides managing all kind of resources  Arguing capacity  Humble  Flexibility  Knowledge of people  Versatility and adaptability to situations  Knowing the techniques  Managing resources  Maximise resources  Being attentive to all factors involved in situation  Giving particular attention to human factor  Critical perspective of things  To decide (between strategies, methods and situations)  For most of them: having academic training in management (some will be successful managers with or without it, but most must have it)</p>	
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Descriptions of manager</b>	<p>Possess necessary instruments to solve problems  Within organisational goals to pursue  A technician for decision  Manage scarce resources  Help organisations living from others' financial capitals  Gather resources, select and manage scarce resources, most important ones being human,  Decides, is responsible for, and develops organisation with their work  Is versatile</p>	<p>To reach efficacy  Work those factors for organisation's benefit  Some features are born with the manager  Consider human factor in first place</p>	
	<b>3</b>		
	<p>A technique in a social analysis process, where decision is fundamental  Markets are preferential target-environments for management practice  Is always changing in demands and required knowledge.  Target-markets are changing all the time for managers; they need to plan (not to live day by day)  Makes the balance between diverse factors contributing to organisational production  Managing organisations, privileging human factor, organisations having profit or non-profit goals</p>		
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Preparation for Managers</b>	<p>Managers' specialised training/preparation must happen outside school environment and timing. School should prepare generically.</p>	<p>Most managers do not have strategic planning developed (do not predict investments consequences in terms of cost analysis)_they need such preparation</p>	<p>Academic training _ most of them  To have management academic training corresponding to job market interests and academic training offers  Exception is for some managers that do not need the training (those succeed in developing their abilities and capacities for management in contexts other than academic one_ might be workplace or other).</p>
<b>Constraints to management practice</b>	<p>Ambition, excessive workload and decrease of qualitative aspects  Corruption by group pressures (internal or organisation's external groups)  Lack of strategic planning skills</p>		

The information for the categories of ‘manager’s basic skills’ and ‘description of manager’,<sup>108</sup> were grouped together in one broader category, that of ‘representations of manager’, with the aim of identifying the representations of manager that are predominant in the sample of teachers, and verifying their parity with the representations expressed through the course curriculum. From the set of categories of information obtained through the verbalized conceptions and descriptions of the teachers interviewed it is possible to underline the representations that can be integrated in the ideal types of manager, such as those presented in the work of Holman (2000). Two main types of manager are represented:

A first type within a more academic liberalist notion of the management scientist:

A manager is capable of solving any kind of problem attending to any kind of organisational demand... Then, there is humility, flexibility, perspicacity and, as a result of this, the ability to assume responsibilities and decision-making tasks, choosing, assuming (...) T1

Communication is essential and from this come the ability to relate to people; it is essential to have some information about the person (...) T3

The second image of the manager generated by teachers is closer to the ‘competent manager’ of experiential vocationalism:

The manager possesses technical skills in accounting and finance (T2), and in product markets (T4), the manager has prevision and strategic skills, and decision skills, knowing the techniques, managing and maximising resources, among other features (T4).

The manager can analyse news, information, and in real situations can separate the important points of what is to be analysed; (s)he is able to focus on what the important factor for the company, or what market, or what market is influential, or what economic policy is influential for the company, or even politics in

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<sup>108</sup> These are categories of constructs derived from interview content analysis.

general, and the social environment that influences the company's performance  
(...) T2

The representations of manager produced by teachers from the sample studied are divided essentially between these two types of manager. Associated to this information is what was observed in the classes, where what could be seen was a generally orthodox, managerialist approach, usually within the logic of managers as being greatly responsible for the success of their organisations, and as being one of the best ways of practicing management.

Constructs produced by teachers as representing constraints for adequate management practice are 'excessive ambition', 'corruption', and 'lack of experience or competence'. These constraints correspond to those which limit the development of a *competent* manager, according to Holman's (2000) logo, conceptually supported by a training model in management of the 'experiential vocationalism' type.

### **Representations of manager and management in the students study sample**

From the analysis of the individual contents of the repertory grids, categories of constructs of management and managers were formed; the meaning of each of these is given by the constructs which the category includes. From all the constructs, three broad categories of constructs stood out, dominating the representations of manager and management of the students, whether in students who are beginning their training in management, or in those who are about to finish that training. The categories are: 'conditions for the practice of management' (in which the category of 'structural organisation' can be emphasised), 'leadership', and 'success'. As these are the most relevant in the two academic years focussed on in this study, a more detailed analysis of them follows. It must be noted that, although these categories of representations are common to first- and fifth-year students, they are constructed in a different way in the two groups of students; that is, the constructs included in each category are not equivalent to each other.

**In the first-year students**, the representations of manager are organised according to ‘organisational context and conditions’, as well as by the respective differentiation between functions and practices; this family of constructs groups together a series of dimensions, from structure, size, type of aims, activities and tasks of a manager (depending on the type of organisation):

(top managers have) important problems to solve - (middle managers) have insignificant/common problems to manage, to deal with (1B)

(there are organizations where) each situation for managers to manage is very similar to previous ones - (while other organizations offer a context where) each situation is a specific case (1F)

(Some managers) manage collective goods - (while other) managers have to manage individual goods (1C)

(there are contexts where there are) specialized human resources - (while, in others) most workers are not specialized ones (1H)

International managers (are of) more value - Portuguese managers (are of) less value (1D)

(Some organizational contexts present) structured and organized activities - (while other develop) unstructured and unorganized activities (1A)

The main goal is profit - the main goal is organizational well being (1B)

There are managers that mostly deal with people - (while others) mostly deal with numbers (1G)

managing human resources--managing non-human resources (1D; 1I)

doing specific tasks/activities which demand specific skills - responsible for general activities as managers, which demand general skills (1E)

management with a local scope of action - global management (1B)

interacting with few people at a time - multiple interactions at one time (1F)

advantageous management situation - non-advantageous management situation (1C)

well-defined goals - unclear goals (1C; 1E)

According to first-year students, the conditions of the context that is managed by a manager represented by these constructs condition the managers’ actions, their practices and even their leadership style. The representations of manager, besides being based on

these constructs, are joined by constructs from another category, that of ‘leadership’, which describes managers in action, where personal characteristics and the activities that a manager performs are brought together:

democratic - authoritarian (1B; 1F)

principal concern is with people - principal concern is with tasks (1C)

concern with people/humanity goals - self-concerned/self-centered management (1B)

man as a machine - man as a human being (1D; 1A)

employee as a piece from a machine - employee as a person (1H; 1J)

attention to task, or production - attention to people (1C; 1F)

mainly interested in production - mainly interested in people (1E)

concern with people - no concern with people (1K)

From these constructs, ‘democratic’ and ‘authoritarian’ styles were constituted, the first one having recourse to ‘human practices of management’ and the second one employing especially ‘egocentric’ management practices. The differences between ‘human’ practices and ‘egocentric’ practices were established by the students from the use of the verbalisations they produced with the grids of contrasting words; such as ‘authoritarian’ vs. ‘democratic’, ‘flexible’ vs. ‘rigid’<sup>109</sup>, hostile (attitude) vs. friendly (attitude), distant in relationships vs. vulnerable and open, individualised work strategies vs. group decisions, individualised decisions vs. strategies of cooperation, centralising vs. team management, centralising vs. delegating, human vs. egocentric, benevolent vs. rigid. These contrasting constructs, referring to egocentric and human practices, and produced by the students, that are used by them to differentiate between these forms of leadership; in some cases, the students established the contrast by using the exact same words that I had chosen to designate the styles/practices (egocentric/human); I had chosen them specifically because they had arisen quite frequently in the constructs of

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<sup>109</sup> Styles are just hinted at in the template analysis and turn into defined leadership styles with repertory grid deep construct analysis

the students (four times, to be precise<sup>110</sup>), characterising managers who are opposed to the style they adopt.

'Success' is a construct that, despite being inherent to many of the students' constructs, does not impose itself, in that it is not strong enough to differentiate between management practices or managers. The construct 'power' is stronger than 'success', given that these students, when they do make some reference to a manager's success, do so through constructs such as 'prestige/fame' or 'power' rather than using the term 'success' (the term only appears verbatim once; and twice as 'successful', in contrast with 'unsuccessful')

restricted power - powerful, with influence/known only in their work region - famous (1B)

small entrepreneurship - a lot of capital to invest, well-known /publicly unknown - with prestige and influence (1C)

management with a local scope of action - global management/Powerful, with influence - not influencing others, less powerful (1A)

Power is related with prestige and fame – some of the students attribute more or less prestige to certain conditions of managed contexts, such as the internationality of managed situations/organizations, or the fact that managers are known in the general public sphere. In that way, the projection of the image of manager is such that it constitutes a basis for prestige and, consequently, power for the manager. Power is also related, in some statements, with the fact that a manager is the owner of an organisation instead of only working for others in that organisation:

Owner - working for others; powerful/less power/restricted power--Powerful, with influence (1G)

We can see, therefore, through the verbalisations listed, that a positive image that is strongly implemented in the publics sphere is much more prestigious and powerful for managers than a weak public image. Although these unknown managers might have great success in terms of action and results, it is not the degree of success obtained by managers or the results they achieve that count, but rather the fact that those results.

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<sup>110</sup> 'Egocentric' emerges four times as directly opposed to 'human' (1G; 1A; 1D; 1K).

that success, might be known by the wider public: the more far-reaching this image is, the more prestige a manager gets.

Success is expressed as a construct mainly dependent on a manager's individual qualities (age, creativity...), and this has already been verified in the written statements of the students, in the case study:

(...) normally, success is positively associated with age progression but it might be possible, exceptionally, for a young manager to obtain success, which allows him or her to progress in career stages (1B)"

(...) Success depends on innovation; if a manager is creative, innovative (s)he will probably reach success easily (1F)

(...) Success is related with dynamism; dynamic managers are more effective, (... 1G)

Now this is confirmed in the repertory grids; although only three students made direct references to the term (one, using the word 'success'; the other two using 'successful' or 'more successful', as opposed to 'unsuccessful'). In this regard, it can be seen that some personal characteristics, such as ambition and creativity, are perceived as fundamental conditions for a manager to develop a practice suited to the needs of an organisation<sup>111</sup>. 'Success' depends, therefore, on a manager's personal characteristics; in the students' word, managers are able to manage in a more or less competent way according to their personal characteristics, such as innovation (1.C, 1.K) or creativity:

less creative and innovative/less successful--innovative and creative/successful (1J)

or age:

older, with a short way to success/younger, with a long way to achieving success  
(1.D)

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<sup>111</sup> Note from analysis: Ambition is an important personal characteristic for managers, varying from low to high, and acting as a development factor or as a constraint; the "constraint" meaning is given by the positive sense of the word "adequate" and the negative sense of the word "exaggerated"-

or career, given that there are verbalisations that indirectly relate age with career, in terms of degree of experience:

older and more experienced/younger and ‘fresh’ in the world of management  
(1.G)

growing, developing management practice strategies vs. is at the top of their career (1.I)<sup>112</sup>

In the case study, already discussed with the students in the first stage of the research, success was also expressed as being the result of creative and innovative management practice, and a consequence of a manager’s ambition:

(managers) need to be creative to solve the problems they are dealing with ...  
(1.F)

Innovative processes that they can use will allow them to manage in the way they intend ... (1.C)

(...) they have to be ambitious to achieve their proposed goals (1.B)

... their ambition is what guides their career and the future of their company  
(1.L)

To sum up, the first-year students describe managers who practice management in different ways, determined by the organisation of which they are a part and whose context conditions their performance, particularly in terms of dimension, hierarchical/structural position, place in national or international markets, and the theoretical/cultural background of the organisation itself. On the other hand, personal characteristics of ambition, creativity and responsibility, together with the choice of more human or more egocentric practices, complete the set of factors that condition the different managers represented.

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<sup>112</sup> Each of these constructs is defined in more detail in appendix 6, ‘repertory grid construct analysis’.

The constructs found in these students corroborate Bilimoria's (1999:464) argument that the students consider the profession of manager as 'hierarchical, individualistic, focuses on the task, and competitive, oriented for the short term, functional'.

important problems to solve - insignificant/common problems to manage, to deal with (1D)

managing speculative and idealistic situations - managing real situations (1C)

every situation to be managed is very similar to previous ones - each situation is a specific case (1K)

structured and organised activities - unstructured and unorganised activities (1A)

dealing with people - dealing with numbers (1G)

all kinds of management activities - mainly control activities (1C)

doing specific tasks/activities which demand specific skills - responsible for general activities as managers, which demand general skills (1D)

following others' previous knowledge and experience in management- trying new ways in management (1E)

flexible task organization - rigid task organization (1F)

less structured work tasks and goals - strongly structured goals and tasks(1H)

managing non-human resources - managing human resources (1I)

let go - it is imperative to satisfy the clients (1J)

planning - executing (1I;1J)

not organised/ not achieving goals - organised/achieving goals (1C)

not achieving predefined goals - achieving predefined goals (1B)

multi-skilled - restricted skills for managing (1E)

strategies adequate to social reality - inadequate strategies (1A)

refrained in decision-making - taking great risks in decision-making (1F)

unknown strategies and goals - known strategies and goals (1K)

safe management - risk management (1L)

The practice of management is seen as a combination of conditions of the context, and leadership qualities and strategies. In this practice, although reference is made to managers who are ‘good’ managers and to others who are ‘bad’ managers, from the students’ data it is not possible to clearly identify which set of factors establishes ‘good’ or ‘bad’ forms of management for them. Nevertheless, through the discussion of the case study we had confirmed the value given to centralisation and control strategies, as both came up in the students’ texts as being essential conditions for adequate management (therefore, can we now affirm that these strategies are an implicit factor for success?):

(...) by centralising decisions and power, he (Harold) guarantees not losing control, otherwise everyone would be in charge ...” (1.H)

(...) for him (Harold) to be successful, he has to make his practice dependent on his ability to organise everything ...” (1.D)

Before being influenced by the management course at ESTG, these students show notions of an organisation that is represented hierarchically, with management practices that value control and rationality, as well as the bipolarisation of leadership style (between ‘human/democratic’ and ‘authoritarian/egocentric').

The representations of manager are those of ‘authoritarian’ and ‘democratic’ managers, more specifically those who adopt ‘egocentric’ or ‘human’ practices, who occupy structural positions in their organisations, being top, or middle, managers<sup>113</sup>. Although the term ‘success’ is only expressed in the grids of three students, there are indirect allusions to forms of success that are associated with a manager’s personal

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<sup>113</sup> With regard to the influence of gender shown in the results analysed: throughout completion of the grids, the students often use “ele” (he) to refer to the actions and attributes of a manager; but this phenomenon is not exclusive of the first year students, being present in both students samples. The issue of gender is visible in the representations produced, always favouring the male. Although this discrimination and its impact on the representations of manager and management was not an issue that was focussed on in this research, that does not mean that the fact that many students refer to managers as male should not be called attention to, since this thesis considers the constructs of representations a process of negotiation governed by relationships of power, with the subsequent intervention of privileges and limitations. In this regard, we should remind ourselves of the arguments of Elsworth (1989) that a classroom is a place where complex interactions of power take place, in which relationships of privilege are formed around gender (besides other aspects).

characteristics, and with power/prestige. In the descriptions of activities and practices, principles of technical rationality and the need for control are disclosed.

**In the fifth-year students**, the same three categories previously underlined in the results of the first-year students underpin the representations of manager and management practice that they hold; in these students it is possible to repeat the categories of ‘conditions for the practice of management’, ‘leadership style’, and ‘success’; added to those, we can consider ‘experience’ as another basis for the construction of representations of manager for the final year students.

In the fifth year, the students also use the hierarchical structure as a basis for differentiating between representations of managers; in this way, the data do not reveal the extent to which the management course could have provided them with sufficient knowledge of other organisational structures for them to have had any impact on the way in which they have constructed their representations of manager<sup>114</sup>. The representations produced are based on the position that the manager occupies in the organisational structure, this always being represented in a hierarchical form. This representation of a manager reflects someone attributed with responsibilities, functions, power, competencies, and career possibilities and prospects, according to the respective hierarchical position, often oscillating between roles of a generalist nature and those of a specialised character; this was already evident in the template analysis of the case study:

(...managers who are in the highest positions...) have a general vision and preparation (5.J)

(They) are ultimately responsible for the organisational processes in a general way (5.E)

(...middle managers ...) have specialised knowledge (5.A)

they (...middle managers ...) collaborate in specific areas of management (5.G)

This is further reinforced by the verbalisations expressed in the grids:

employee/employer (5A, 5G, 5H, 5L)

top manager/middle manager (5B, 5F, 5G, 5K)

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<sup>114</sup> Awareness that we assumed students would already possess, by that point in their academic experience.

To these constructs of ‘top/middle manager’ or of ‘employer/employee’, the constructs that represent the aims, functions, activities, and responsibilities which are attributed to managers are very often associated the following:

Employer, creates own conceptions, theories - employee, develops conceptions from others (5N)

middle manager, more practical - is at the top, more theoretical, and influencing decisions (5B)

middle manager, has limited career - top manager, has important career (5M)

is an employee, the final decisions and strategies depend on others - is the owner, the final decisions and strategies belong to him (5A)

The verbalisations produced by the repertory grids reveal, thus, the extent to which the manager participates in organisational dimensions constructed by the students - ‘formal vs. informal organisational structure’, ‘complex tasks vs. routine tasks’, ‘degree of adversity’, ‘markets characteristics’, ‘strategic skills’, ‘decision strategies’, ‘degree of experience’, ‘innovation’, ‘ambition’, ‘initiative’<sup>115</sup> – based on whether the manager is a middle or a top manager, an employer or an employee in an organisation. The representations found are also more detailed than those of the first-year students, and the role set aside for top managers is defined as being more strategic and of a more general scope, while that of a middle manager is confined to a more specialised exercise of management activity.

The leadership styles that make up the representations of manager for these students reflect the knowledge transmitted through the literature and academic approaches, and resulting from contact with theories and perspectives learned in the course; these styles range, in the words of the students, between a ‘bureaucratic’ or ‘authoritarian’ leadership and a ‘democratic’ one; or between a ‘centralised’ or ‘decentralised’ management. Despite the fact that the style designations differ from those used by the first-year students, the practices that characterise them and differentiate them are similar to those expressed by the other students: practices of an egocentric character vs. human practices.

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<sup>115</sup> Categories defined in individual repertory grids – more detailed information in appendix 6.

In the case study, the students already explained some of the differences that they identified between the possible ways a manager could lead:

Top managers should be ultimately responsible in the organisational processes  
... (5.D)

...it is a centralised style; the last word in all processes belong to them (referring to top managers) (5.I)

(...) delegating requires specialists (5.B)

They need to decentralise; middle managers have to take part in the final decisions (5.L)

(...decentralisation) creates dependency on others; because they cannot decide alone (...) they cannot act as they would like to (5.C)

Delegating makes managers more dependent than the use of centralised strategies (5.G)

The construct of ‘leadership’ now obtained with the repertory grids reveals a set of constructs that were produced and that, in one way or another, translate into the forms in which people can lead in an organisation; these constructs were categorised into two base-styles of leadership: an ‘authoritarian’ or ‘centralised’ style (egocentric in attitudes and practices to which they have recourse) and a ‘democratic’ or ‘decentralised’ style (more ‘human’, in their attitudes and practices).

more authoritarian - less authoritarian (5G)

demanding, severe, strict - permissive (5B)

straight, clear in attitude and communication – do not say what they think, ambiguous (5L)

imposing themselves – do not impose themselves as managers (5B)

Accessible - inaccessible, distant (5D)

Easy talkers, persuaders - too direct in their speech, intimidating people (5C)

Democratic - autocratic (5C)

Open - inflexible (5M)

giving relevance to their organisational human resources - paternalistic (5M)

team management - individual management (5F)

authoritarian relationships with employees - friendly relationships with employees (5A)

distant - open, polite, in the mood for helping, available (5A)

using intermediate communication, action being supported many times by distorted information - listen to others' opinions, flexible (5E)

authoritarian image - open, listening to others (5F)

consensual manager, coherent - closed, inaccessible (5J)

not imposing - inflexible (5K)

rigid orientation - flexible orientation (5P)

machines first, then people - first people, then machines (5Q)

caring for employees, human - authoritarian (5L)

care with information management - careless with information management (5N)

teaching others, being a guide to others - demanding, only asking and not giving anything (5C)

comprehensive - inflexible (5H)

human - cold and distant (5I)

democratic - authoritarian (5I)

controlling too much in order to have everything organised - less controlling (5J)

effectiveness in leadership - leadership strategies are not at all effective (5P)

harmonious performance - more rigid performance, intolerant (5B)

in leadership they know what they want, not manipulated - failing leadership, manipulated (5D)

With regard to what the constructs of the students tell us about the way in which managers exercise their practice in organisations, the notion of 'control' and its respective value had been touched on in the analysis of the grids of the first-year students, where this control arose here and there, in a less obvious, more diluted form.

Now, in the final year students, it emerges in a much clearer form. The differences between top and middle managers, for example, use the construct of ‘control exercised’, in degree/extension, to distinguish between managers, besides other constructs already referred (career, decisions, approaches...).

Notions such as rationalization, the defining of meanings-ends relationships, and the standardisation of systems of control over activities and actors, which characterises contemporary organisational/institutional thinking (Scott and Meyer, 1994), are present in these students’ representations. Whilst this could be already detected in first-year representations, the results of students finalising their academic training show an obvious verbalisation of control strategies and technical rationality principles, compared with first-year students:

control in order to have everything organised - less controlling (5G)

control of all information management - careless with information management (5D)

The fact that constructs related with strategic management and planning strategies are observed underlines, as Mintzberg (1993) argues, the obsession of managers and management with control and uncertainty reduction; these strategies are control refinements for managers’ peace and security; representations found in fifth-year students show this concern with control.

