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# Reinforcing the concept of social management

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## Abstract

The concept of social management may be considered unreachable, even a dream, when observing the current context. However, it is crucial to emphasize social management and resist the concept of strategic management that is predominant in today's administration area. Thus, the repetition of a theme that has been debated in Brazilian academia since the early 1990s is a journey in search of a better qualification for the central concept of this text: social management. Therefore, although we are at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is crucial to return to the end of the eighteenth century to observe the concept of social management using the lens of enlightenment. Enlightenment or barbarism? That is the question.

**Keywords:** Social management. Strategic management. Modernity. Postmodernity.

## Mais uma vez o conceito de gestão social

### Resumo

Este artigo busca repetir, uma vez mais, o conceito de gestão social, que talvez seja um sonho que pode não se realizar, dadas as condições de “temperatura e pressão” sob as quais vivemos na contemporaneidade. Não obstante, a resistência conceitual deve ser o motivo para que possamos reagir ao que consideramos predominante na hodierna área da Administração: a gestão estratégica. Assim, a repetição de um tema que, desde o início dos anos 1990, vem sendo apresentado à academia brasileira é um caminhar em busca de uma qualificação melhor para o conceito central deste texto: a gestão social. Para tanto, apesar de estarmos no início do século XXI, recorreremos ao fim do século XVIII, a fim de aproximar o conceito de gestão social dos parâmetros iluministas dessa centúria. Iluminismo ou barbárie? Eis a questão.

**Palavras-chave:** Gestão social. Gestão estratégica. Modernidade. Pós-modernidade.

## Una vez más, el concepto de gestión social

### Resumen

Este artículo se propone repetir y enfatizar, una vez más, el concepto de gestión social, que talvez sea una quimera, un sueño que puede no realizarse dadas las condiciones de “temperatura” y “presión” bajo las cuales vivimos en la contemporaneidad. No obstante, la resistencia conceptual debe ser el motivo que nos impulse a reaccionar a lo que consideramos predominante en la hodierna área de la Administración: la gestión estratégica. Así, la repetición de un tema que, desde el inicio de los años 1990, se está presentado a la academia brasileña es un caminar en busca de una calificación mejor para el concepto central de este texto: la gestión social. Para ello, a pesar de estar a principios del siglo XXI, recurrimos al final del siglo XVIII a los efectos de aproximar el concepto de gestión social a los parámetros iluministas de esa centuria. ¿Iluminismo o barbarie? He aquí la cuestión.

**Palabras clave:** Gestión social. Gestión estratégica. Modernidad. Posmodernidad.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1990s, the Brazilian Academy has been facing the concept of **social management**, which is sometimes accepted by it, with exceptions, and sometimes is relegated. The proposition of a managerial concept that is opposed to those in the mainstream still lacks better institutionalization<sup>1</sup> in teaching, research and extension, which occurs mainly in higher education institutions dedicated to Administration (Public and Private) and Social Work. This gap still remains, in spite of institutional support, such as those of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes, initials in Portuguese), which, through public notices, stimulates the discussions around the theme; the creation of the Network of Researchers in Social Management (RGS, initials in Portuguese); the National Meetings of Researchers in Social Management (Enapegs, initials in Portuguese), among others. These circumstances can be observed in the debates circulating throughout RGS and/or through other academic settings, such as the National Association of Graduate Studies in Administration (Anpad, initials in Portuguese), as well as in the newly established National Association of Teaching and Research of the “*Campo de Públicas*”<sup>2</sup> (ANEPCP, initials in Portuguese), as well as the Brazilian Society of Public Administration (SBAP, initials in Portuguese)<sup>3</sup>. They are all institutional spaces in which the meaning of social management has not yet succeeded in establishing itself. Thus, the intention of this article is to reiterate what has been previously written<sup>4</sup>, perhaps expanding it.