Careful, prudent - taking risks, visionary (5F)

Think immediate - think future (5P)

having difficulties with strategic vision - having strategic vision (5I)

short strategic planning - strategic management (5Q)

established rules and guidelines to follow - blind management, trial and error (5C)

Results emphasize ‘plan’ and ‘prevent’ in students’ reports as tools for control and guarantee of success, in line with current technical rationality approaches to management practice:

adventurer, audacious, too risky - careful, planned and worked decisions (5N)

These results also reveal characteristics that in some way frame the position of Bilimoria (2000) and of Cunliffe (2002) when they argue in favour of the existence of the belief, in ME, that managers can be lords and master of their own careers; that the final responsibility for their destinies in management lies with them; 5.D and 5. E refer (in the case study) to the fact that:

Managers are ultimately responsible for the organizational process (5E)

They are responsible for the degree of success of their organization and the way goals are (not) achieved (5E)

For these students, therefore, control and specialisation constitute constructs whose presence should be guaranteed when it is a matter of being successful in management practice, not only control and other principles of technical rationality such as competition, in fact. Contrary to first-year students, where ‘good’ and ‘bad’ managers, or ‘good’ and ‘bad’ management practices, were notions whose differentiating constructs were not clearly defined, the students from the fifth year of the ESTG management course define these differences very clearly and in terms of the degree of success achieved: a manager or a practice is good or bad, depending on the degree of success of the goals attained, and the resulting competitive edge that the organisation is then given for its survival (the manager and his/her organisation as the fittest). The qualities attributed to managers come up together with their success – this is the case of the constructs of ‘strategic vision’, ‘degree of responsibility’, ‘fame’, ‘ambition’ or ‘experience’. In turn, ‘success’ frequently appears next to more ‘egocentric’ management practices; this is in spite of the fact that the constructs integrated in the construct ‘human’ imply practices that consider people’s welfare, that are more flexible, socially desirable, while ‘egocentric’ implies a certain dehumanisation and rigidity, with a very economicist, competitive character, devaluating the human element in organisations.

Although constructs emerge in the representations obtained with regard to social well-being or in the interest of employees, they are not used by the students to differentiate between managers or practices in terms of ‘good’ or ‘bad’; ‘success’ is, instead, contextualised and determined in economic terms: the reports of several students (5.B, 5.C, 5.L) described effectiveness as ‘the attaining of’ (5.C), or ‘achieving’ (5.L)

organisational results, and is related to success or, indirectly, to control; being successful means ‘foreseeing’ (5.L) or ‘planning’ (5.M). It is related to fame because ‘reaching your goals will bring fame and recognition to a manager ...’ (5.F).

A ‘successful manager’ often means a manager who is ‘powerful’ (5.B), ‘rich’ (5.F) or ‘famous’ (5.M), in the words of the students; the word ‘success’ appears in association with the idea of ‘being known’:

less successful - successful (5D)

limited success - successful (5P)

being professional in attitudes and choices made (related with fame) - being personal in attitudes and goals/successful - less successful (5A)

Success is effectiveness in teamwork and decision: rapid and efficient vs. slower and less efficient (5C)

Is associated with fame: has limited fame, so has limited success - have success, is well-known (5Q)

A memo from the repertory grid analysis said:

Throughout the course, students seem to develop a more complex sense of success, students beginning their training already construct success based only on personal factors and in quantitative terms (greater/more or less success) while the final year students reveal the construct associated to specific organisational situations: having success is also being famous, being well-known; fame, in turn, is related with the public image a manager is able to develop, to build; a manager will be well-known when he/she is successful Success also means professional success, achieving goals, teamwork progress, choosing the right people for the achievement of team goals, success in leadership also.

Have difficulties in building teams with the right people - building successful teams (5H)

rapid and efficient answer to problems - slower answer to market changes and needs dynamic (5I)

efficient, professional - less success, less professional, fixes instead of prevents (5P)

effectiveness in leadership - leadership strategies are not at all effective (5F)

It can be seen by the verbalisations of the grids that the final year students interpret a public image as being one that is solid, as a factor for success. Even if the public image is not a guarantee for quality of management, it is a way of achieving power and fame<sup>116</sup>.

Unknown by the public - famous (5H)

Recognition only in the organisation where they work - public recognition, publicly well-known (5E)

Limited professional success and fame - professional success and well-known (5K)

investing a lot in image - image is not important (5J)

foreigner - national (5D, F, L)

little recognition - highly recognised (5B)

publicly well-known, famous - publicly unknown (5A, C, G)

public image - no public image (5M)

a management model, an example to follow - an example not to be followed (5P)

limited career - important career (5L)

image with little impact - powerful image (5Q)

not famous - famous, well-known (5B, F)

The career of manager appears as an important instrument of social integration, in a world where people value fame more and more, and where 'being famous' means 'having power'. What these students disclose in their results is that what is really significant in a manager's career, more than being successful in their practice or achieving results, is that these results are known to the wider public (the more favourable a public image, the more prestige the manager will have and the further (s)he will go).

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<sup>116</sup> Image projection (regrids/5th year)

Power, in turn, is also related to image, with a positive, solidly established public image being synonymous with power and influence.

power of decision - cannot decide alone (5I)

Less power and influence – influential and intervening (5A)

with little power and influence, and domain of influence - powerful manager (5E)

final decisions and strategies depend on others - final decisions and strategies belong to them (5B)

limited power - maximum negotiation power (5G)

more practical - more theoretical, influencing decisions (5Q)

image with a little impact - powerful image (5C)

little influence on others - great power (5L)

Limited professional success and fame - professional success, and well-known (5J)

From what has been shown so far in the students' representations, their socially constructed nature stands out, which have resulted from a process negotiated with agents of the course and within which knowledge and shared belief systems are constructed (Berger e Luckman, 1966; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Although some differences between the representations of manager produced by the students have been identified at different stages of academic formation in management (initial and final), there were no representations, in either group, that showed real alternatives to those that integrate the more traditional models of ME. This means that it was expected that these representations would be encountered due to the pedagogical model that underpins this course, and the fact that, through this study, I was fully aware of the representations and pedagogical orientation favoured by the teachers in the Management course at ESTG, as well as of the fact that their concerns with the use of control strategies, and the need to dominate the management process in a 'competent' and 'scientific' way are integral to the representations obtained.

In spite of there being representations that are different from those of Holman's models, and in greater number than those that predominate in the course and in the constructs of the teachers, they are representations that continue to form part of the traditional educational scenarios and do not constitute a real alternative. These results remind me of the differences between 'organisers' and 'behaviouralists' (Pugh, 1997), with regard to the development of Organisational Theory, in which the former demanded more and better control, and the latter defend more autonomy and trust for the people that were managed. However, neither of these two approaches offered real alternative strategies to those of control in management. The representations of manager that arose in this research are characterised by the students through practices and strategies, but none of them being real alternatives to the strategies and concerns of control and rationality. Huff's (1980) argument that the rational model simplifies structures, making our world more comprehensible, may explain, in part, why this model is easily accepted by students why they adhere to it.

### Summary

When students begin their Management course at ESTG, they already have representations of manager based on constructs about organisation, management and manager, acquired before they begin the course. The group of students that I studied in these circumstances (first-year students beginning their first semester) took part in the study before they were directly influenced by the course curriculum or by teachers; therefore, the representations obtained with the grids are a result of the perceptions, experiences, and negotiations of meanings they had prior to the impact of the course.

The way in which students with no management training represented the role and functions of a manager were mainly based on a set of previously acquired knowledge on organisational structures and their respective functionality. The role of manager, their functions and responsibilities, are structurally defined and vary according to the degree of dependence on changes in the structure and the position that the manager occupies in this structure. The hierarchical structure of organisations is thus identified as one of the basic constructs used by these students with no academic training in management, in order to differentiate between representations of manager.

One representation of manager that can be considered generalised among these students is that of leader-hero. Therefore, besides having recourse to the structural position that the manager occupies in the organisation, to construct and diversify representations, the students from the first-year reveal a representation of management practice based on the type of leadership that managers adopt in their practice. The story of the ‘heroes of management’, those whose mission it is to lead to the truth, principles and laws of management to represent the rational change in the theorisation of management (Strassmann, 1996), seems to have been ‘told’ to these students before they began their course. Their representations were socially influenced by the theorisation and knowledge of contemporary before, and out of reach of the specific context of ME that is the Management course at ESTG.

The styles of leadership that form part of the representations of manager of the first-year students vary between ‘authoritarian’ and ‘democratic’; the differences between the two have their origin in ‘egocentric’ and ‘human’ practices, respectively, according to the students’ own words; in the differentiation between the two types of practice, emphasis is given to the way in which a manager treats the human elements in an organisation (relationships, decisions...), the tasks/activities and the level of strategic action taken by the manager.

The possibility of comparing these representations with those of students who had passed through a set of influences from academic training in management was fundamental for me. Looking at the results, and recalling the arguments of Prosser and Trigwell (1999), I can state that, before entering the Management course at ESTG, students already bring with them an image of ‘manager-hero’, representations of leader and distinctions between authoritarian and democratic types of leader, through constructs of ‘egocentric’ and ‘human’ practices, and representations of the structure of organisations (hierarchical) which guide the actions of manager-heroes. These representations are probably constructed under the influence of the broader conditions that predominate in the present-day western social context.

Students who are finishing their management course, on the other hand, reveal more complex representations of manager – with more constructs and more detail. There are new nuances in the styles of manager produced. ‘Leadership’ is a family of constructs

that is now combined with constructs from another family, ‘success’; the associated constructs that come up show that ‘manager’ is no longer just a representation of hero/leader who adopts a certain style of thinking and acting to get to the truth of management, but also someone who, as a consequence of their choices, more than of the conditions imposed by the context, can be successful or fail in their mission. Therefore, managers, besides being leaders, are now leaders who are ‘successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’.

The representations of these students continue to be based on some principles of management that are similar to those that dominated the representations of the first-year students: individualism, competitive tendencies and survival of the fittest, which confirms the principles that Bilimoria (2000) or Cunliffe (2002) attribute as still being dominant in the present panorama of ME. This also means that, independently of the influencing role of the course and its agents, in the construction of the students’ representations, there are broader social influences that impose themselves on the management environment, its teachings, and on the construction of dominant representations; or the representations dictated by factors previous to the action of the course continue to prevail in students that have done their academic training; either because the course corroborates them or because, even though the course and its agents provide alternative influences, the societal impact superimposes itself in terms of negotiated representations. And if that is the case, such a conclusion points to a factor of added difficulty for those who, as agents of ME, seek alternatives in this field of education, putting into action pedagogical strategies that they believe will help them achieve such goals when, in truth, the broader social impact will prevail over their own educational actions.

Nevertheless, there are differences that are visibly suggested by the influence of the academic experience: for example, the distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ managers, between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ practices, psychological self-defence mechanisms according to Freedman (2002), become more perceptible in the representations of students who have gone through management training than in those who have not yet been influenced by this. The fifth-year students exhibit representations of leader that distinguish clearly between a ‘good’ manager and a ‘bad’ manager with, on the one hand, more human and more egocentric practices that are associated more with the epithets of ‘good’ or ‘bad’, respectively; but, at the same time, it is the style of leadership adopted by the manager

that dictates the differences in the degree of success obtained, with the same success associated more repeatedly with egocentric practices. To illustrate what I have just said, the verbalisation of student 5 L sums up many of the others presented above:

the fact they are human can be nasty to the decision-making process/they use all kinds of strategies to reach the goals established

Generally speaking, we can consider the image of manager produced by the students in the study sample as being, on the one hand, based on principles of contemporary management, such as technical rationality and control, and this is independent of it being first- or fifth-year students, which underlines the influence of broader social factors in the construction of the representations, prior to the impact of the course itself. This happens even though, over the course, the influence of principles that are inherent to contemporary management practice, perceptible in the course and its teaching staff, ‘refine’ those representations, but always in a sense of conformity with traditional models of ME, that underline the management scientist or, (I would say mainly) the competent manager, where ‘competent’ or ‘successful’ has to do much more with representations ruled by the principle of competition and survival of the fittest than with the humanisation of practices or with tendencies of social and organisational well-being.

Furthermore, the image has a strictly performative and functional character, and this is not due to the students having been exposed to a management course that seems, in some way, to broaden or multiply perspectives on the character of the image. On the contrary, I would go so far as to say; in the question of leadership and success, while before the course, the students’ constructs are not specifically or very obviously associated (thus, not so limited), at the end of the course they are associated with ‘success’ limiting their meaning instead of broadening it, because there would be much more probability of a leader being successful if (s)he used ‘egocentric’ practices, risking more ‘unsuccessful’ results if they are leaders who opt for more ‘human’ practices.

This type of representation greatly limits the possibilities of students to perceive, for managers, alternative forms, and broader fields, of action than just that of hierarchy, or the function for which this position remits managers, or even the options that managers have in terms of leadership strategies and/or practices, which will take them to probable

success or failure, to fame or public ignorance. An image derived from such representations stops the students from developing critical elements and, consequently, being capable of reflexivity.

From what was previously explored regarding the educational process and the representations inherent to the agents of this process, it is possible to state that these representations conform to what is expected for a process that, as has been shown, does not allow a significant margin for alternatives, for reflection or criticism, or for presenting the transmission and negotiation of knowledge and representations of management and managers in line with more traditionalist models of ME and with the principles of contemporary management that still predominate socially. Even though the students have produced more varied representations than those transmitted by the teachers on the course (or its curriculum), this diversity does not seem to mean, in fact, that they are ‘alternative representations to the traditional ones’. However, in order to gain a clearer idea of how these representations identify with those of more dominant models of ME, or, on the contrary, diverge from those models, I will show how such representations are presented when they are grouped in ‘types of manager’.

### **The representations and their organisation into types of manager<sup>117</sup>**

The representations of managers revealed by the students can be organised into ‘types’; when they were treated with Webgrid focus cluster, the information obtained with the repertory grids provides a systematic organisation of the constructs of manager in clusters, which show frequent and repeated associations of some categories of representation/constructs, indicated through high positive correlations between those constructs.

Clusters were identified in the representations of the students from both academic years that made up the study sample. Clusters are considered to be specific ‘types’ of manager; in this research, one cluster represents a pattern of manager behaviour. The clusters produced by the treatment of the data from the students reveal more numerous,

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<sup>117</sup> Are students’ representations structured in types of manager? Are these mutually exclusive types, in terms of the constructs that form them, or do they share constructs?

Do the types of manager generated by students within the present investigation form part of Holman’s ideal types of managers, or are they out of the range of Holman’s types?

specific, varied and detailed images of manager than the four ‘ideal types’ of manager integrated in the pedagogical models of Holman (2000).

The question is whether this is synonymous with representations that are different to those of the teaching staff and/or curriculum, in the sense that they are underpinned by different models of management education. Does this diversity of clusters confirm the possibility that was previously put forward, that this research reveals more (in terms of quantity) representations of manager than initially expected and also different to those predicted (that is, different to those that are based on management principles such as rationality and control), or do they have their origin in pedagogical models such as ‘academic liberalism’ or ‘experiential vocationalism’? Or could it be that they are simply variations on a theme, which are integrated into broader types of manager, such as ‘management scientist’ or ‘competent manager’?

The interpretation of the clusters was assisted by the categories that resulted from the first analysis of (individual) content of the repertory grids; this analysis had shed some light on what managers and management are for these students. Now, treating the same information as it arises associated in clusters, allows an easier understanding of the meaning of a type of manager which is represented by a set of concepts associated in a cluster. It is possible, for example, to gain a better understanding of what these students were actually talking about when they referred to ‘success’ for a manager, for example, of this construct appears in a cluster associated to others that give it meaning.

There are two families of constructs that stand out in the clusters, that of ‘leadership’ and that of ‘success’. The first - ‘leadership’ – is present in all the clusters of the first-year students; the clusters of the fifth-year students always include constructs from one of the two families - ‘leadership’ or ‘success’ – but never constructs from both families at the same time. All the types of manager obtained with the cluster analysis were based on these families of constructs: in the first-year students, the clusters represent variations of human or egocentric managers; in the fifth-year students, they represent variations of ‘human, successful’ or ‘unsuccessful human’ managers, or of ‘successful egocentric’ or ‘unsuccessful egocentric’ managers.<sup>118</sup>

More types de manager were obtained, which were variations resulting from the additional presence, in the clusters, of other constructs than just those that make up the families of ‘leadership’ or ‘success’,<sup>119</sup> thus giving more numerous and more varied representations.

One example of the way in which the clusters were explored and interpreted are data from the repertory grid of student 1.K (first year): a cluster that shows positive correlation (+0.91) in the following constructs: ‘is human with others’ and ‘gives more attention to people than to tasks’. This association of constructs,<sup>120</sup> which belongs to the family of constructs of ‘human leadership’, according to the results of the previous analysis, allows us to designate the cluster as being one (of the) type(s) of ‘human’ manager. In this cluster, there is, however, another construct associated to the previous ones: ‘no fame’ (+0.80), which is a little more specific in terms of this ‘human’ type of manager; that is, a ‘human, powerless’ type (due to the fact that in the previous phase, we saw that ‘fame’ was integrated in the broader construct of ‘power’). The process of exploration/interpretation of clusters was carried out in the same manner as described for all the clusters.

The clusters resulting from the analysis confirm that, in first-year students, the representations of manager produced are the fruit of the style of leadership that the manager may eventually adopt – they are representations based on the archetype of ‘leadership’, varying fundamentally between egocentric and human managers. Other variations within each of these (human/egocentric) are the result of associations of other constructs than those of human manager and, to the egocentric manager, they confer additional characteristics, competencies and strategies<sup>121</sup>. In the previous analysis, the construct ‘human’ formed part of the family of constructs of ‘democratic leadership’, as opposed to ‘egocentric’ being part of the family of ‘authoritarian leadership’. That is why the clusters now constituted by constructs that make up the family ‘leadership’ can be called ‘egocentric’ or ‘human’ managers, depending on the specific constructs of

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<sup>119</sup> Thus, the types primarily oscillating between ‘human’ and ‘egocentric’, ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful’ managers also present subtypes, because clusters additionally present other constructs, secondary less frequent than leadership or success ones, but also forming part of the types of managers derived from the clusters found.

<sup>120</sup> See repertory grid analysis and results, in appendices 6, 7 and 8.

<sup>121</sup> This designation stems from interpretations of a previous construct analysis.

leadership that predominate in the cluster (if they form part of the ‘democratic’ or ‘authoritarian’ family).

The most significant result of this analysis, in the first-year students might possibly be that all the clusters constituted include constructs of ‘leadership’. When constructs that were previously part of the family ‘human leadership’ appear in the clusters, these types of manager are designated as ‘human’; these constructs are:

- Social objectives (1.K),
- Mainly organisational objectives (1.A)
- The manager is concerned about people’s welfare (1.H)
- He<sup>122</sup> develops respect for others (1.D)
- (S)he treats people as human beings (1.C)
- (S)he takes others’ needs into account (1.F),
- (S)he has a global vision(1.E)
- An attitude of thinking about and/or with others (1.A)
- Open relationships (1.C)
- Friendly (1.B)
- His/her practice is managing with others (1.E)
- team management (1.F)
- collective management(1.K)
- collaborative (1.L)
- attention is put on people more than on tasks (1.H)
- motivated to use group strategies (1.D)

The cluster is designated a type of ‘egocentric’ leader when the correlated constructs are some of those that are listed below:

- goals are individual (1.K)
- geared mainly for profit (1.H)
- disrespect for others (1.D)
- people could be pieces of machinery (1.C)
- ignores others’ needs (1.F)

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<sup>122</sup> ‘Manager’ is usually referred to in the male form in students’ words, using “he” or “him” in their phrases. But this is not a prerogative of first-year students, also being a characteristic of fifth-year verbal constructions

vision is partial (1.E), self-centred attitude, thinking individually (1.A)  
distant (1.B)  
closed relationships (1.C)  
hostile, with individualistic practice of management (1.K)  
centralising (1.F)  
attention is given to tasks and results (1.H)  
motivated to use individualised strategies (1.D)

These were the constructs that, in the previous analysis, formed part of the family of constructs of ‘egocentric leader’.

Therefore, the managers in the clusters are either ‘egocentric’ or ‘human’: they are mutually exclusive types because constructs that belong to the type of ‘human’ leadership never arise in the cluster analysis associated with constructs that belong to the ‘authoritarian/egocentric’ type of leadership, or vice-versa. In the first-year students, this mutual exclusivity is not seen in relation to other constructs, only to those of the families of leadership. There are other constructs that are shared by different clusters. Examples of these are the clusters of ‘egocentric, global’ and ‘egocentric restricted’ manager, which share the construct ‘with academic training’, or those of ‘egocentric, powerful’ and ‘egocentric, powerless’ manager, which share the construct ‘dishonest’; ‘honesty’ had been defined in the individual analysis of the constructs of the fifth-year students as:

honest - dishonest or hypocritical<sup>123</sup> (1E)  
consensual manager, coherent - closed, inaccessible (1J)  
controversial - consensual (1K)

Furthermore, there are constructs that appear exclusively in certain types: the construct ‘realistic’ is only associated to ‘human’ managers; the construct ‘unrealistic’ is only associated to ‘egocentric’ managers; the clusters that correspond to managers who ‘manage globally’ and ‘manage restrictedly’ only share ‘academic training’ in the case of them being ‘egocentric’ managers.

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<sup>123</sup> P11: D5.txt - 11:3 (7:7) (Super)  
Codes: [availability] [image characteristics] [manager style,  
leadership]

Representations of manager based on the construct ‘success’ are rare in the first year of the course: this construct appears only three times; one of them is associated to the ‘carrying out of organisational objectives’, producing a ‘successful’ manager, and the other two are associated to ambition and creativity, representing a ‘powerful’ manager<sup>124</sup>.

In the fifth-year sample, the clusters that represent types of managers have as their basis constructs from the families of ‘leadership’ or ‘success’<sup>125</sup>; as was already mentioned, constructs that make up one or other of the two families never appear together in the clusters (or they are clusters that include constructs of ‘leadership’ or of ‘success’) – which means that they never present values of high positive correlation, between themselves. Contrary to what happens with first-year students, whose clusters all shared constructs of the ‘leadership’ family, in the fifth year, there is no construct shared by all the clusters. Besides constructs that belong to ‘leadership’ or ‘success’, just like with the first-year students, each cluster includes subsidiary constructs; some of the most significant are: ‘experience’ in the practice of management, ‘responsibility’, or ‘ambition’.

A cluster is designated as a type of ‘human’ leader when the correlated constructs are amongst those listed below:

- human in decisions (5.D)
- human (5.A)
- seeking non-profit making goals (5.C)
- concerned with human results (5.H)
- with no orientation towards financial results (5.G)
- developing friendly relationships with employees (5.H)
- listening to others (5.J)
- accessible (5.B)
- a guide/a teacher (5.A)
- understanding (5.D)

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<sup>124</sup> In the previous construct analysed, ambition relates with power.

<sup>125</sup> A construction which is based on ‘power’ and ‘fame’ as previously revealed by the analysis of the 5<sup>th</sup> year students.

- open (5.J)
- available (5.D)
- helpful (5.F)
- considering people first and then machines (5.D)
- not a director (5.C)
- giving relevance to human resources (5.J)

When the cluster associates constructs from other families, variations of the 'human' type of manager are generated.

A cluster is designated as an 'egocentric' type of leader when the correlated constructs are some of those that appear in the following list:

- cold (5.D)
- mathematically orientated (5.A)
- seeking profit-making goals (5.C)
- concerned with financial results (5.H)
- orientation towards financial results and economic vision (5.G)
- having an authoritarian relationship with employees (5.H)
- distorted use of information (5.J)
- inaccessible (5.B)
- demanding (5.D)
- inflexible (5.D)
- revealing an authoritarian image (5.F)
- first considering machines and then people (5.D)
- is a director (5.C)
- paternalistic (5.J)

Associated to constructs from other families, clusters that represent variations of the 'egocentric' type of manager are generated.

A cluster is designated as a 'successful' type of manager when the correlated constructs are amongst those listed below:

from well-known organisations (5.L)  
well-known (5.K)  
professionally successful (5.E)  
a successful team builder (5.K)  
famous (5.N)  
showing effective leadership (5.M)  
having public recognition (5.O)  
influential/intervening (5.L)  
with good, consistent results (5.E)  
an example to follow (5.N)  
powerful (5.N)  
quick and efficient at problem-solving (5.K)  
with power of negotiation (5.I)  
successful (5.M)

Associated to constructs from other families, clusters that represent variations of the ‘successful’ type of manager are generated.

A cluster is designated as an ‘unsuccessful’ type of manager when the correlated constructs are some of those listed below:

from unknown organisations (5.L)  
unnoticed/unknown (5.K)  
with limited success, less professional (5.E)  
having difficulties in creating teams with the right people (5.K)  
with limited fame (5.N)  
failing in leadership (5.M)  
with limited recognition (5.O)  
less influential (5.L)  
having problems achieving results (5.F)  
irregular and inconsistent results (5.E)  
a model not to be followed (5.N)  
powerless (5.N)  
with no influence (5.N)

slow at finding answers to problems and at solving problems (5.K)  
with limited power (5.I)  
unsuccessful/less successful (5.M)

Associated to constructs from other families, clusters that represent variations of the 'unsuccessful' type of manager are generated.

In the clusters that correlate constructs from the family 'success' and 'leadership' significantly (positively), constructs of 'human managers' are rarely found associated to constructs of 'successful'. This means that, in the beliefs or representations of the students about the practice of management, in order to be successful, a manager does not recur to 'human' strategies<sup>126</sup>.

The types produced by the teachers combine some of the human constructs that emerged in the students' grids with their constructs for the competent, normally egocentric manager, and economics and competition principles: if we observe the picture 5.3 on page 217, we see that, for teachers, human characteristics and attitudes are essential for a manager's performance, but, at the same time, strategies such as gathering resources, selecting and managing scarce resources in a competitive world, knowing the techniques, deciding, being efficient, being able to solve any kind of problems and attending to any kind of organisational demands among others, are required for the practice of management to be successful. Also, having academic training in management is considered by teachers to be fundamental for almost all management professionals. Finally, according to these agents of ME, the most important constraints to success are lack of strategic planning skills or lack of competence.

According to these results, we can argue that teachers transmit knowledge and representations of manager and management that students receive and reinterpret in their own way, reconstructing them through their own processes, rearranging both 'human' and 'egocentric' attitudes and competences and 'requirements for successful

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<sup>126</sup> Only one student presented 'human' constructs associated to 'successful' constructs, and 'egocentric' constructs associated to 'unsuccessful' constructs (5.D); all the other students to whom repertory grids were administered, associated 'human' constructs with those of 'unsuccessful', and 'egocentric' to those of 'successful' (5.E, 5.G 5.K, 5.L, 5.A, 5.H, e 5.I).

management practice' in different models of manager, but always in line with dominant contemporary myths and principles of management.

For the students, besides constructs from the 'egocentric' family, the 'successful egocentric' manager can also include the constructs 'experience', 'practice of strategic management', or hierarchical position (that of top manager) which, from the information provided by the analysis of the contents of the repertory grids, mean:

Experienced: solid career, global management, employer, from formal and/or large organisations, structured and grounded decisions (5.E, 5.I, 5.K)

Strategist: strategic vision, academic training, starting from zero, image is not a priority (5.G, 5.H)

Top manager: important career, high-level responsibilities (5.K, 5.L, 5.A)

For these students, although a manager's 'success' depends, in part, on the experience they have at the level<sup>127</sup> of management practiced, or on the hierarchical position they occupy, above all, it is a characteristic/quality inherent to 'egocentric' practices of management.

In the same way, the 'unsuccessful human' manager is characterised by the experience they (do not) have, the hierarchical position they occupy, or by the level of management in which they move preferentially. The variations originated are as followed:

Inexperienced: beginning a career, local management, employee, informal/small to medium organisations, adventurer (5.E, 5.I)

Middle manager: limited career, little responsibility (5.K, 5.L and 5.A)

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<sup>127</sup> The level is defined through opposites such as theoretical - practical, global - restricted, practical, particular - global.

Immediate manager: difficulties in assuming strategic vision, training through experience, developing others' previous work/responsibilities; image is important (5.G, 5.H)

The lack of success in the practice of management is, above all, a characteristic/quality inherent to 'human' practices of management. The only cluster that correlates significantly and positively constructs from the 'human' family with constructs from the 'successful' family (5.D) associates it to the construct 'level of strategic management', revealing a representation that says that 'human' managers can be successful if they work at a strategic level<sup>128</sup>. We can conclude that, in the students, 'egocentric' and 'human' managers do not share constructs; not even those that constitute the families of egocentric/human leadership, or the family of 'success' ('successful'/'unsuccessful').

In the results of the teachers, this relationship between 'human' practices of management and lack of success in management was not obvious; on the contrary, in their results on models of manager, the teachers combined practices and characteristics that, in the students, we designated 'human', with practices and characteristics that, in the students, we designated 'egocentric'. Why is that, after five years' influence from the course, the students have separated these strategies into two different models of manager, considering that 'success' is associated to the 'egocentric' strategies, and lack of 'success' is normally associated to the 'human' ones?

Although the teachers had not transmitted information in their interviews whose analysis and interpretation led to the results just mentioned, it must be noted that, in the classroom observation sessions, those same teachers transmitted scientific and academic knowledge about managers that coincided with the still dominant contemporary management myths and principles; their representations of management/manager are underpinned by the myth of technical rationality (like those of the curriculum), albeit not in such a clear way as the myth of competition and of manager-hero, thus emphasising the dominance of the competition in a manager-hero, and in technical rationality.

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<sup>128</sup> The egocentric unsuccessful: the immediate manager - immediate management, careless with information, low-level responsibility, local management (5.4).

The human successful: the strategist - strategic management, care with information, high-level responsibility, global markets and management.

Previously presented excerpts from the teachers' statements from the interviews describing management practice, such as 'development of strategic planning', 'process of analysis where the decision is fundamental', 'tools/competencies necessary for problem-solving', 'well-defined organisational objectives to achieve', relate these strategies and competences with success. On the contrary, in the discourse of the same teachers in a classroom situation, it was not confirmed that they associate those competences and characteristics to constructs designated (in this study) as 'human'; management practices that had been described in the teachers' interviews as desirable or 'good' focus on strategic dimensions, planning and prevision, analytical skills and scientific knowledge, to solve all types of management problems; that is, those practices that are related with technical rationality and that the final year students also represent as 'good' or 'effective'. The rare contradictions between what the teachers and the final year students represent in this respect are, as has been said previously, given by the 'human' character of the managers represented by the teachers.

However, as I have already underlined, the fact that such 'human' constructs arose in a management context that is markedly economic and governed by principles based on the markets, the manager profiles thus designated ('human') become simply instrumental. They provide the students who receive such information with knowledge (unexpressed, but transmitted in an implicit way) that allows them to differentiate between constructs of really 'human' managers and apparently 'human' managers but who have 'instrumental interests', which are identified by the students as belonging to the 'egocentric' types of manager, based on this kind of instrumental interpretations. For example, the representations of manager produced by the teachers' interviews are divided between two 'human' types of manager, but classroom observation sessions informed us of a markedly orthodox, managerialist management approach, viewing managers as being greatly responsible for organisational success through control and strategic planning activities.

Once more, the inner contradictions detected a propos of teachers' representations can be partly the result of the teachers' concern with harmonising the objectives of the school and the course with the objectives and needs of potential employers, and the impossibility of completely conciliating the interests of both groups, together with the

internal pressure exerted by the myths underpinning those interests and goals. This way of acting pedagogically, the difficulty in changing practices, or at least being more flexible in those teaching practices is justified in part by the set of representations of management and managers that these teachers possess, and constructed: these representational contradictions impact on students' constructions, splitting representations in a process that differentiates much more than the teachers do.

### **Summary**

The clusters obtained with the WEbgrid cluster analysis reveal the representations of manager and management of the students on the Management course at ESTG, resulting from the negotiations of knowledge that occur throughout the course. From those clusters we can read the representations/constructs that the students take on from their teachers and from the course curriculum, and what they add of their own to them. The final result is a representation of manager that could constitute an orientation that would tell students how to be a manager in a given context (Shotter, 1993).

In the students' representations of management, the threats to the possibility of controlling situations that have to be managed are threats to the success of managers: this is an idea that is present in the data thrown up by the sample. Control is a key construct of management that is clearly present in the results from both groups of students: in managers' activities and strategies; in the requisites and strategies for leadership; and on the conditions for success. The classic management approaches, especially regarding technical rationality, seem to dominate the representations of management and managers even before the students have been submitted to any academic experience of management; this dominance seems to be the result of previous external influences, of a broader social origin.

The construct 'leadership' is constituted on the basis of different practices of management, producing diverse types of manager. It dominates all the clusters/types of manager represented by the first-year students, and it is combined with 'success' to make up the clusters/types of manager represented by the fifth-year students. However, the students with five years of academic experience in management show more

developed constructs<sup>129</sup> than those who are beginning the course. This complexity can be confirmed in the variety of clusters that represent types of manager in one given family. More than with qualitative changes (changes in orientation or the main theoretical approach, or the emergence of critical aspects and reflection in the practice of management), variety brings detail in the first-year students' representations. The way in which the practice of management is represented in the fifth year is based on a more complete construct/representation, one that is more technically and scientifically grounded than in first-year students. Nevertheless, the basic principles of management that underpin the process of construction of representations change only slightly between those students who are just beginning their course and those that are finishing it. The most significant change is perhaps the difference in approach to the practice of management where, in the first year, the perspective is grounded on the principle of technical rationality and, in the fifth year, on principles of strategic management. However, control as a fundamental management strategy in any organisational situation, managing the unpredictable, with the subsequent tranquillity of the manager and respective reduction in anxiety levels, are still essential aims of management practice at any of the academic levels.

The main differences of content/meaning between the constructs of management practice of the first- and fifth-year students in a way corroborate the action/intervention/impact of the course as it develops, although we are not comparing two moments of development in one group of students but in two groups of students, one with academic experience in management and the other without that. The constructs of management practice of the fifth-year students will be much more in line with the educational aims of the models of management education that pursue goals of academic liberalism and experiential vocationalism than those of the first-year students. The intention is develop in the students a manager who is ideally a 'management scientist'

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<sup>129</sup> The treatment given to information (between 'ambiguous' and 'clear'), the accessibility of information to organisational members and the control that managers exert on their own speech form part of 5<sup>th</sup> year students' representations about communication strategies. 'Human' strategies are improved by addition of 'persuasion' and the use of 'managers as models for organisational members' learning processes. The needs for entrepreneurial spirit, risk attitude, as well as the use of strategic thought in planning, are fifth-year constructs.

The 'success' construct evolves from an internal attribute of managers or an ambitioned quality throughout a management career ('innovation' and 'creativity' being 'the way' to get it), to a context-dependant quality, associated to each management activity and to others' recognition. While it means essentially 'a goal for a career in management' and 'an attribute of managers', in first-year students' reports, it emerges as a context-dependent outcome of management practice in fifth-year students' reports. It also deviates from its initial link to 'control'; and reveals a 'success' construct more related to 'fame' (being well-known) and/or 'power'.

and/or a ‘competent’ manager, a manager who understands and deals with meanings and all types of management techniques and theories scientifically and technically, as well as a manager who is prepared to solve any type of problem in the practice of management in a competitive way. In their daily practices, the teachers support these ideals and ideas, even though they argue in favour of changes in management classes, in terms of teaching methods, assessment strategies and/or aims, because they establish as objectives providing students with the tools and knowledge necessary for the exercise of competent management, showing concern with vocationalist aims and with a managerialist curriculum, which underpin the present course orientation.

The direct vocational role that we would attribute to the Management course at ESTG has its evidence here: the development of skills in the students that directly respond to the needs of companies/organisations but also to the needs of society in general.

It is also possible to conclude, based on what we have learned in this chapter about the representations of the teachers and of the Management course at ESTG, that the representations of manager incorporated by these students do not correspond linearly and exclusively to those supposedly transmitted /imposed by their teachers<sup>130</sup>. On one hand, confronting the variety of types produced by students with the only two held by teachers brings to mind the views on knowledge construction which describe it as a process heavily relying on the procedure that gives value, depth, complexity and meaning, within an educational process which is the central mode of communicating such represented beliefs to others (Weick, 1996; Alvesson 1994; Giddens, 1991; Latane and Schaller, 1996).

On the other hand, we can recall the words of Beck (1994), who calls ‘reciprocal authority’ the fact that students also exercise their own authority on the process of negotiation of meanings within the educational context; this ‘reciprocal authority’ can explain the emergence of some types of manager whose representations fall outside the predominant sphere of contemporary management representations.

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<sup>130</sup> This refers to the ideal types of manager transmitted by the models of management education which are predominant in the educational context of this research.

It had been verified that the course structure and programmes revealed core values that guided the curriculum. These values and choices are related to specific representations of managers and practices of management, and this curricular orientation aims to prepare students to be ‘management scientists’ and ‘competent managers’. The dominant values underpinning these representations are related to the need of the school, and the course, to produce profiles of managers who are scientifically prepared to deal with each unexpected situation competently, but also to the course’s ability to prepare students adequately for future professional experiences, guaranteeing them the tools that will allow them to survive in an organisational world where there are few resources, which means instrumental, competitive organisational relationships in a world where only the fittest, and the most competent, will survive.

In terms of the course’s fundamental orientation, the teachers seem to agree with the curriculum, and this has been confirmed in the interviews and observation sessions. In these the focus was shown to be on a teaching orientation and practice that is mainly founded on traditional, managerialist models of management education, based on values that are in line with academic liberalism and experiential vocationalism.

In this way, the arguments of MacIntyre (1981) and Roberts (1996) are confirmed with regard to management education still having to do with teaching and using methods of control to create managers who are technicians and agents of progress. As for them being ‘morally neutral’ agents, however, during the educational process in question, the students reveal a certain apprehension regarding management as a practice that is not morally neutral, incorporating dichotic differences of management practices through the leadership practices referred to. This division between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ management practices or types of manager had already been confirmed in the analysis of individual content of the constructs produced with the repertory grids, ‘good’ being an attribute of ‘human’ practices, and ‘bad’ an attribute of ‘egocentric’ practices; like this, the students use ‘good’ and ‘bad’ in a socially desirable way. However, despite them considering it ‘socially recommendable’ for managers to practice ‘human’ management (in the variations in which ‘human’ can be represented/understood), the students (and teachers) represent managers who practice egocentric management as being ‘successful’ (are these then ‘good’ managers?), considering the rational, competitive and technicist models such as those that still function in present-day management.

The students in the fifth year of the course show a “politically correct” discourse in their verbalisations on managers, which show that they know/have learned what is expected of a manager in the twenty-first century. Their representations of management and their verbalisations transmit, in part, the process of socialisation that they have undergone, on the part of the course and its agents; the results of their grids show that they think they know what the ‘correct’ attitude for a manager to adopt is, in terms of what is “socially expected”: to pursue objectives and put into practice human/humanitarian procedures in management, to adopt flexible, friendly attitudes, to respect the human quality of those they work with. Nevertheless, the clusters obtained with this group of students also reveals that they repeatedly associate such practices and attitudes in management to lack of success or to other constraints to an adequate management practice.

It is as if the discourse of these students were following two parallel paths, one that is manifest, and the other latent, as if they had been socialised in the sense that they take on board and learn a role for managers that demands management practice involving respect for others, attitudes of assistance and teaching/orientation, flexibility, concern for others, and shared decision-making processes. However, at the same time, they believe that “what really works in management practice” is still the use and manipulation of people to achieve the proposed goals efficiently and globally, when the goals mainly translate into profit (on a personal and organisational level), centralisation (of planning and decision-making) and, above all, control.

These defence mechanisms are in line with those identified by Freedman (2002), and they are developed by management students within the management course against the stresses and strains that can be caused by their environment. The new information provided by the results of this research that add to it is the fact that similar defence mechanisms can be attributed to the teachers in the ME context studied.

The fact that the teachers defend a critical perspective of teaching but, in practice, opt for following a more traditionalist pedagogical orientation, basing this on arguments/justifications that can be ‘mere’ excuses when we consider that some of the changes to current teaching practice would not depend on the justifications or constraints stated. The fact is that they reveal representations of ‘human’ managers,

such as those who should manage an organisation to make their management adequate. but, in the classes observed, they presented a conceptual framework of management and/or manager based on contemporary management principles and myths, in rational management of resources and competition for survival of the fittest; all of this could constitute a set of revealing data regarding psychological defence mechanisms that they teachers themselves activate in the attempt to overcome the internal discomfort that comes from the confrontation between ideal and possible pedagogy, ideal and real management and manager.

The fact that teachers exhibit “splitting” mechanisms suggests that they need this as much as students, at least in management education contexts, as a protection from the constant demands of the dual, and often contradictory, character of the management education context, which combines the academic imperative with commercial needs, as well as the old and still prevalent management myths of rationality, competition and control with the ‘human’, ‘emotional’ and ‘flexible’ societal requirements for management and manager in the modern world. Therefore, the psychological processes which students learn and/or improve on during their ME experience, such as defence mechanisms against anxiety and insecurity, can partly be the result of teachers’ direct influence through their own, similar defence mechanisms, during the act of teaching.

The fact that it has been seen, through the classroom observations, that the teaching process and classroom dynamics were mainly, not to say totally, controlled by the teachers, led the expectations to be that, in the students, the images and representations would result from the images and representations transmitted by the teachers and curriculum. If we now look at the clusters that indicate what representations of manager the students hold, we find that those representations were not limited, in their construction, to a mere process of assimilation or reproduction of those of the teachers. That is why we use Beck’s argument (1994) of ‘reciprocal authority’, which explains the students’ intervention in the process, as they themselves also exert some authority on the process of negotiation of meanings. Seeing that it must be difficult for the students to exercise that authority openly, expressly, in daily interactions, as they run the risk of less favourable assessment from those involved in the process, the students end up exerting that authority on their internal processes of construction of representations. The appearance, in the results of the students, of clusters that represent

types of manager that do not directly coincide with those contemplated by the curriculum or by the teachers could, therefore, be the result of them exercising ‘reciprocal authority’, indicating the existence of an act (albeit hidden) of students effectively exercising power, in spite of this not being observable in the overt interactions between teachers and students in the classroom. The argument confirms that the teachers’ contributions are not accepted by the students without suffering modifications.

In line with Beck’s (1994) and Latane and Schaller’s (1996) ideas, the students ‘stretch’ the information given by the teachers to fit their needs, their information or their expectations. Moreover, not all the information that both sides (students and teachers) deal with over the five years of the educational process is shared with equal efficiency, depending on the ‘filters’ used by the students and by the teachers. The variations in the quantity and quality of information shared during this process of construction and negotiation of information and knowledge are, in part, related to the differentials of power that are in place during the educational process.

Besides the differentials of power, the domain of negotiations being a prerogative of teachers, other filters of information that seem to dominate the process analysed are: on the one hand, dominant representations of ‘success’ in our present-day world, a ‘success’ that comes more from a suitable public image than from the value of a management action and its respective organisational results; on the other hand, the importance (not expressed) that is attributed to management practices defined as ‘competitive’, ‘egocentric’, ‘rational’, even though, at the same time, management practices defined as ‘human’ are valued expressly, using positive discourse about these forms of management, because of the social adequacy of this type of discourse to management in today’s world.

One of the reasons that can help us understand this is: when we examine the models of the teachers and the types of managers they produce, the main obstacles to a suitable practice of management pointed out by the teachers correspond to characteristics of some clusters of ‘egocentric’ managers, namely those that integrate constructs of ‘power’ and ‘dishonesty’, corresponding to managers with high ambition, powerful, and/or dishonest. These constructs of management practices represented and transmitted

by the teachers associated to negative social connotations can contribute to discomfort on the part of the students, in openly assuming them as desirable for successful management practice.

From some of the representations about management and manager that were recorded following the dialogues that took place in the observation sessions, a certain conflict of values underlying the representations/constructs recorded was seen: looking for information from the classroom sessions, during the presentation of knowledge/theoretical information about management, which originated a lengthy debate (C3, 6th session), I recorded differences in the role attributed to managers, both between teacher and students and between students:

- The manager, in these circumstances could be tempted to abandon any type of ethics and go on to manage companies according to the exclusive interests of the stockholders or internal pressure groups, and not so much under the interest of the company as an entity that forms part of the social fabric.

- But managers should know how to manage and do it well, always being independent of the question of the context of pressure, and within necessary ethics (...)

- Managers are expected to always have a solution to problems that arise, don't they? (...) in situations where others are not able to do that, they have to be (...)

- But they are human (...) vulnerable (...) aren't you? (...) and aren't you going to be a manager?

- That is why I say that this course cannot teach us everything we need to know about management, that is why I am finishing this course and I don't feel certain of anything, to start work in an organisation, even thinking that I am going to be what I always wanted to be professionally.

At the level of language, we can affirm that educational agents carry out a series of selections from large amounts of words and pick up the few that are needed to transmit meaning. At the other end of the communication link, students have to select among several possible interpretations. They, therefore, reconstruct a meaning, reflecting their

associations. The amount of information that can be transmitted is limited, while the range of options for words to create one specific meaning is virtually unlimited. This could explain what we have just commented about the types of manager produced both by students and teachers.

On the other hand, these representational ‘gaps’ observed in the sessions point to a prevalence at the end of the debate, from the teacher’s perspective, as meaning the most correct; however, this prevalence or dominion do not seem to solve the uncertainties of the students that do not believe in the phenomenon of ME as a universal panacea for successful management in an organisation.

The strategies according to which the students learn to be managers, throughout the educational process of their management course constitute strategies of survival that prepare the students for the world (Samuels, 1991); this learning uses processes of attribution of meanings that are taken for granted (Chia, 1996). Therefore, we can consider the psychological divisions used by the students, between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ ways of managing, as defences that protect them from the anxieties to which they are subject (Freedman, 2002). The fact that the students value, albeit not expressly, representations of ‘egocentric manager’ as being ‘successful’, even though they do not consider them to be the most suitable for the human demands of our world today, goes in line with Freedman’s argument (2002) that students are subject to a culture full of bureaucratic organisations at the same time that what is called for is integrating practices stemming from the idealised images of post bureaucratic organisations.

As has already been mentioned, the representations of manager and management of the teachers combine with a pedagogical orientation that favours academic liberalism and experiential liberalism. The teachers reveal representations of manager that favour a solid career, and a ‘human’ profile; the human profile of the representations of the teachers reveal some variations of this profile, such as those that were found in the students’ clusters: human ‘strategist’ or ‘honest’ human and, within this one, honest ‘with power’ and honest ‘without power’. The ‘honest with power’ and ‘honest without power’ human managers were produced in the first-year students, and the human ‘strategist’ manager was produced by the fifth-year students.

The representations of manager of the teachers are distributed in this way, mainly by (a few) variations just of the *human* type of manager<sup>131</sup>. These particularities of the representational process studied can help to explain the contradictions in the manifest and latent representations of the students, who openly associate ‘good’ practices to human managers (and ‘bad’ to the egocentric ones), but who associate constructs of ‘success’ to egocentric practices (and ‘unsuccessful’ to the human ones).

Whilst some authors (see Boland and Richard, 2001) assume that, afterwards, in the organisational world, the range of representations will shrink in the role of socialisation of organisational factors<sup>132</sup>, the results of the present research lead me to think exactly the contrary: that students will multiply and develop constructions of manager and management, through social constructionist processes partly led by the interactions between students and management agents, be it in an educational or an organisational working context.

Whilst academic influences shape students’ representations in a ‘socialised way’, with students’ representations of manager and management adapted to current organisational expectations, requirements, and approaches, they are confronted with internal contradictory messages. Seeming to be aware of the ‘correct’/‘socially expected’ attitude for a manager to have in this new world, in this new century, final students overtly represent the manager as someone who defends and pursues human or humanitarian goals, applying procedures and attitudes such as being flexible and friendly, and respecting others as human beings. However, these same constructs and speech form part of an image of manager which these students repeatedly associate with lack of success or other limitations to a desired management practice, in a more or less conscious manner.

The psychological processes used to split management practices between good and bad managers are not in line with the criteria acquired in classes to represent the manager of the new century which should, logically, be the good manager. The inner discourse of these students represents the successful manager as the egocentric powerful one. These tensions are resolved by externally valuing the human qualities of the manager,

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<sup>131</sup> Human as defined by students’ clusters of constructs

<sup>132</sup> These factors will determine manager’s representations consistent with/adapted to organizational requirements and socio-cultural values in that society.

expressly. This ambiguity and ambivalence, already focused on by Freedman (2002) in his work, seems here to be the result of the socialisation role that the course performs upon students with regard to attitudes, knowledge and actions within their management and management education environment.

(...) management education is a process that has an inherently conflictual dimension (...) it embodies cultural imperatives and psychological needs, sometimes in competition with each other. The internal demands of psychological strategies, splitting the world into different camps, containing anxiety by disowning feelings and separating good from bad, are managed in the narratives, sometimes in conflict with the external demands of management in a new key. The transformations of learners into heroes involve the interpretive activities of subjects who are commonly faced with some fundamental issues of 'how to be' and can countenance ways of living with them (Freedman, 2002:91)

This study suggests that congeneric mechanisms exist, for management teachers; the discussion about the myths of management involved in representations produced by investigated groups of subjects can shed some more light on the matter.

The socialising role or character of ME (Grey, 2002), specifically of the Management course at ESTG and its educational agents, on the respective students, can be seen through the impact of principles and contemporary myths of management that underpin the framework of representations and conceptualisations of the teachers and the curriculum, mainly that of competition, in the representations constructed by the students. The socialising action of the Management course at ESTG on students can thus be seen as the exercise of influence of the competition myth on the process of construction of representations of manager by the students, essentially through and during the educational period, while two other fundamental myths of contemporary management practice (the myth of rationality and the myth of the hero) already underpin representations of manager and management of the students even before they have been submitted to the experience of the course, although attending the course 'sharpens' the effect of the impact.

In the same way that the psychological splitting processes of the teachers themselves influence the students, who also probably learn to use this type of mechanism in order to minimise their own discomforts or insecurities, managing the process of construction

of knowledge/representations with the help of mechanisms of this type, under the educational/socialising action of their teachers.

With regard to the differences that exist between the myths that support the representations of the students with and without academic experience of management, the representations of the first-year students, specifically the representations of ‘successful strategies’ and ‘successful organisations’, are underpinned by classical management explanations, emphasising the domain of technical rationality. The practice of management is represented through control strategies to guarantee success, in line with the main concerns of contemporary management (Bowles, 1997).

The appearance of ‘control’ as a dominant construct of representations of management/manager of these students is probably due to social influences that transmit the control myth before the management course and its agents does, given that, for these students, the course has hardly begun to exert its influence on the process of construction of representations, because the students have only just begun to be exposed to such an experience. Similarly, the manager is already seen as a ‘hero’ by these students, and this underlines the presence of the myth of the hero (manager-hero) previously to attending the course, hence the respective influence.

In the representations of the fifth-year students, ‘success’ is the ‘objective of the hero’, and the need to be successful is the motor for action. It is the myth of the hero that underpins the leadership construction, the main construct that dominates the representations of manager, from the first to the fifth year. ‘Success’ is a construct that presents similarities and differences between the two academic years studied, in so far as the constructs that form part of it; it is similar because, in both groups of students, the hero can only be called that if (s)he is successful in the organisational mission being undertaken. And being successful means foreseeing and controlling, so as not to fail; to reach such goals will bring fame and recognition to the hero; that is, to the manager. Nevertheless, in the first year, the students consider that this success depends more on personal attributes of the manager while, in the fifth year, they think that it is a result that depends directly on actions and competencies.

For both groups, the manager-hero corresponds to a version of the ‘egocentric manager’, that can also be related to the negative pole of the ‘myth of the hero’, just as was described in Chapter One of this thesis, and thus also underpinned by social Darwinism principles.

Managers should show quick responses to market needs, and changes should also be fast and at the right moment (...)

Success demands will and determination and the strongest wins (...)

‘Success in action’ is often an answer to the personal interests of the manager (...)

(Excerpts from students taken from classroom observation sessions - C2, C6, C8)

Either way, ‘success’ is still a construct related to control of insecurity, more than to other constructs<sup>133</sup>.

*Successful:* structured, organised activities, organised, achieving goals, economic profits;

*Unsuccessful:* no preparation, not organised and not achieving goals, no profits.

References to social well-being or to other aims of the organisational actors do not appear in this construct - ‘success’ is economically contextualised and determined, even when ‘efficiency’ is evoked, which means ‘efficiency’ in a context of management practice dominated by social Darwinism principles.

Despite the similarities between the two groups of students, the competence myth and power principle emerge in fifth- year students’ constructs, clearly differentiating them from those of the first year. The actual clusters that integrate ‘success’ in the results of the fifth-year students associate it to *fame*, *recognition* and/or *power*, more than ‘control’, or ‘uncertainty reduction’, although the control of the situations managed and the reduction of uncertainties and anxiety are still a concern.

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<sup>133</sup> According to students’ words, *successful* means: structured, organised activities, organised, achieving goals; *Unsuccessful* means: no preparation, no organised and non-achieving goals.

## CONCLUSIONS

Taking knowledge and representations as socially constructed, and the academic context of ME as a privileged means, both of the socialisation of future managers and of the manufacture of myths in the field of management, this research aims, on the one hand, to explore the representations of manager and management that the students on the Management course at ESTG construct and, on the other hand, identify the nature and pedagogical orientation of both the curriculum and the practices of those who teach on that course, in order to reveal, and thus better understand, the relationships that are established and the influences exerted between the two sides that intervene in this ME process. Another aim was to identify, within this context and processes, what the greatest obstacles would be to the implementation of a pedagogical model of a more critical nature and pedagogical orientation, in ESTG.

It was considered that these students (re)construct their representations of manager and management during the time it takes them to complete their academic training in management at ESTG through the processes of negotiation of meaning with their respective teachers, and under the influence of a specifically oriented curriculum; underlying these negotiations of meanings are management myths favoured by the agents and context of the course, which transmit specific types of manager, and which the students learn and absorb. In this study, therefore, the representations of manager and management found were observed in light of the ideal types of manager presented by Holman (2000), and of the contemporary myths of management of Bowles (1997), in order to verify the extent to which they resemble or differ from those models and myths.

It is argued that, given that the traditional, orthodox perspectives of management and ME are the most common at the moment, they are expected to predominate in the Management course at ESTG also, orienting the pedagogical process developed. Since I defend the position that such perspectives facilitate the construction of a performative, stunted, image of manager, limiting the integral development of the students' capabilities, their intellectual freedom, and their critical thinking, it can be expected that an image of manager of this type would predominate in these students' representations of manager and management, and that the constraints referred to would be those most

likely be found, if a more critical educational model were to be implemented in the Management course at ESTG.

When Holman presented his contemporary models of ME, and of the ideal managers he envisioned for each model, in his article (*ibid*), he did it as a result of an analysis of the present-day educational system. The dynamic aspects of the educational contexts – the pedagogical process and its agents - were not taken into account, the interactions developed and the power relationships established did not form part of the study. The present research adds the dynamics of the processes to the information that already exists about the educational models presented by Holman (2000). Following this line of investigation, this study showed that the dominant representations of manager in the students at ESTG reflected characteristics that are similar to those of the ideal manager<sup>134</sup> ideal of academic liberalism and/or experiential vocationalism, both being educational models favoured by the Management course at ESTG. However, the students also produced other types of manager, with characteristics /constructs besides those that integrate those models put forward by the institution and its educational agents (or, at least, not mentioned by them); i. e., the types of manager produced by each group of students are more diverse, in the constructs that constitute them, than just that of ‘management scientist’ or ‘the competent manager’. Furthermore, they are also more varied, in constructs, than those of the managers represented by the teachers whose pedagogical process was studied, suggesting that the mechanisms/relationships of power that underlie the interactions between teachers and students and that could, in part, be observed in the classroom sessions, although largely imposed by the teachers, give the students the possibility to exert their own influence(s) on the process.

Despite a power differential that, for the large part, favours the teachers and, together with the course curriculum, allows them to interfere greatly in the process of construction of the representations of the students, guiding these students towards representations and expectations of ‘more suitable’ or ‘more socially acceptable’ managers and management, the processes of negotiation investigated offer, even in this way, a certain margin of liberty for the students, albeit limited, which means that the

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<sup>134</sup> Those from the *management scientist* and the *competent manager*

educational agents do not perform an exclusive role in the process<sup>135</sup>. The (non-explicit) way in which the students exert their influence on the process is a consequence of some fears that they expressed, on the one hand, regarding the structure of the course, with its focus on assessment as the ultimate and final goal of the whole process. This makes the students fearful of being actively participative, as verbalising ideas that are in opposition to the ideas put forward by their teacher can bring, according to their own words, negative consequences, prejudicing them in their assessment and marks. On the other hand, these same fears are a result of a lack of reflexivity strategies in the present educational context, or of other strategies that would facilitate opening up channels of communication and making it more fluid.

The students also used other specific defence mechanisms<sup>136</sup>, as a response to the cohabitation of conflictive representations, values and knowledge, in the classroom. As mentioned previously (Freedman, 2002), this splitting facilitates the students' psychological survival and can be a strategy of reconstruction of the self, which is essential for the students to maintain a psychological balance in an educational context where the coexistence of conflictive representations could compromise such a balance, through the discomfort it produces. The recourse to psychological defence mechanisms of ambiguities and states of anxiety caused by the conflictive character of these situations does not seem to be exclusive to the students, and extends to the teachers themselves. These need to reconcile different interests from diverse fields, which are often even concurrent, and they lack the strategies to lead with the tensions they experience during the ME processes they direct.

Some examples that illustrate and confirm what I have just said are the splitting mechanisms shown by the students between 'good' and 'bad' managers, identified in the results of this research, a split that works as internal defence; for example, the split/division between 'human' and 'egocentric' managers, recurring to constructs that

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<sup>135</sup> Besides the transmission of dominant constructions from teachers and curriculum to students' straight reception, authors also consider students' factors to influence the process. Some of these factors are students' prior experiences, perceptions, approaches and outcomes, simultaneously present in their awareness: Prosser and Trigwell (1999) state that previous experiences of students perform a significant role in the process of construing knowledge's representations.

<sup>136</sup> For instance, considerations were made about the representations of *success*, specifically regarding the manifest and latent meanings of the construction for fifth-year students. These students express positive associations between the best or most desirable ways of managing, and strategies and practices of *human* types of manager. Nevertheless, when comparing with practices or types associated with success, those did not correspond to *human* types of manager but egocentric, instead. Internal defensive mechanisms could thus be observed in these results.

identify ‘human’ managers with socially desirable practices, and ‘egocentric’ managers with those who have selfish socially more reprehensible practices. Apparently, the former are ‘good’ and the latter are ‘bad’ managers, although they are attributed with success by the same students in inversely proportional doses – the more ‘human’ they are, the least probability they have of achieving success and vice versa<sup>137</sup>.

Some uncertainties arose, verbalised by the students in the fifth year of the course, about the role that the course will have in their respective professional activity, but mainly focussed on the value of the impact of their academic experience in management on their future practice of management. Several students questioned the fact of the course representing a real positive impact, a plus in terms of quality and know-how in their future professional practice that would make them different to what they would be if they had not been through this academic experience. They did not, however, question the advantages that the course gives them when they are trying to begin their professional activity, and they recognise these advantages. This could be due to a progressive development on the part of the students, over the course, in terms of the psychological defence mechanisms, mentioned above, that protect them and guarantee internal balance, in parallel with the fact that these students perceive the course as a privileged device to obtain the status of ‘manager’, in a wider social game, contrary to the value they attribute to the course.

The contradictory representations of manager and management produced by the teachers, at different moments in the collection of data, also serve to illustrate what has been said about the existence of internal defence mechanisms: on the one hand, to characterise management practice, as well as the characteristics and competencies of whoever ensures them, the teachers evoke strategies such as ‘managing scarce resources’, ‘managing according to economic imperative principles’, ‘trying to ensure the reliability of the processes’, ‘reducing uncertainty’ and ‘controlling managed situations’; on the other hand, ‘desirable/suitable’ types of manager for these teachers, as well as their respective strategies, are constituted by constructs from the family of the ‘human manager’. The teachers consider success in management to be the result of

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<sup>137</sup> As Cunliffe states (2002), students seem to develop their own ways of making sense of situations from within the activity itself; the differences detected between beginners and final-year students, regarding the types of manager produced and the constructs that each type includes, emphasize the possibility of differences being partly generated by exposure to five years’ academic influence.

'human' management but, at the same time, management is represented as a necessarily competitive practice that is oriented by essentially economic principles.

The results' analysis and interpretation undertaken within this work also focused on myths, improving my understanding of the construction of students' representations; the myths identified support model(s) of education privileged by the course, informing us of the limitations of an image of manager as the one conveyed by the course and its agents, limitations to the students' professional practice, as well as to a CME practice. This image of manager is supported by the *myth of the hero*, a presence which has been inferred from the missions attributed to managers by the students. Technical rationality and *logos* principles dominate their representations of management which develop in detail and complexity along the course. The practice of management is appreciated through the eyes of technical rationality, with very well-defined structures and tasks; organisation and standardisation are emphasised. The presence of the Social Darwinism myth is also underlined, under the light of competition, with manager represented as the 'successful warrior', and the aspiration of a 'promised land' offering power and fame to those who ambition it. Thus, the prevailing image is apparently linked to an orthodox view of management, in line with 'traditional' managerialist contemporary perspectives.

These espoused representations appear be a response to the social requirements perceived by students, a way students found to conform their teachers' wishes, a 'socialization game' that the students have learned how to play, along the five years of their academic experience, and also an internal mechanism of defence to be reassured, overcoming knowledge ambiguities and conflictual representations cohabiting in that specific field/context of ME.

In fact, this response may not represent clearly what students intimately believe they have to be or do in order to become successful managers, but rather what they think they are expected to be and do, as managers<sup>138</sup>. Management education and, specifically, their teachers, strongly contribute to teach them how to play this social game. Constructed under the influences of curriculum and agents' goals, pedagogic

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<sup>138</sup> First-year students have not yet had enough time or academic experience to develop these internal mechanisms; along the course, the image of the manager evolves from someone who controls uncertainty into someone who is famous and recognized and, thus powerful, whilst the concern with control never disappears.

orientation, representations of manager and management, and underpinning myths, representations held by the students at the end of the fifth year of the course will reveal that students have learned how to respond adequately to prevalent educational and social requirements, perspectives and expectations of ‘manager’, no matter what convictions and expectations they hold internally, through the acceptance of power relationships institutionalised and the knowledge produced within these interactions. Therefore, we confirm a central contribution of ESTG management course, in terms of changes operated in students, with regard to their perspective of management and managers, as well as to the value they ascribe to ME<sup>139</sup>.

The impact or the main influence of ESTG management course can be observed through the way the students learn how to deal with the social demands of dominant/acculturating practices of management, as well as the way they are provided with status and legitimated with a performative manager’s role, perpetuating the *status quo*. How can this impact be of any value for implementing/developing critical thinking, reflexive practices and, broadly, implementing a critical pedagogy in ESTG management course?

In the introduction part, I stated that it appeared to me the mainstream normative discourse of ME is a too simplistic form of theorising and practising it, in our current social contexts, as it does not incorporate critical stance nor promotes creative forms of being in management. Management course of ESTG is not exception to this mainstream discourse and findings support this statement: the image of manager constructed within, and under the influence of, the model(s) of ME adopted by ESTG, is limited and mostly focused on functional relationships, favouring neither the development of new myths nor consequent developments of management practice; myths that emerge from students’ findings are only those underpinning contemporary management, and

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<sup>139</sup> I assume that, prior to their training experience, students believe that the course is an answer to their need for performing successfully in management while, at the end of their academic experience, they no longer share this opinion. This reaffirms the role of socialisation and status-provider performed by the course. Usefulness ascribed by students to the course changes, along the course. In the beginning, the course represents the guarantee of a successful management practice, through the acquisition of scientific knowledge and technical devices for controlling management environments; at the end, its meaning shifts from ‘guarantee of a successful management practice’ to ‘guarantee of status and social/professional position’, permitting access to management. For students, this constitutes a way of learning how to *play the game* and getting the right key to opening the job market gate, mainly by obtaining a degree in management. For teachers, this academic experience is considered an instrumental device which helps to mould future managers, making them capable of responding to organisational expectations, in terms of image, knowledge, attitudes and action.

management is taken as a generalised control work and rational thought; other myths, supported by Eros and emotional mechanisms, myths which would break the rules of rational management and control, providing management practice with novel directions, were not detected in a obvious way, within this work.

Moreover, the psychological mechanisms of defence developed by the students, in order to balance their constructions of manager with the demands of ME and the management world, do not favour students' awareness of the ambiguities and particularities which characterize their discourse and practice, and of the necessary critical reflexivity. Students apparently accept the current formula of "management" without objection, the control of organisational situations and events in order to gain or conquer a relevant position in such competitive environment.

The predominance of *logos over Eros*, in representations of manager and management found (in students and teachers), corroborates the previous criticisms made of a system of education where emotional areas, creative attitudes and the expression of feelings are not stimulated; on the contrary, these aspects are suppressed in the investigated educational context, in order not to disturb a quiet state of things in the classroom. This perpetuates traditional myths, maintains conservative knowledge(s) and practices of management, and favours the *status quo*. Although this alleged influence of the course on students' processes of constructing knowledge is clear, students reveal some representations which are diverse from teachers' ones, allowing us to think of a certain/small margin of freedom for students, in the processes of knowledge's negotiation processes occurring in the classroom.

On teachers' side, data does not indicate they are aware of their own influential capabilities and role; that is, of the power they possess to influence students' representations and actions. I wonder what conscious influences students receive from teachers who probably are not aware of their political or social role in the management field. The context of this study reveals a teaching environment that mirrors neither teacher's awareness of their power in the classroom, their influential capability, nor

their critical understanding of managers and management<sup>140</sup>; these conditions confine teachers in their task of organising the classroom experience.

To this adds the strong relation of course curriculum and teachers' pedagogies to managerialist perspectives of manager and management and its lack of flexibility, supporting the use of methodologies that often focus on accumulating knowledge, and failing to provide the acquisition of skills that allow students to read situations with various scenarios in mind, or develop creative and/or critical attitudes<sup>141</sup>. The academic experience investigated here seems to help students to construct representations of management practice technically and scientifically understood and grounded, emphasizing control of situations and management of the unexpected, with the intention of reducing anxiety level.

The coexistence, more stressful than pacific, of different metaphors and myths of management in students' representations is a fact that teachers can take advantage of in order to improve their teaching practice. Different, even contradictory, myths, coexisting in students' perspectives of management could be taken advantage of by teachers to approach management from diverse perspectives in the classroom, enriching the process of management learning with the development of students' critical and reflexive skills. Traditional management perspectives imprison us in fixed frames; the myths on which they are founded capture us, indicating that 'this is the way to see it'. Both students and teachers need to recognize the wider discursive structures in which they act.

I affirmed, in the introduction part, that it is hard for me to advise my students to be more reflexive, critical-spirit apprentices if I fail to be reflexive about my own practice, if I fail to recognize the participants and mechanisms inherent to the ME process and the way they impact on students' construction of knowledge and meanings. The present research intends to alert teachers to the above-mentioned aspects, and I consider this to be one of its principal contributions. Reflexivity will be always very difficult to

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<sup>140</sup> In theory, teachers aim creative techniques, the development of critical thought, freedom in the organisation and management of classes and in strategies for knowledge apprehension, management labs to study in and work with real situations... Nevertheless, the daily practice that those teachers develop is mainly supported by traditional teaching methods.

<sup>141</sup> It canalizes its strength to educate "competent managers" or management scientists", not to promote critics, reflexive though or doubts.

implement in a learning context where course curriculum ignores its practice and teachers do not reveal the awareness necessary to engage in reflexive practice, or to develop a critical perspective of themes<sup>142</sup>, as well as to stimulate such practice in students, and where the general structure and dynamics of the institution fails to support a corresponding pedagogic orientation<sup>143</sup>.

The ambivalence of the representations found in the teachers that made up the study sample in this research leads me to believe that they also use defence mechanisms that are similar to those ascribed to the students. The demands of reconciling the interests of the different sectors and entities involved in ME that the teachers are faced with generate discomfort and imbalance and, consequently, they feel the need to restore the balance.

The discomfort that I would also say I have often experienced in my role as a teacher on a management course probably comes from ambivalences of this type, with the consequential and reluctant, or subconscious, use on my part, of splitting defence mechanisms, instead of using strategies to raise more awareness of this state of things. The demands that teachers feel to reconcile such different interests in their teaching practice, and the lack of resources and strategies that would allow them to be more aware of the pressure felt, can constitute constraints to the implementation of more critical educational models in Management. Moreover, the constraints to a shift in pedagogical orientation pointed out by the teachers in this study were seen as mere ‘excuses’ or false constraints, in that some strategies of change did not demand more resources than just motivating actions on the part of the teachers. Whether these constraints were mentioned because of a real lack of resources or simply a lack of preparation or motivation on the part of the teachers to implement such a change is accompanied by other concerns in the case of implementing such a change. I am concerned, for example, that the students would be less happy as a result of being more

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<sup>142</sup> Their conception of manager as a ‘maximizing resources, capable of solving any kind of problem attending to any kind of organisational demand’ proves lack of reflexivity on their part, presenting the manager as little less than “a management god”.

<sup>143</sup> According to them, the practice of aimed strategies is not often possible, due to the curriculum extension, number of students, teachers’ workload, non-existent culture of learning motivation, and prevalence of grades’ concern, among others.

critical, or that there could indeed be an ethical problem if an attempt was made to implement a more critical pedagogy in the Management course at ESTG.

Being 'too' critical of organisations and managers can lead these students to the idea that there would no longer be any chance of not being "trapped" by the managerial system, unless we suffer the "marginalization" process that suffer everyone who run against it. So, I also worry I can not be really capable of practicing critical ME or be really reflexive with my students and myself, with very positive consequences.

How much am I exposing students to personal risk via encouraging them to be 'critical'? What sense of solidarity is there in my relatively risk-free provocation, if I try to implement CME at ESTG management course?

Despite being highly gratified with the possible positive responses of students to such a critical methodology, my overall feeling can be one of disappointment that more is not achieved.

These doubts and fears raise some questions about teachers' own competence as 'critical educators', which can represent a main constraint to the implementation of the model: how far are we prepared to be critical with our students, but more than that, with ourselves? An uncritical application of the CME model can always be a problem: a critical education in management would implicitly rely, among other things, on the abilities of participants to freely contribute ideas or challenge those of others, consensually determining the educational process and content (Reedy, 2003). This assumption ignores a number of problems raised by the nature of power, for all the students are well aware that the decision to pass or fail them lies largely with teachers. As a result they have some reason to conform to their teachers' wishes. Beyond this obvious power inequality there remains the fact that it is highly unlikely that students pursuing a university qualification begin with a blank sheet on which they can collectively write their course. The panoptic qualities of external inspection and internal quality assurance ensure that academic staff must increasingly predetermine the aims, objectives, learning outcomes and teaching and learning methods for anything they teach (Boje, 1996). For the lecturer to suggest to his or her students that there can be any fundamental negotiation of their studies is disingenuous and may provoke a highly

sceptical response. In other words, in ESTG's management course, as in any university or polytechnic's course, there already exist hierarchical relationships deriving from structures within the academy. Also, power can work in other direction than only comfort students to their teachers' wishes. The students have paid for their studies: as customers they have certain expectations as to the nature of the commodity they are purchasing. If teachers refuse to conform to these expectations, complaints can emerge and the image of the school becomes a rather 'negative' one, in terms of products offered. The 'products' are normally defined by marketing activities as a 'prestigious qualification', which has a high exchange value in terms of career advancement, the ability to manage 'better', and generally impress others. Students would be certainly not encouraged to part with their money on the basis of being challenged as to their fundamental beliefs and behaviour, or having the worth of their hard-won qualification problematized. Thus, it is not surprising that students attempt to resist an approach where they are expected to 'do the lecturer's work' or 'question their basic values', just to mention a few differences from the methods they are used to<sup>144</sup>.

Another concern is the fact that teachers practicing critical pedagogies many times notice the existence of a level of discomfort exhibited by their students, in classes. They many times feel unease to follow the strategies they intend to; they need to switch off the role of teacher in charge of the class and let them discuss with no obvious attempt to control or lead. In these situations students always look for teacher's reassurance, and it is very tempting for the teacher to jump back in and 'provide' a solution to how they wanted to run the class. Teachers feel many times they are not well prepared to deal with this kind of situations, and they easily turn to the previous methods and strategies even when they were decided to develop critical processes in the classroom. Students' attitude also motivates this turn back as they become relieved not to have the responsibility of being in charge of their own learning. Both, teachers and students, may be thus largely unprepared to face it, accept it or, even more difficult, practice it, in an

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<sup>144</sup> This analysis partially mirrors the current situation of management education in Portugal: the constraints and contradictions regarding the choice of teaching and learning methods, due both to structural premises and teachers' ambiguities; the problems that make it impossible to change the basic teaching method of 'talk and chalk', or the 'teaching of masses' in management courses, for similar reasons; and the teachers' acceptance of guidelines and decisions they do not agree with. These issues, characterising the current state of ME in Portugal, can be tracked in many of the findings and interpretations presented here. Obtaining a degree in management, preferentially with high grades, is emphasized as a primary motivation for students in the ME context. The changes made to, or proposed, in the management course of ESTG are mostly consequence of economic guidelines and social and political pressures. Therefore, the real value of a management course still lies in market supremacy: academic titles are worth what supply and demand determine.

adequate manner. Besides an adequate preparation, the resistance to accept and practice the associated techniques it is natural and represents another relevant limitation.

An issue which can constitute a constraint to the implementation of a critical model of education, in the investigated context of ME, has been observed in classroom sessions: the existence of conflicting and overlapping representations and values; students many times seek membership of different elements in the class for idiosyncratic reasons. Identity may be closely bound up with both the way in which relationships happen and with the continuing performance of constitutive elements/members of the class. In order to become accepted as members of such a learning group, individuals may have to deny their identity as members of different communities, setting in train internal conflicts and feelings of anxiety and discomfort<sup>145</sup>.

It is also probable that the students feel that the acceptance of some critical ideas requires them to change; they will be seeking to be accepted in a distinctive community of practice, that of the class; the way in which participation in one might influence the other is not obviously simple. When in their future organizations, or with their friends, they are quite possibly performing different identities and memberships. This fragmentation of identity may be regarded positively as evidence of an emerging politics of difference, but discussions in class do not seem to develop in order to a wider solidarity on the part of these students towards others (particularly if we think in terms of their ‘future’ subordinates) which emphasizes constraints for the transformative aspirations of critical management pedagogy. Identifications, solidarities, and dominant cultures students and lecturers bring with them will constrain a worthwhile critical intervention in the classroom. The students bring their own projects and aims to the classroom and may simply decide not to participate in a politics of difference; in other words, participation always requires a sufficient degree of solidarity, the enthusiasm to put aside individual projects in order to accomplish collective goals, in this case learning.

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<sup>145</sup> Students’ speech often turned into ‘strategic management speech’; whilst these conversations seem to be dominated by two or three students only, the entire group appeared to be content to let the conversation continue at length. Only afterwards (in interviews) some students told me that they found this talk profoundly uninteresting and irrelevant to their own concerns – a recurrent behaviour in the class that seemed to indicate the marking out of a collective managerial identity by some group members.

Whilst critical models require solidarity (Reedy, 2003), the lecturer stands in an inevitable position of power and his or her students will define their solidarity with each other in opposition to him or her, as the most effective forms of solidarity are exclusive-'us' opposed to 'them'; thus teachers may feel a powerful sense of exclusion having stepped outside the comfortable aspect of the usual lecturer/student relationship.

Still in the field of constraints, it is important to remember the reducing autonomy of the lecturer in school, which leads to an increasing difficulty in teaching according to the principles of dialogic democracy, as well as the shrinkage of teaching time<sup>146</sup>. How can we 'read' this reducing autonomy of teachers, in ESTG? Besides its pedagogic orientation, between that of 'academic liberalism' and 'experiential vocationalism', the need for developing competent managers, scientifically prepared for dealing with every unexpected situation, as well as to prepare students for their future professional experience, ESTG management course also reveals an increasing concern with economic and commercial aspects, which will guarantee the survival of the institution in a competitive educational environment, and these issues surely pressurize teachers' performance. It can be very hard, for teachers, to support the implementation, in ESTG, of a critical process of education in its management course, as it constrains some of the most relevant interests the school might pursue, commercial and vocationalist ones, including those which support these teachers' jobs and pay?

A propos shrinkage of teaching time, the e-university might dispense with this meagre allowance altogether: how then can students be expected to learn to become full participants in a CME process? However, schools, ESTG included, are investing, more and more, in this kind of education models which shrink the time of direct contact between teachers and students.

The identification of possible constraints to a critical management education in ESTG had not the purpose of abandoning such an implementation, rather trying to design a better sort of educational process, in which case many of the problems I have outlined remain to be resolved. Despite the acknowledgement that power over the assessment process is unequal, the other ways in which power operates within the educational process also remain, including competing solidarities, solidarity as resistance, and a

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<sup>146</sup> Part-time students, for instance, are only in contact with their tutors for nearly 20 hours per module.

higher education system that is increasingly hostile to democratic and diverse forms of learning. The classic business school or management department could be taken as even more antagonistic context of education, with its instrumental approach to learning and its financial dependence on its corporate clients. Given the practical and theoretical difficulties pointed so far, does a critical pedagogy have any place in management course of ESTG? The options seem to be working within the constraints, dealing with the problems, but these may be rather difficult to overcome. Perhaps we could listen to Cunliffe suggestions (2002), when she argues that, focusing on representations of realities and working from within one's experience can provide the motivation for change more powerfully than externally imposed frames.

It could be argued that the investigated case is a specific one, failing to enable any general conclusions to be drawn; I had stated already, in chapter 4, that, the fact this research used a case study methodology serves its goals but won't allow generalisations. However, it seems to me that the tendency is more and more towards these kinds of constraints. Hence to explore representations that students construct about the manager and management realities the way in which I have done here may, may help future and current managers, as well as ME agents, to develop a more critical and self-reflexive awareness of tacit assumptions and the way these assumptions influence processes of making sense of and constructing different realities. As educators, we should be able to help students engage in learning by encouraging reflexive dialogue about striking moments of learning. We may draw on tacit and/or explicit knowledge and use practical and/or theoretical ways of talking to help us construct order and account for our experience. This may involve learning and making sense of our actions by linking theory and practice in reflective/reflexive dialogue with self or others.

We can connect tacit knowing and explicit knowledge and become more aware of how we create the 'imagined from the imaginary' (Cunliffe, 2002). This involves exploring how our own actions, conversational practices and ways of making sense, as managers, educators, and learners, may create and be sustained by particular ways of relating and by implicit or explicit representations resulting from power relationships. A critical stance can be developed by becoming more aware of the subtle effects of our discursive practices from the perspective of involved participants and creators of change, rather than external, analytical indicators. By embracing this view of sense-making, the ways

in which managers, students, and management educators talk becomes a creative force in learning. This tends to be a taken-for-granted aspect of the practice of conventional and critical management educators who talk about theory.

Trying to displace managerialism by only questioning ideologies and techniques and practices of domination, hierarchy, and control, is not the solution: the fact is that managerialism still exists within business and academic contexts, living through discursive structures which institutionalize and espouse managerialism in implicit and explicit ways (Boje, 1994, 1996; Cooper, 1989); we have observed it also in the ESTG context. We have hierarchies, a need for competitive advantage and technological dominance, and presumably we engage in education to improve management skills and career prospects in this context. As educators, we, ourselves, are agents of control and surveillance, as we share our 'expertise', and categorize and evaluate the performance of our students, whatever ideology we subscribe to, whether managerialist, critical, or constructionist. While critical approaches may bring these wider contextual influences to the surface, they can often result in impotence unless we also recognize the formative, relational, and embodied nature of local discourse. By recognizing this, we can help students and educators think and act differently, by recognizing the part we play in constructing the 'realities', 'systems', 'structures', and practices we critique.

For me, as teacher and researcher, the next question is along the lines of: 'is there a possibility of transforming our contemporary social environment of management and managers into a more free-thinking, creative, critical one, through the undergraduate education of future managers; and, if so, with which curriculum and, principally, strategies?'

As seen, schools like ESTG, as many others, still develop traditional images of manager and management; an academically constructed logic and language (theory about practice) is not the only way of making sense of experience. Whereas emotion may lead to anxiety and defence, it can also be an inevitable feature of learning by heightening awareness and sensitivity to what is happening around us (Fineman, 1997), but our teaching practices often focus on cognitive rather than affective aspects (Baker and Kolb, 1993: 25). We need to understand how we may construct our sense of reality in more affective/emotional, critical and deliberate ways. This means recognizing that teachers and students act as practical co-authors of understanding in this responsive learning process. The implications of a trial for implementing CME in ESTG

management course are many and complex, as referred; to this adds no guarantee of success.

The comprehension of the ‘constructing constructs’ process, in the context of ESTG management course generates a ‘contextualised theory’ (Santos, 2001) which constitutes a useful support for picturing specific perceptual and behavioural patterns, rather than the formulation of generalised conclusions. Any ‘contextualised theory’ (Santos, 2001) developed within these conditions would only aim to reinforce the more abstract theory referring general patterns of perception and behaviour. In a much more practical way, it should serve for planning and performing an intervention for implementing CME in ESTG management course, or starting with an intervention in my classes, only, paying attention to all the constraints identified with the help of this work. This should be my next step as an educator and researcher, and should represent the real ‘value’ of the present research.

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<sup>ii</sup> The technicist perspective considers that the understanding of management is instrumental and scientific; and that management is primarily a rational, technical and morally neutral activity, aimed at securing the goals of the organization through the efficient use of administrative, human and productive resources. Scientific methods and techniques are perceived to be an excellent model on which to base management practice. The practice perspective argues that the understanding of management is a social practice. Studies in this area stress the political, moral, interpersonal, cultural, as well as the technical, aspects of the manager's world, which are vague, problematic and contested (Mintzberg, 1973; Kotter, 1982). Variability in management practice also suggests that general principles of management will be difficult to find, due to the fact that there is no ‘one best way’ for MP. Finally, the critical perspective shares many of the assumptions of the practice perspective, but is more explicit about understanding management practice within its wider social, historical and economic context; it is explicit also in examining the means and ends of management practice. Holman argues that management perspectives condition the way management education is perceived and put into action; each perspective generates a different approach to management education.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **“Background on the Contemporary Models of Management Education” - Holman (2000)**

#### **Academic liberalism**

The aim of this model is predominantly epistemological - the main concern of management education has to be the pursuit of the objective knowledge about management, the generic principles and theories of management; it combines academic approaches and technicist perspectives. Consequently, the ideal process of learning should involve the acquisition of scientifically verified bodies of managerial knowledge, which are then subject to rational logic and empirical testing and subsequently integrated with experience. Specific aims include decision-making, planning, and rational problem solving. The intermediate aim, the 'ideal' manager, is the 'management scientist'. The developments of the specific and intermediate aims help the manager to achieve personal autonomy. The main constraints on the person are a lack of knowledge and reasoning ability. Teaching methods are structured to facilitate the transmission of knowledge (e.g. lectures), the ability to critique such knowledge (e.g. seminars, case studies, essays), and the ability to apply scientific forms of analysis and action (e.g. case studies, quasi-experimentation, hypothesis testing).

A direct vocational role, an academic role and an indirect cultural role are expected for ME; it seeks to provide a broad introduction to management, while attempting to develop knowledge and skills that correspond reasonably well to those required by organizations.

ME needs to support academic freedom and permit a critical and open discussion of ideas in the pursuit of truth. It will be best managed by non-managerialist methods as managerialist methods are thought to interfere unduly with academic freedom and inhibit the achievement of the epistemological, pedagogical and social aims.

#### **Experiential Liberalism**

Whilst sharing similar social and organizational axioms with academic liberalism, experiential liberalism gains much of its force from the failure of academic approaches to meet their adopted aims. Even when active, academic approaches to learning are still

seen by many students to be too theoretical, to have little practical relevance, and not to be particularly useful for developing a manager's ability to deal with problems (Willmott, 1997). A practice perspective of management heavily influences experiential liberalism as it is more congruent with the 'real' experience of managers. Learning should be primarily rooted in manager experience and context and managers should engage in various forms of action, reflection and re-conceptualisation. Despite this common core, there are a number of debates within experiential liberalism, giving rise to different understandings of the learning process, the specific, intermediate and general aims, and teaching methods. Consequently, "ideal manager" aimed varies from the "practical scientist" or the "reflective practitioner" to the "practical user of language/practical author".

### **Experiential vocationalism**

Experiential vocationalism derives from an approach to education and training labelled 'new vocationalism', which has reformed education and training in line with a vocationalist agenda, by arguing that education should produce outcomes in line with economic and organizational requirements, operating like a market, itself. Main role of management education is to provide managers with the relevant skills and knowledge needed by organizations, cultural or academic roles being limited. Managerialist practices are considered to be appropriate and unproblematic in higher education (Ellis, 1993); courses must respond managers and organizations needs and management education must base on descriptions of 'real' and generic management action. "Useful" knowledge is that which is seen to aid skilled performance. Specific aims are competences, interpersonal and technical, required by organizations and some general knowledge of them. The ideal is that of a "competent manager" who is able to work to the required organizational standard. Managerial autonomy is aimed and lack of competence is chief constraint.

### **Critical School**

Boundaries between the experiential/critical account and that of experiential liberalism are diffuse. They share a relativistic epistemology (in particular a social constructionist epistemology), a focus on experiential pedagogies, and a concern with the use of managerialist practices in higher education. The pedagogical axiom is similar except that it draws on both critical and post-modern theories to inform the nature of the

learning process, the specific, intermediate and general aims, and teaching methods. Learners are aimed to question the social, political, ecological and cultural assumptions of their knowledge base, to examine power relations implicit, to explore the means and ends of the practices and discourses used and to examine the methods used to legitimate the occupational class of management and other sectional interests. Critical reflections are used to inform practical, non-instrumental and emancipative forms of action (see Alvesson and Willmott, 1996). The specific aims of the model are thus to develop a body of critical knowledge and skills, which enable people to be reflexive about their own knowing and doing; the ideal image of the manager is that of a “critical practitioner” and its general aim is social and personal emancipation. Management education needs to be engaged in the world of managers but disengaged from their instrumental and oppressive practices. Managerialist approaches are seen to be particularly inappropriate, not only because of the fundamental differences between higher education and industry, but also because they are representative of the instrumental logic of capitalism, leading to an intensification and deprofessionalization of academic work.

## Appendix 2

### “Background on the Myths of management” - Bowles (1997)

	Goals/objectives	Process	Archetype(s)	Kind of Promised Land <sup>1</sup>	Other features
Social Darwinism	Profit “Survival of the fittest” “To be the strongest” “Gain competitive forces”	Competitiveness Competitive advantage Markets invasion Strategy	“Power” (Characterised by hierarchy, rules, punishment, even fear)	An organisation/society of “winners”, “self-starters”, with the ability to attain economic gains.	Social relation: I ----- it  Efficiency has a restricted sense and a moral guide  Negative pole of the “hero myth”
Technical Rationality	Profit and numbers Control and regulation People as instruments Person as object	(No feelings in management) Rationality Decision: Information, modelling and analysis	“Logos” (No “Eros” in organisation; objectivity and non-emotional interests)	World with all the phenomenon fully controlled and fully understood	Profit and numbers Control and regulation People as instruments Person as object (No feelings in management) Rationality Decision: Information, modelling and analysis “Logos” (No “Eros” in organisation; objectivity and non-emotional interests) World

<sup>1</sup> It's the general goal for the hero, “the difficult treasure to attain”

					with all the phenomenon fully controlled and fully understood
Myth of the Hero	<p>Main goal: to attain the promised land</p> <p>Mission is to:</p> <p>Achieve goals</p> <p>To design strategies</p> <p>Positive pole goals:</p> <p>Brake new grounds</p> <p>Get new insights</p> <p>Bring new opportunities to serve the wellbeing of people</p> <p>Negative pole goals:</p> <p>Growth/profit/rationality</p> <p>Economic stability, security, for the prosperity of the few</p>	<p>Bipolarity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Negative process (implies negative pole of hero): self-interests, particular goals, ignoring community needs; de-massing, rationalisation, stakeholders profit and jobs menace for employees</li> <li>. The charlatan (a particular type from negative pole): Stage unconscious Behave through instinct and basic appetites</li> <li>Goal is immediate satisfaction (Think immediate and act now)</li> <li>Look for his own needs satisfaction</li> <li>Cruel/cynical/unfeeling</li> </ul> <p>. Positive process (correspond to positive pole of the hero myth): To provide new insights</p>	<p>Hero archetype:</p> <p>He/she has found or done something beyond the normal range of experience; the hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself.</p>	<p>It's always the main goal of the hero.</p> <p>But, depending on which pole the hero is situated, it can have different meanings; positive pole of the hero myth has diverse goals from negative one.</p>	

		To break new grounds To guarantee well-being of people and environment People's liberation			
<b>Emergent Myth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century</b>	To humanise organisations and management practices  Complete expression of human condition	To include emotions in management of organisations; get the balance  To attenuate competitiveness and rationality processes	"Eros" (besides other"  Using emotional intelligence  Reflection  Consciousness	Cooperativeness in organisations  A Reflective world  Organisational and social well-fare	Positive pole of "the myth of the hero"  Social relation: I-Thou

**Adapted from Bowles, 1997**

<sup>1</sup> It's the general goal for the hero, "the difficult treasure to attain".

## **Appendix 3**

### **“Subjects’ identification”**

Each subject tested has been given a code name. In the text of the thesis, each illustrative quote is followed by the code which represents the subject who has produced that information. These codes are given rather than the actual names of the students and teachers, following the promise of confidentiality.

#### **1st year’s students**

In the case study, students were given identification numbers, from 1.1 to 1.35, in a total of 35 subjects (1.1, 1.2, 1.3...until 1.35); first number represents the academic year and following number regards his/her entry in the total of individual analysis of case study).

For the repertory grid, the 14 subjects taken from the initial sample were given an identification code, formed by a number \_‘1’, representing the academic year \_ and a letter (representing his/her entry in the total of applications of repertory grid) Subjects were coded from 1.A, 1..B.....to 1.N.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> year’s students**

In the case study, students were given identification numbers, from 5.1 to 5.30, in a total of 30 subjects (5.1, 5.2, 5.3...until 5.30); first number represents the academic year and following number regards his/her entry in the total of individual analysis of case study).

For the repertory grid, the 19 subjects taken from the initial sample were given an identification code, formed by a number \_‘5’, representing the academic year \_ and a letter (representing his/her entry in the total of applications of repertory grid) Subjects were coded from 5.A, 5..B.....to 5.S.

## **Appendix 4**

### **“Template Analysis - final version”**

#### **1. Organisational structure and managers**

**1.1.** Organisational structure

**1.2.** Manager's possible position

**1.3.** Degree of responsibilities according to structural position

**1.4.** Career development:

**1.4.1.** Kind of career (structurally)

**1.4.2.** Strategies for pursuing a career

**1.5.** Training needs

**1.6.** Environmental factors:

**1.6.1.** Growth and climate

**1.6.2.** Complexity

**1.6.3.** Balance

**1.6.4.** Development strategies

#### **2. Manager's role**

**2.1.** Top manager's role:

**2.1.1.** Technical Activities/strategies

**2.1.2.** Interpersonal Activities/strategies

**2.1.2.** Strategic Activities/strategies

**2.2.** Middle manager's role:

**2.2.1.** Technical Activities/strategies

**2.2.2.** Interpersonal Activities/strategies

**2.2.3.** Strategic Activities/strategies

**2.3.** Power/relevance:

**2.3.1.** Factors influencing managers' importance to the organisation

**2.3.2.** Dependence from organisation's factors

**2.4.** Leadership:

**2.4.1.** Leadership styles and conditions

**2.4.2.** Leadership motivation's strategies

\*

**3. Management success**

**3.1.** Threats to success

**3.2.** Success's promoting strategies

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\* 5. Image has been eliminated (not mentioned or not relevant in both group's statements)

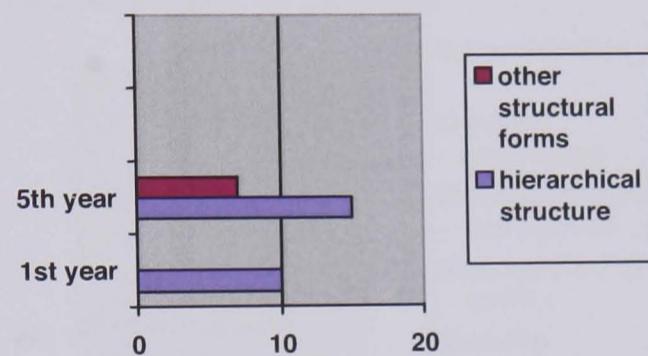
## Appendix 5

### “Template analysis graphs \_ first year and fifth year results”

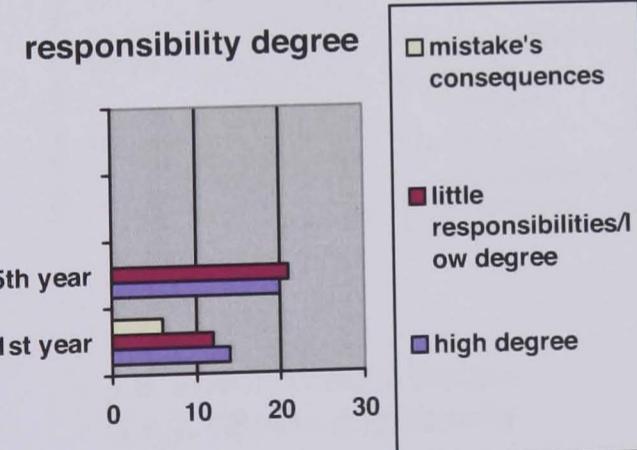
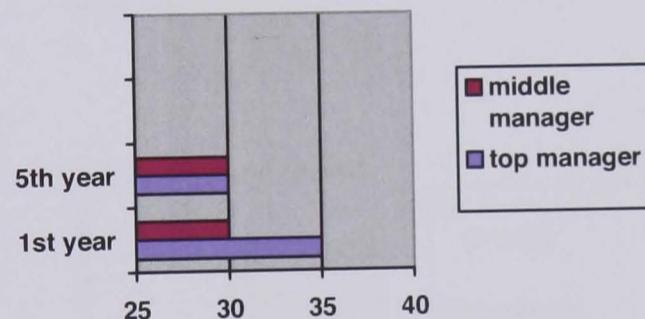
#### 1. Organisational Structure and Managers

##### 1. Organisational structure and managers

###### 1.1.organisational structure

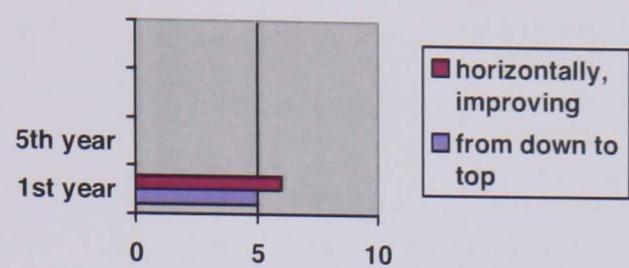


###### 1.2. manager's possible position



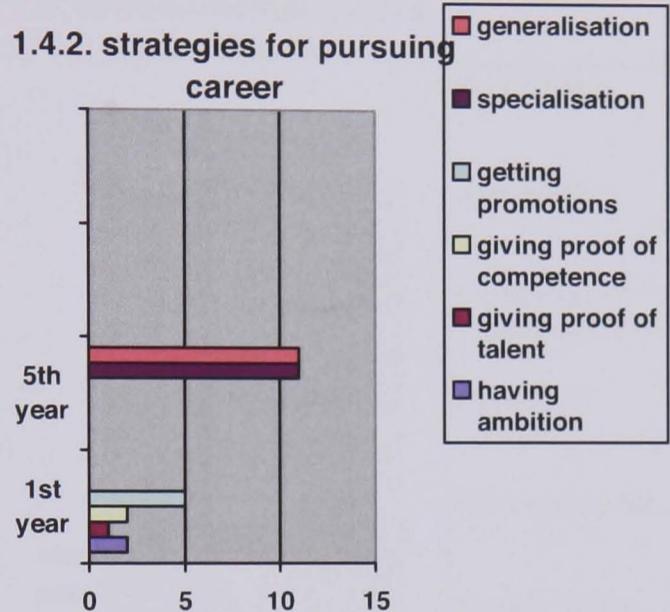
## 1.4. Career development

### 1.4.1. kind of career (structurally)

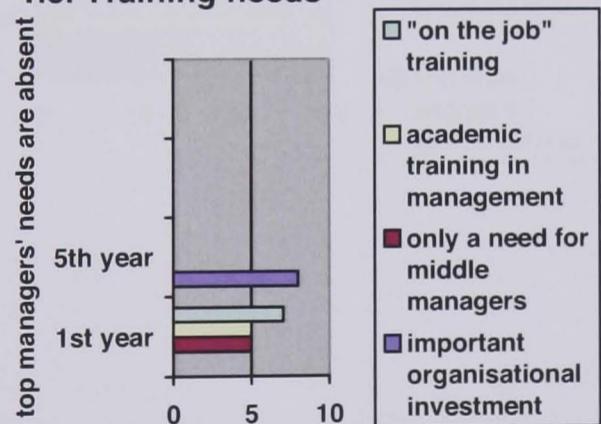


## 1.4. Career development

### 1.4.2. strategies for pursuing career

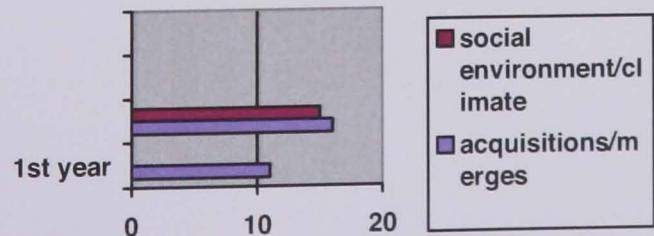


## 1.5. Training needs



## 1.6. Environmental factors

### 1.6.1. Growth and climate



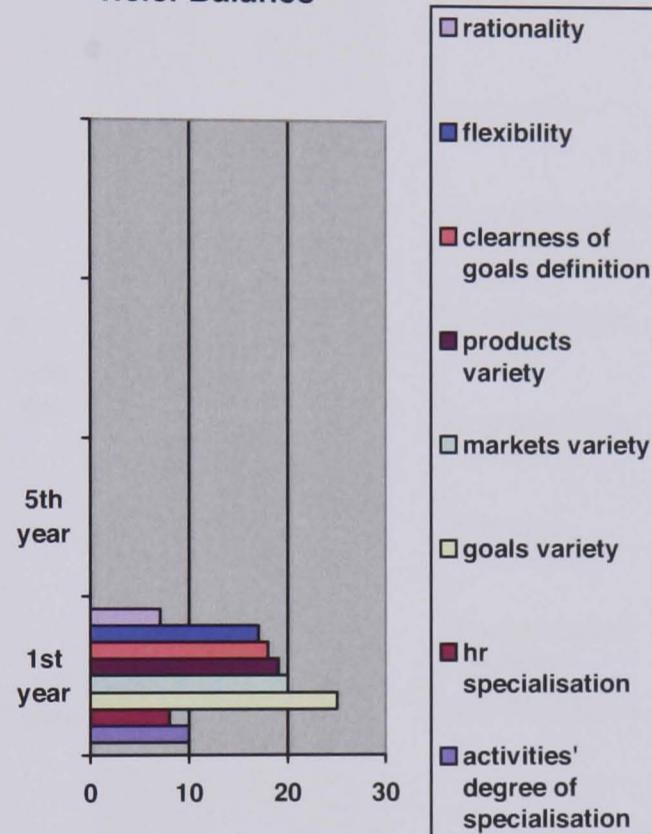
## 1.6. Environmental factors

### 1.6.2. Complexity



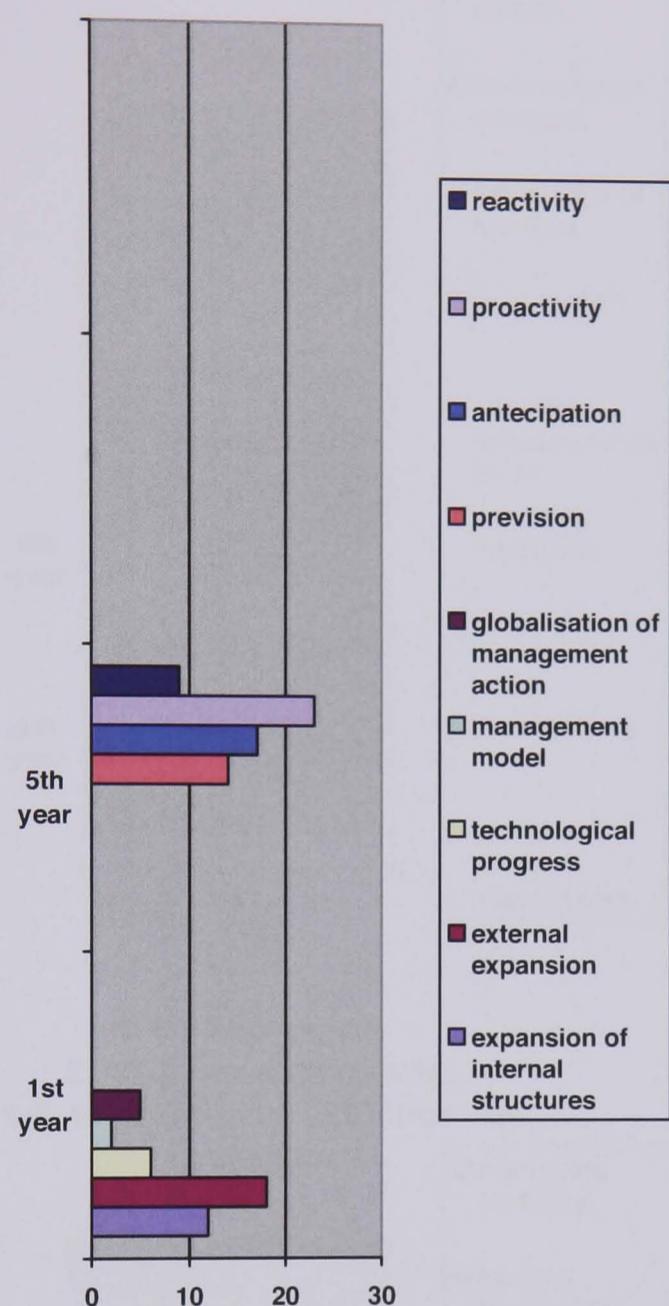
## 1.6. Environmental factors

### 1.6.3. Balance

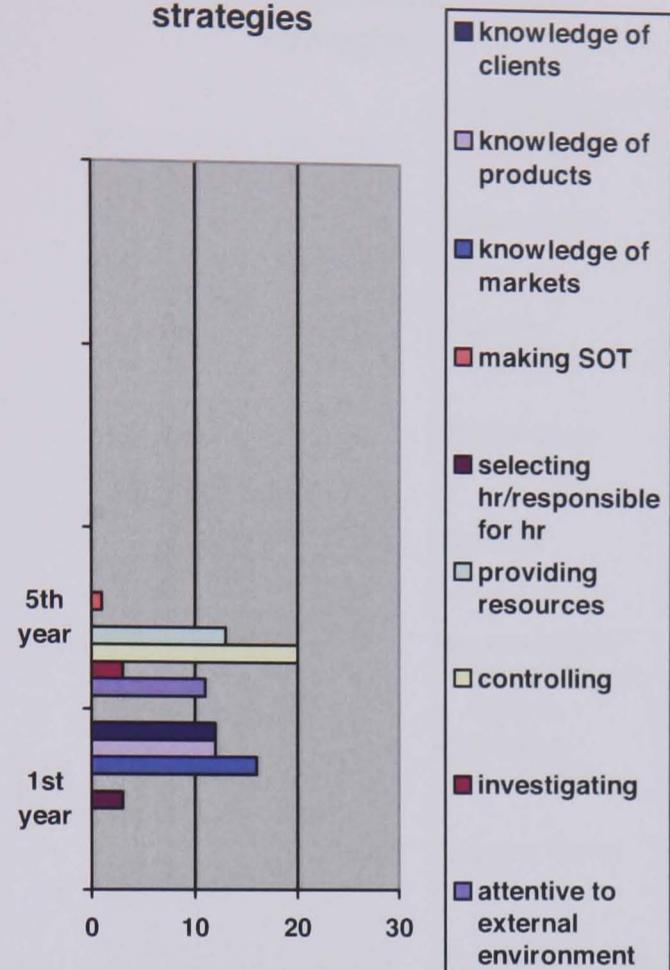


## 1.6. Environmental Factors

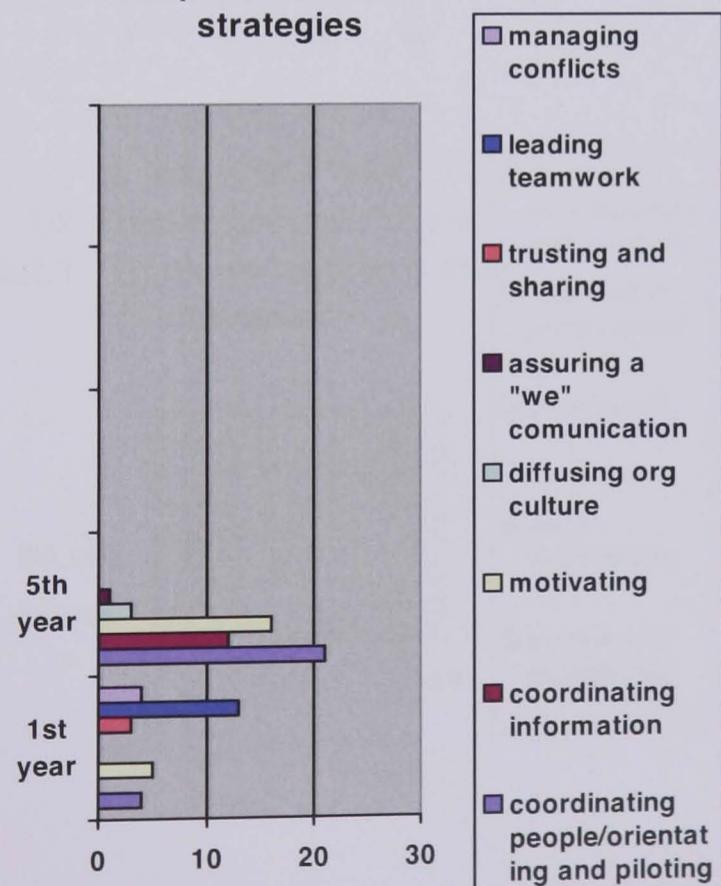
### 1.6.4. Development strategies



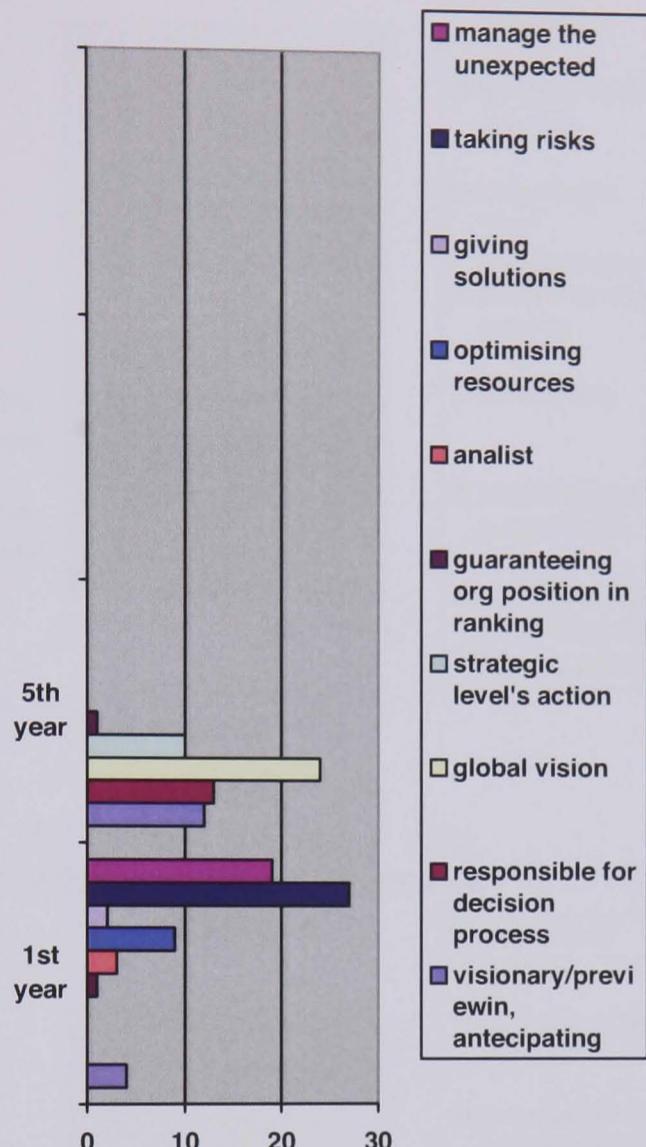
**2. Managers' role**  
**2.1. Top managers' role**  
**2.1.1. Technical activities and strategies**



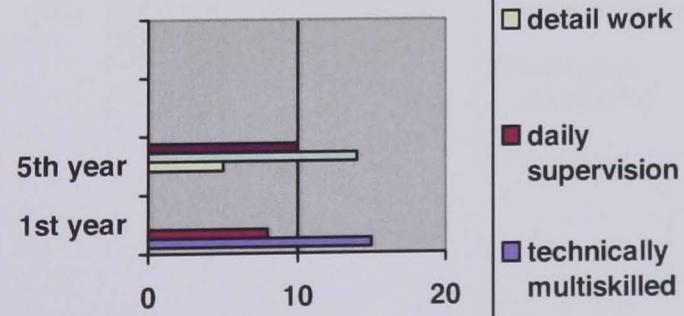
**2. Managers role**  
**2.1.Top managers role**  
**2.1.2. Interpersonal activities and strategies**

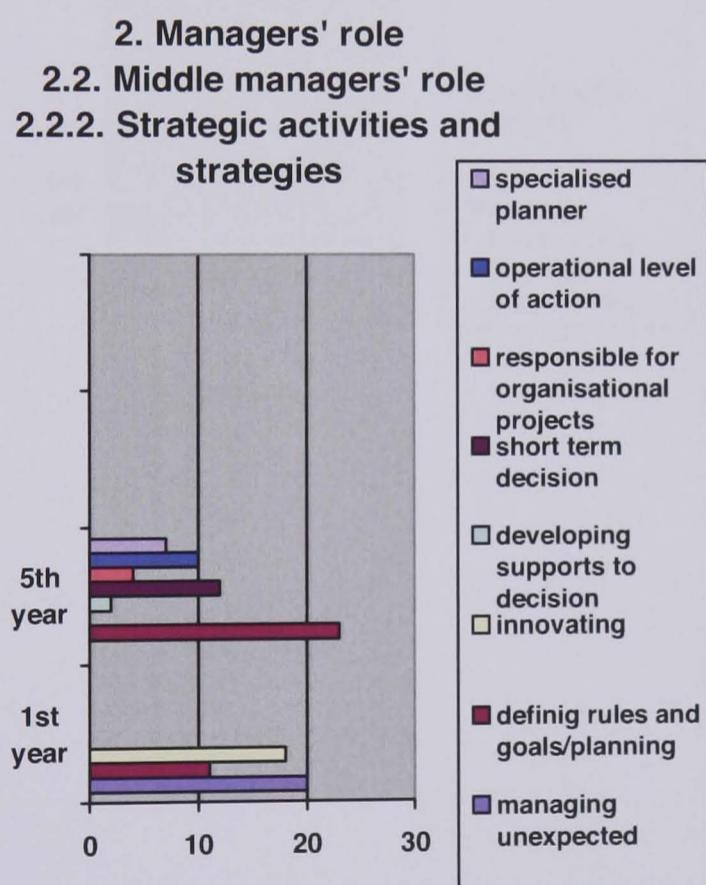
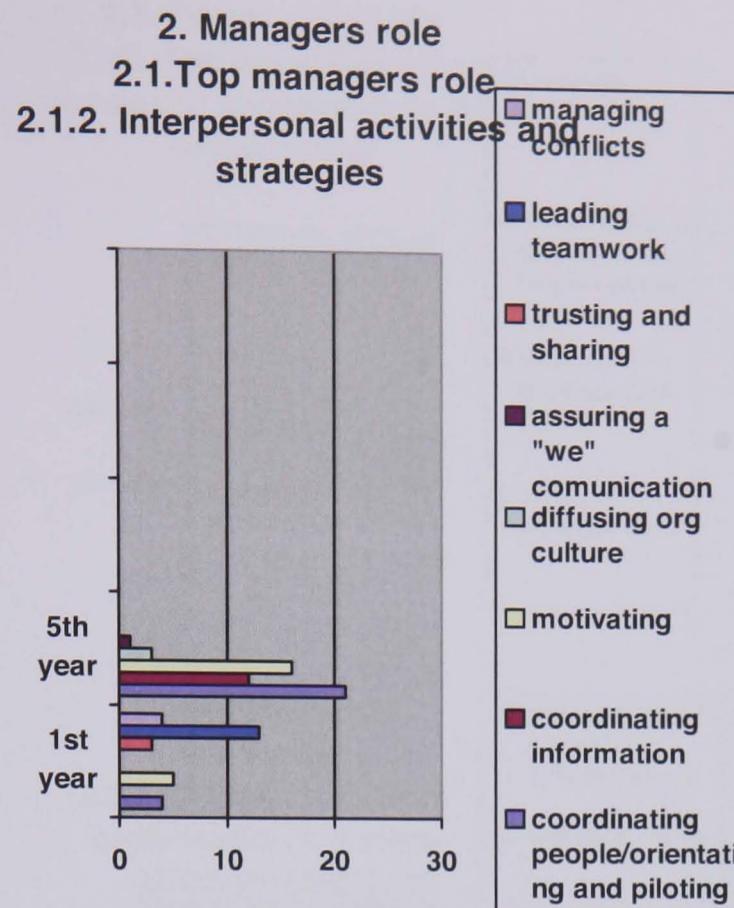


**2. Managers role**  
**2.1. Top managers role**  
**2.1.3. Strategic activities and strategies**

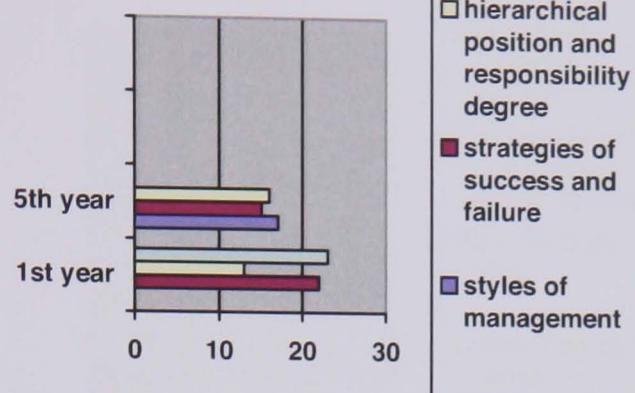


**2. Managers' role**  
**2.2. Middle manager's role**  
**2.2.1. Technical activities and strategies**

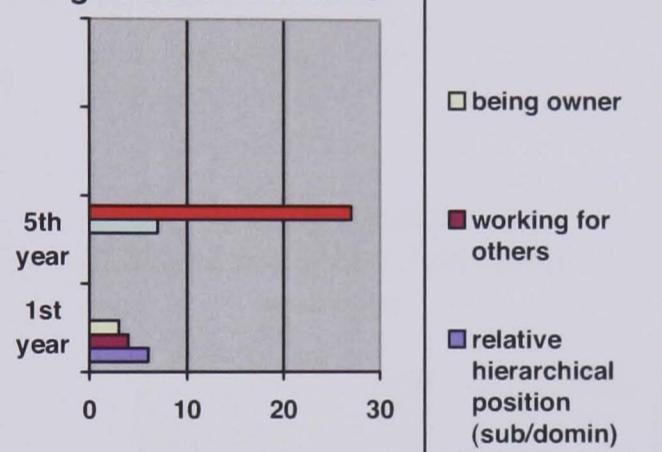




**2.3. Power, relevance**  
**2.3.1. Factors influencing managers' importance to the organisation**

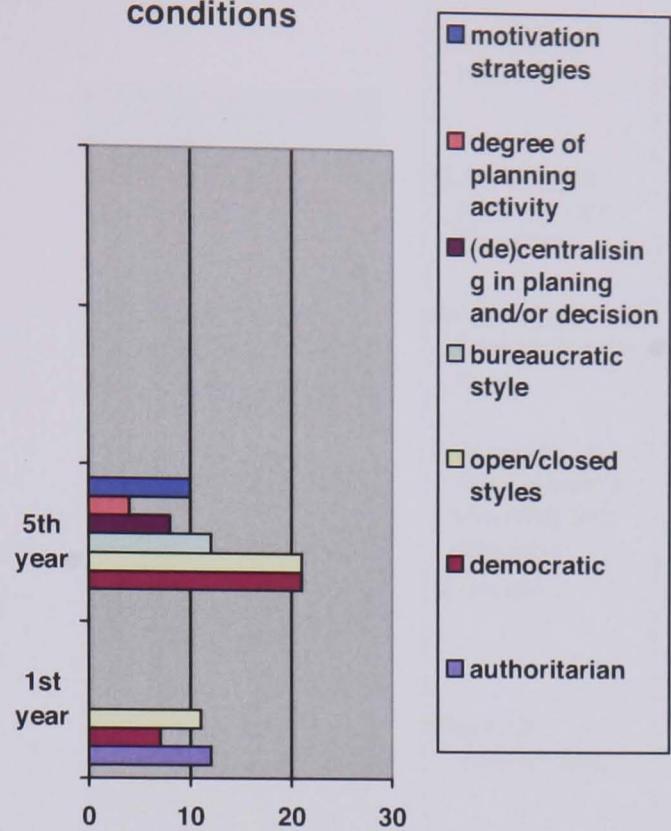


**2. Managers role**  
**2.3. Power**  
**2.3.2. Dependence from organisation's factors**



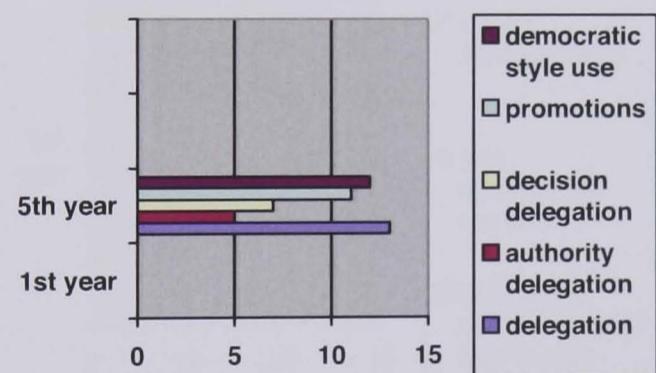
## 2.4. Leadership

### 2.4.1. Leadership styles and conditions



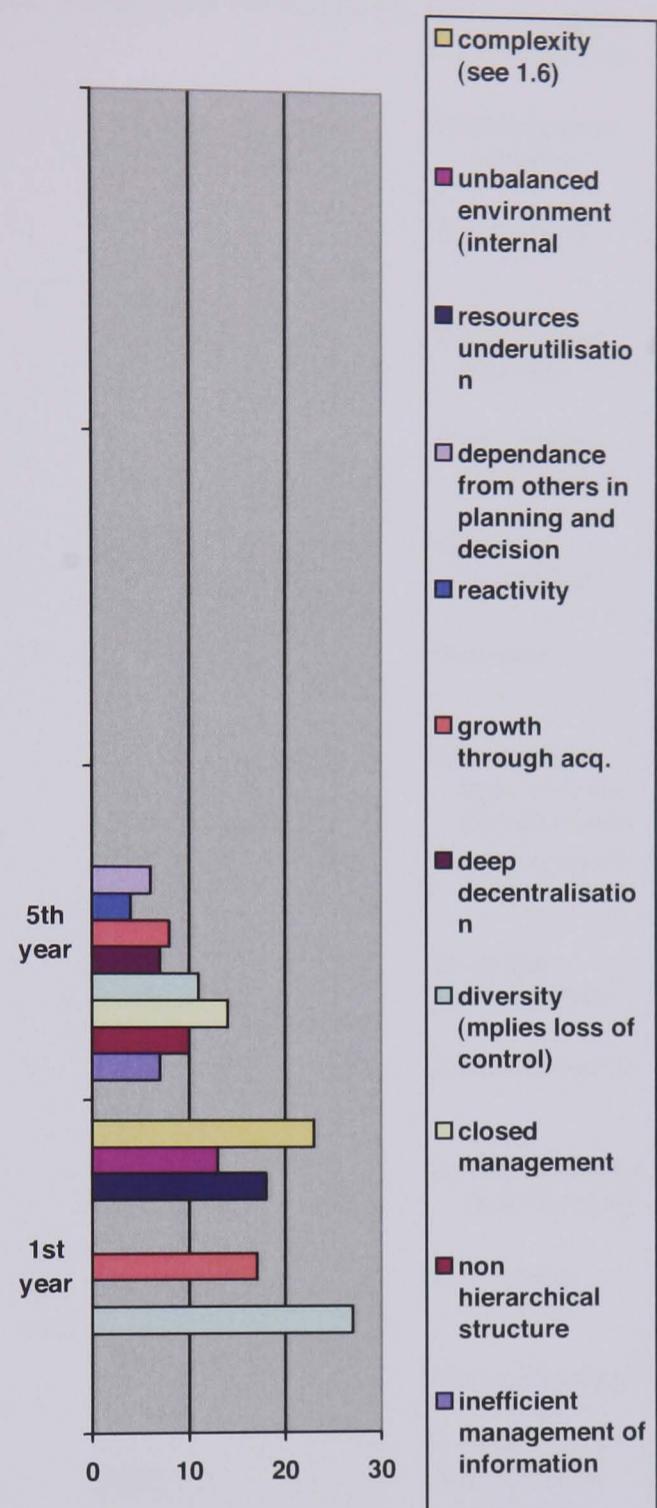
## 2.4. Leadership

### 2.4.2. Leadership's motivation strategies



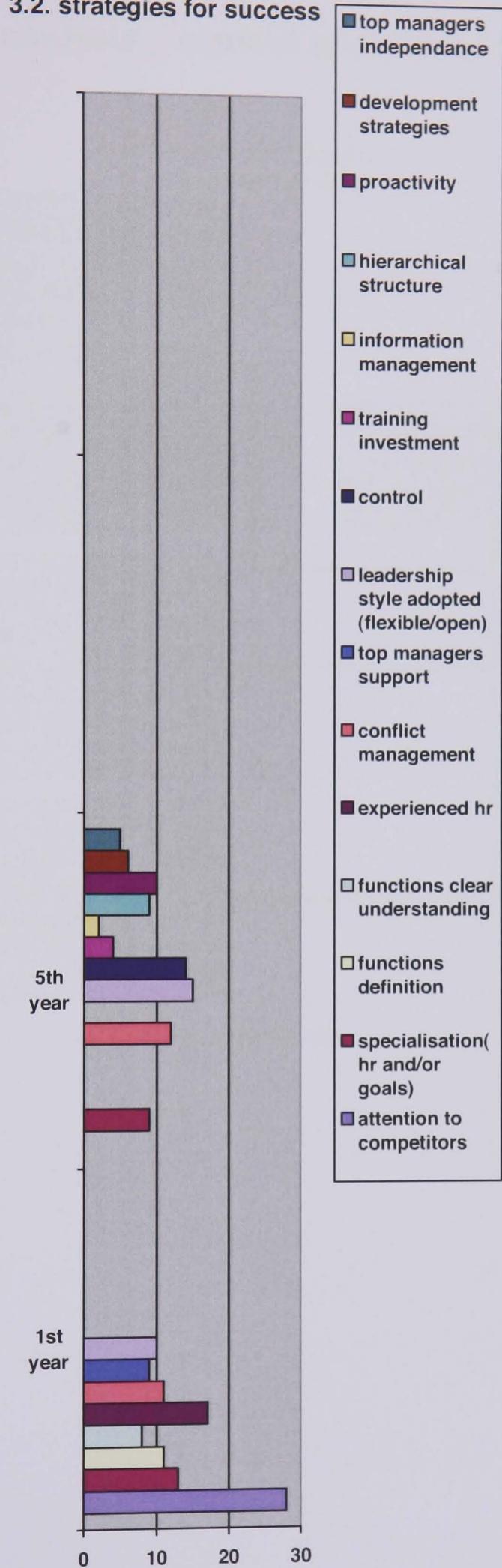
### 3. Management success

#### 3.1. Threats



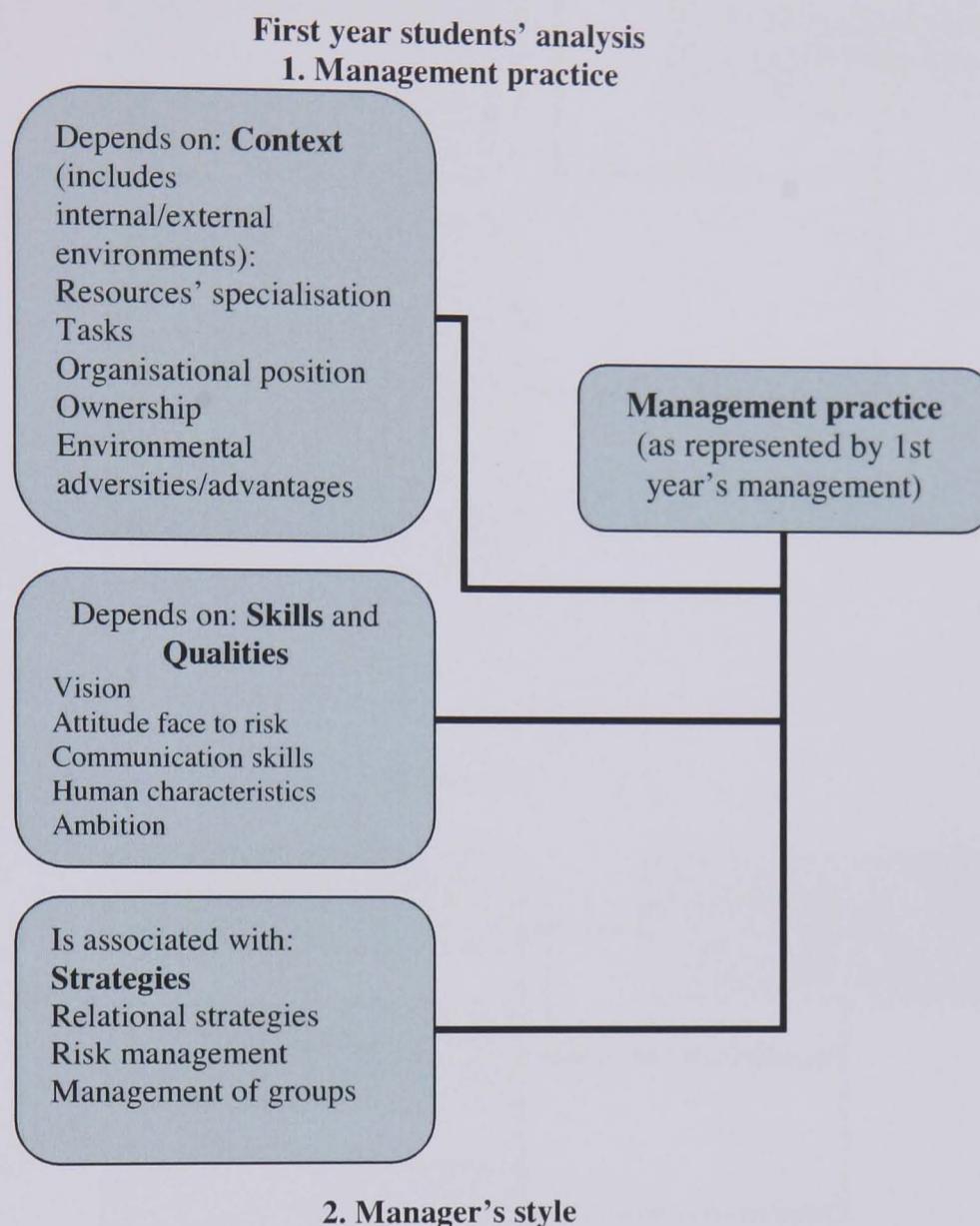
### 3. Management success

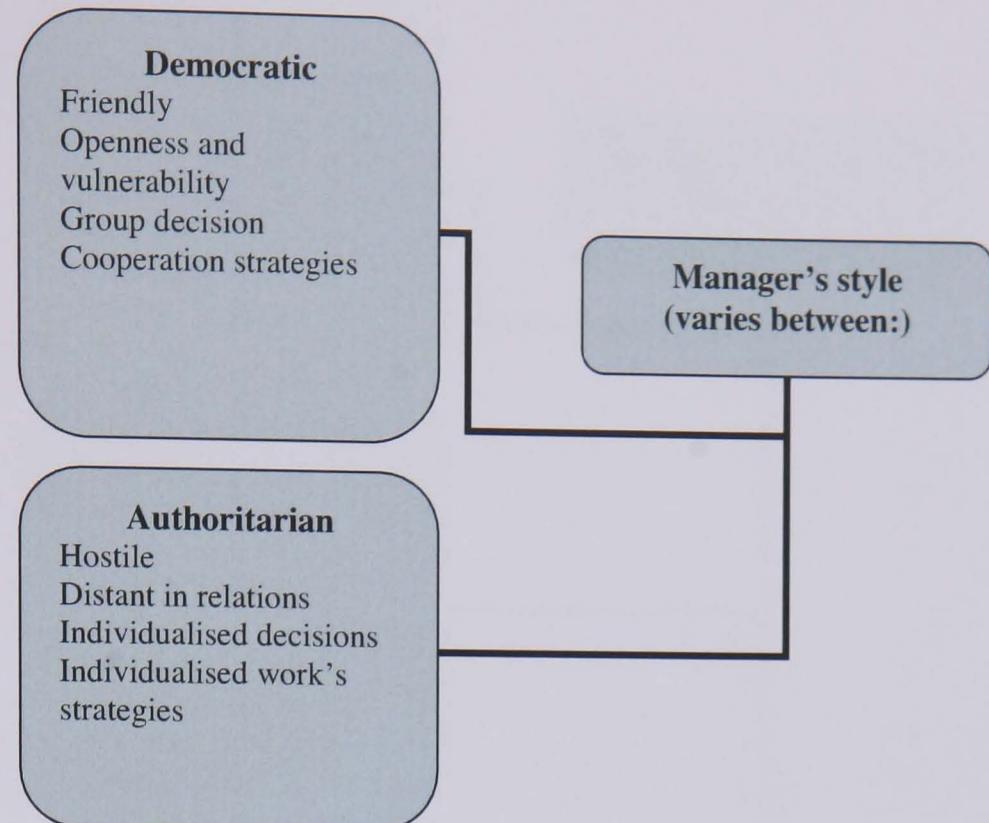
#### 3.2. strategies for success



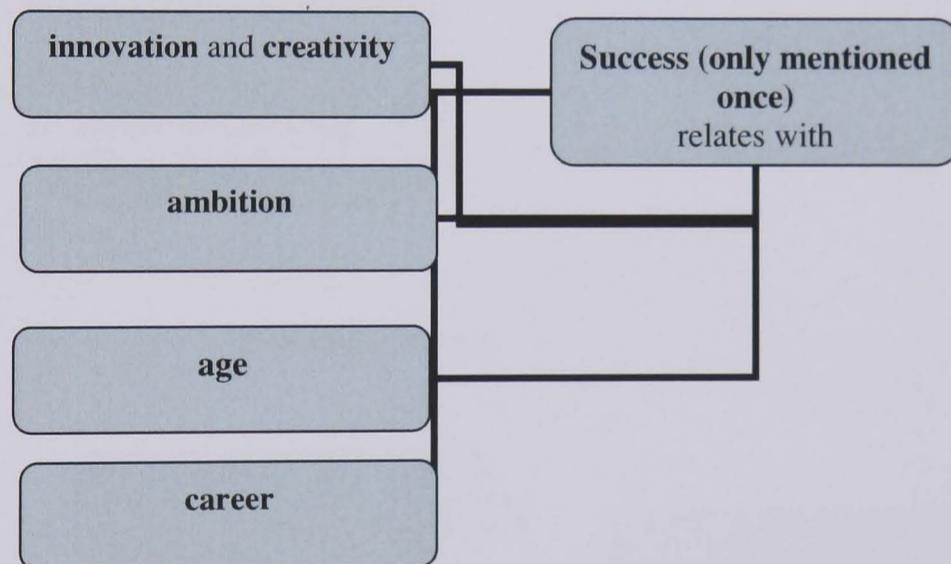
## Appendix 6

### “Repertory grid analysis \_ content analysis of constructs produced”

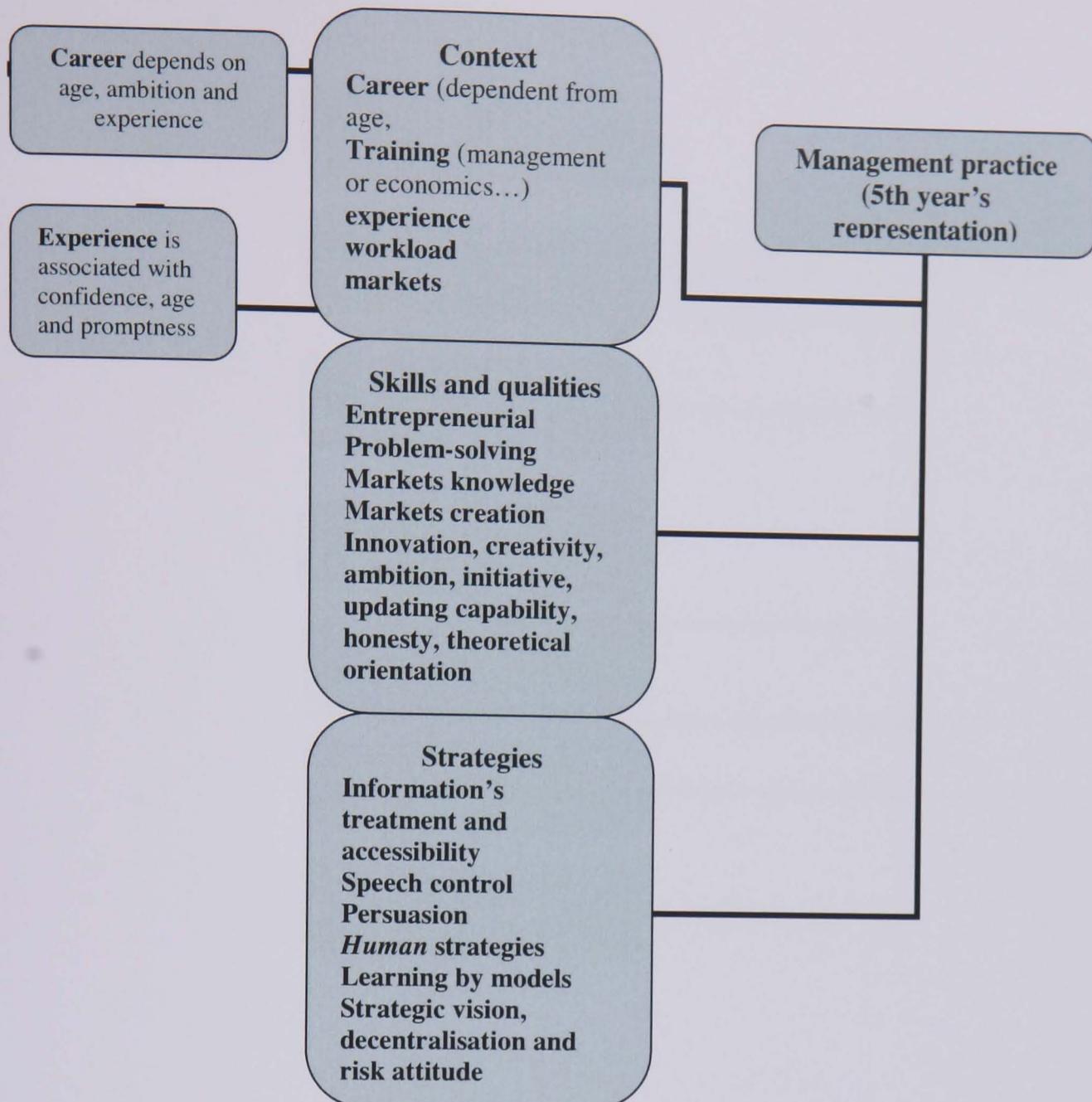




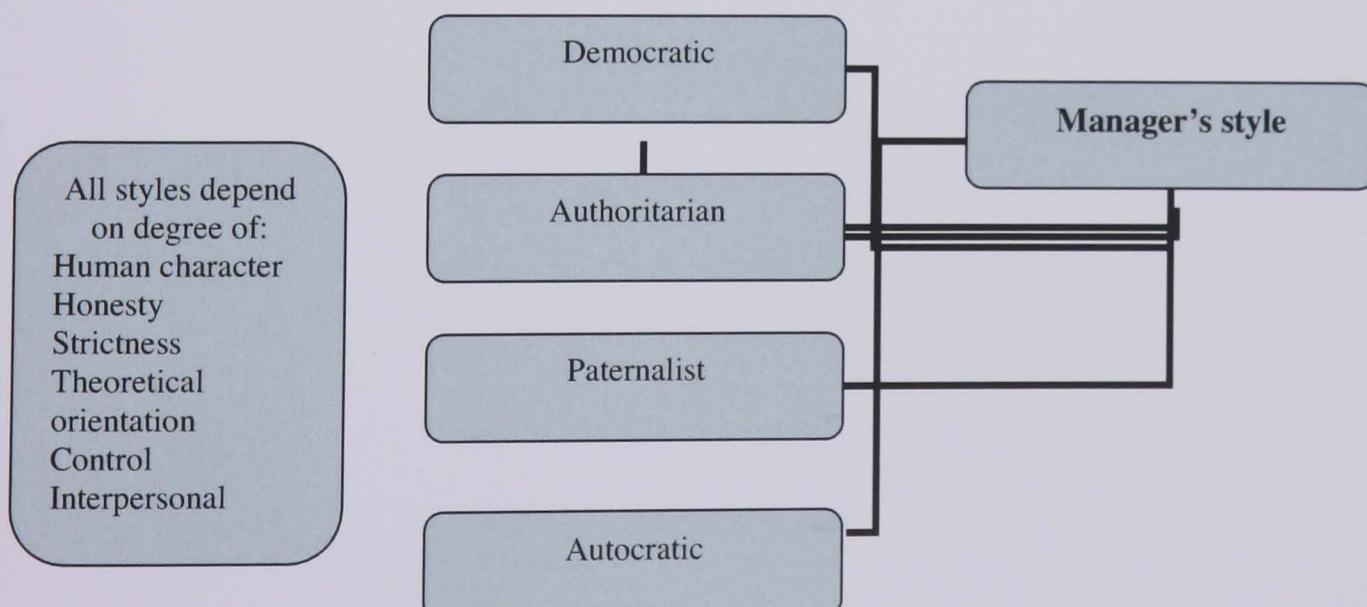
### 3. Success



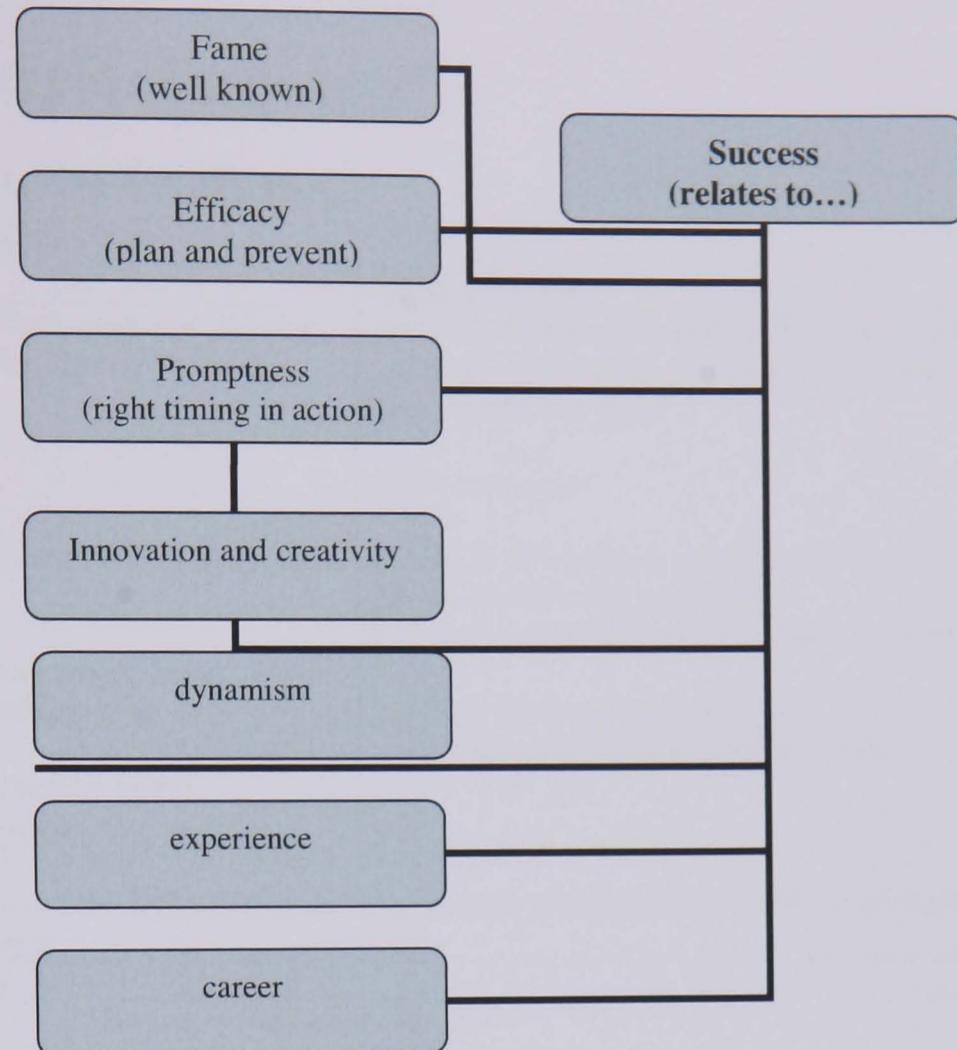
**Fifth year students' analysis**  
**1. Management practice**



## 2. Manager's style



### 3. Success



## Appendix 7

### “Types and subtypes of managers”

#### \_ First year’s cluster analysis \_

THE LEADERSHIP ARCHETYPE	
HUMAN	EGOCENTRIC
goals are social, organisational, mainly well-being, respect for others; people are human beings, considering others' needs	goals are individual, mainly profit ones; disrespect for others; people may be pieces of machines, ignoring others' needs
vision is global	vision is partial
the attitude is thinking of others and /or with others, open relations, friendly	attitude is self-centred, thinking individually, distant, closed relations, hostile
the practice is managing with others, team management, collective, collaborative	the practice is managing individually, centralising
attention is put on people (besides tasks) motivation uses group strategies	attention is put on task and results motivation uses individualised strategies

Within each main type (pole of the archetype), variations emerge, each introducing new constructs to the basic construction of manager:

HUMAN type's subtypes	
<b>Successful</b>	organised and achieving goals structured and organised activities high responsibilities international (large organisations)
<b>Unsuccessful</b>	Working for others no preparation to manage academic education predetermined non-achieving goals (small organisations)
<b>Managing global (no ac. ed.)</b>	important problems to solve long term solutions standardised situations theoretical errors' consequences are irrelevant
<b>Managing restrict (No academic training)</b>	managing through experience following others experience and knowledge motivating open to changes restricted management
<b>Powerful</b>	with influence/powerful/famous keeping previous work done open to changes
<b>Powerless</b>	restricted power low ambition (public organisations)
<b>Realistic</b>	risk management strategies adequate to organisational reality adequate ambition high responsibility
<b>Honest and powerful</b>	discreet open to changes

	frontal honest with a visible project to manage powerful, with influence
<b>Honest and powerless</b>	no fame honest humble with academic education long career in management (usually old) experienced resistant to changes low innovation and creative processes
<b>The good example</b>	guide/teacher safe management experienced management no academic education

<b>EGOCENTRIC type's subtypes</b>	
<b>Successful</b>	owners well prepared to manage no academic education predefined achieving goals (large organisations)
<b>Unsuccessful</b>	unstructured activities non-organised and non achieving goals low responsibility national (small organisations)
<b>Managing global (with academic training)</b>	Trying new ways in management global management motivation failure
<b>Managing restrict (with academic training)</b>	common problems to solve quick/immediate solutions specific and real situations to manage practical management errors' consequences are relevant
<b>Powerful</b>	high ambition powerful (private organisations)
<b>Powerless</b>	restricted power no academic education starting from zero resistant to changes/old-fashioned
<b>Unrealistic</b>	inadequate strategies exaggerated ambition low responsibility
<b>The Powerful Charlatan</b>	no academic education young but with quick career inexperienced open to changes prestige and influence dishonest innovative and creative
<b>The Powerless Charlatan</b>	inadequate strategies exaggerated ambition resistant to changes dishonest ambiguous no visible project of management no influence, powerless

<b>The Bad Example</b>	goals are not clear corrupt risk management academic education fresh management not a model to follow in management
------------------------	--

### The mixed types

#### Mixed (1)

(as they present characteristics from both human and egocentric types)

<b>Competent (1)</b>	<b>Incompetent (1)</b>
quality management practice qualified employees high responsibility pursuing clients satisfaction adversity in organisational context executing/restricted practice (private/small organisations)	less quality in management practice non-qualified employees global vision/planning low responsibility “letting go” easy context to manage
Mixed attitude is: managing individually but giving attention to people and task	Mixed attitude is: managing with others but giving attention only to tasks

## Appendix 8

### “Types and subtypes of managers”

#### \_ Fifth year’s cluster analysis \_

HUMAN	EGOCENTRIC
human in decision human non profit goals worried about human results no financial results orientation  friendly relation with employees listening to others accessible guide/teacher comprehensive open, available, helping first people, then machines non director giving relevance to HR	coldness mathematical orientation profit goals worried about financial results financial results orientation (economic vision) authoritarian relation with employees distorted information use inaccessible demanding/asking inflexible authoritarian image first machines, then people director paternalist

SUCCESSFUL	UNSUCCESSFUL
from known organisations well-known professional success successful team building famous effective leadership public recognition influent/intervening good results regular and consistent results an example to follow powerful rapid and efficient answer to problems negotiation power successful	unknown organisations unnoticed/unknown difficulties in creating teams with right people limited fame failing in leadership limited recognition less influence less professional/problems with results irregular and inconsistent results a model not to be followed powerless/no influence slower answer to problems limited power unsuccessful/less successful

## Types from Success archetype

### A. Crossing leadership and success

Egocentric Successful:	Human Unsuccessful:
<b>The experienced:</b> Experienced Solid career Global management Employer Formal and/or big organisations Worked decisions	<b>The inexperienced:</b> Inexperienced Beginning career Local management Employee Informal/small, medium organisations adventurer
<b>The strategist:</b>  Strategic vision  Academic training Starting from zero  Image is not a priority	<b>The immediate manager:</b>  Difficulties in strategic vision Training through experience Develop others' previous work Image is primary goal
<b>The “top” manager</b> Important career High responsibilities	<b>The “middle” manager</b>  Limited career Little responsibilities
<b>The Egocentric unsuccessful/the immediate manager</b>  Immediate management Careless with information  Low responsibility  Local management	<b>The Human successful/the strategist</b>  Strategic management Care with information High responsibility Global markets and management
Note: these constructs – strategic vision, responsibility degree, action level, and communication skills and attitude – are fundamental in determining success/failure in management, for both egocentric and human managers, according to 5tgh year's students.	
High responsibility, ambition and experience (exception made to the latter in one situation, while associated with middle manager) always emerge associated with successful profiles of manager, be they egocentric or human types. Academic training appears more frequently associated with success than the contrary, but it's no condition of success.	

### B. Other success' types

<b>Successful profile</b>	<b>Unsuccessful profile</b>
Normally is	Normally is
Experienced	Inexperienced
Ambitious (and associated constructs, such as dynamic, innovative, creative...)	Low ambitious/less/no ambition (with associated constructs, such as settled, passive, no creative, outdated, old-fashioned, accommodated)
International (associated with other image characteristics, such as importance, richness, and direct use of image in communication)	National/Portuguese (associated with other image characteristics, such as low relevance, whilst the investment might be big, smaller fortune and no direct use of image in communication processes)
Having high responsibilities Position: top, rather than middle manager Employer, rather than employee	Low responsibility Position: middle, rather than top manager Employee, rather than employer
We may distinguish successful types with following characteristics (besides common referred constructs): the experienced (entrepreneur, innovative, decisions expertise, and complex activity), the strategist (who think future, is rich and dynamic) and the ambitious manager (persistent, controlling, with a relevant image).	We may distinguish unsuccessful types, with following characteristics (besides common referred constructs): the inexperienced (outdated, decisions' inexperience, routine activity) the immediate manager (think immediate, settled, accommodated, less rich) and the undetermined (strict, no ambition, with an irrelevant image and a backstage work)
Note: We also find the experienced and inexperienced manager's type with no association to success or leadership, just with employee (for inexperienced) and owner (for experienced)	
Note: academic training emerges in both profiles, and is not condition of success or failure.	
Other conditions which relate to these types are the goals definition	

## Appendix 9

### “Interviews’ data \_ Managers’ types”

<b>Manager basic skills</b>	<p>Human relations skills (fundamental) and communication skills</p> <p>Technical skills in account and finance, in product markets</p> <p>Prevision and strategic skill</p> <p>Decision skills (besides collect and select resources)</p> <p>Time managing, besides managing all kind of resources</p> <p>Arguing capacity</p> <p>Humble</p> <p>Flexibility</p> <p>Knowledge of the human people</p> <p>Versatility and to adapt to situations</p> <p>Knowing the techniques</p>	<p>Analysis skills</p> <p>Distinguish between essential and secondary information to work with situations</p> <p>Identify major influence factors in organisational situations</p> <p>Creativity, innovation</p> <p>Honesty, ethics</p> <p>Trustable, good reputation</p> <p>More up to date motivated and less knowledge</p> <p>Work available</p> <p>Flexible in terms of organisational characteristics and goals (health, industry, education)</p> <p>Capable to solve any kind of problems and attend to any kind of organisational demands</p>	<p>Managing resources</p> <p>Maximise resources</p> <p>Being attentive to all factors involved in situation</p> <p>Giving particular attention to human factor</p> <p>Critical perspective of things</p> <p>To decide (between strategies, methods and situations)</p> <p>For most of them: having academic training in management (some will be successful managers with or without it, but most must have it)</p>
<b>Manager’s definition</b>	<p>Possess necessary instruments to solve problems</p> <p>Within organisational goals to pursue</p> <p>A technician for decision</p> <p>Manage scarce resources</p>	<p>Help organisations living from others' financial capitals</p> <p>Gather resources, select and manage scarce resources, most important ones being the human,</p> <p>Decide, is responsible for, and develop organisation with his work</p> <p>Is versatile</p>	<p>To reach efficacy</p> <p>Work those factors for organisation's benefit</p> <p>Some features are born with the manager</p> <p>Consider human factor in first place</p>
<b>Management definition</b>	<p>A technique in a social analysis process, where decision is fundamental</p> <p>Markets are preferential target-environments for management practice</p>	<p>Is always changing in demands and required knowledge.</p> <p>Target-markets are changing all the time for managers; they need to plan (not to live day by day)</p> <p>Makes the balance between diverse factors contributing to organisational production</p>	<p>Managing organisations, privileging human factor, organisations having profit or non-profit goals</p>
<b>Managers’ preparation</b>	<p>Managers’ specialised training/preparation must happen outside school environment and timing. School should prepare generically.</p>	<p>Most managers don't have strategic planning developed (don't predict investments consequences in terms of cost analysis)_they need such a preparation</p>	<p>Academic training _ most of them</p> <p>To have management academic training correspond to job market interests and academic training offers</p> <p>Exception is for some managers that don't need the training (those succeed in developing their abilities and capacities for management in contexts other than academic one_ might be workplace or other).</p>

**Constraints to  
management  
practice**

Ambition, excessive workload and decrease of qualitative aspects  
Corruption by group pressures (internal ones or organisation's external groups)