Why do we reiterate it? Because we argue that the type of management that prevails in our society of organizations, backed by a mode of production that reproduces exclusion and inequality, centred on calculation and blind market operation, is not able to meet the needs of society. This is because its management practices serve the strategic interests of systems and individuals and/or groups that feed and are fed by those same systems whenever it is advantageous – generally, in conformity with the *status quo* that in the market society means operating under the prevailing maintenance of gains/profits earned in commercial and/or financial operations. Thus, management is disregarded as a dynamic element that involves people and values, whose impact extends beyond the very organizational working process, implying social repercussions (ARAÚJO, 2012). Which management, therefore, are we talking about and which one do we oppose?

Here, we are opposed to strategic management<sup>5</sup>, a way of managing in which the monetary calculation of consequences, the exchange value, are the primary references in the decision-making processes. Strategic management refers to “a type of utilitarian social action, based on the calculation of means and ends and implemented through the interaction of two or more people, in which one of them has formal authority over the other(s)” (TENÓRIO, 2002, p. 123, free translation). Thus, it prevails in private business organizations, in which their operating conditions are determined, and the State imposes it on society “through processes eminently based on technical reason, configuring technobureaucratic interventions” (GIOVANNI and NOGUEIRA, 2015, p. 412, free translation). Since its birth, in the 19th century, strategic management has been understood and practiced in an ahistorical way, to the taste of fads that, from time to time, appear in managerial literature. It follows a “managerialist” logic, which is an ideology of power that relies on rationalist rules, precise prescriptions, sophisticated measurement instruments, objective evaluative techniques, but also on “irrational rules, unrealistic prescriptions, inapplicable dashboards and arbitrary judgments” (GAULEJAC, 2007, p. 37-38, free translation).

<sup>1</sup> In addition to research and extension activities, there are many institutionalized undergraduate and graduate courses, but with different approaches, that do not define, for example, in its curricula what should be taught about social management. This can lead, sometimes, to a certain trivialisation and to misunderstandings about such a concept.

<sup>2</sup> The “*Campo de Públicas*” (Publics’ Field, in a free and inevitably inaccurate translation), arises from a political-epistemological movement led by Brazilian students, researchers and professors, who aim at gathering different undergraduate and graduate courses related to the notions of ‘public’ and of ‘management’, such as Public Administration, Public Management, Public Policies, Public Policy Management, Social Management and akin.

<sup>3</sup> Anepcp and SBAP are two of the associations, which have been representing courses in the so-called “*Campo de Públicas*”. For more information, see <www.anepcp.org.br> and <www.sbap.org.br>.

<sup>4</sup> “Gestão social: uma perspectiva conceitual”, “(Re)visitando o conceito de gestão social” and “Reprisando o conceito de gestão social” poderão ser encontrados em TENÓRIO, F. G. *Uma alternativa: gestão social*. Ijuí: Editora Unijuí, 2016; “Escorços sobre gestão pública e gestão social” In: MARTINS, P. E. M. et al. (Orgs.). *Estado e gestão pública: visões do Brasil contemporâneo*. Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 2006. p. 107-132; “Gestão social: uma réplica” em RIGO, A. S. et al. (Orgs.). *Gestão social e políticas públicas de desenvolvimento: ações, articulações e agenda*. Recife: Univasf, 2010; eand “Gestão social, um conceito não idêntico? Ou a insuficiência inevitável do pensamento” In: CANÇADO, A. C. et al. (Orgs.). *Gestão social: aspectos teóricos e aplicações*. Ijuí: Editora Unijuí, 2012. p. 23-35.

<sup>5</sup> According to Tenório (1998, p. 14), strategic management is a type of utilitarian social action, based on the calculation of means and ends and implemented through the interaction of two or more people, in which one of them has formal authority over the other(s). By extension, in this type of managerial action, the enterprise-system determines its operating conditions and the State imposes itself on society. It is a combination of technical competence and hierarchical attribution, which produces the substance of technocratic behaviour. By technocratic behaviour, we mean any social action implemented under the hegemony of technical or technobureaucratic power, which manifests itself in both the public and the private sectors, a common phenomenon to contemporary societies”.

Social management arises, therefore, in opposition to strategic management, seeking for a fairer society, one that is democratically articulated in the management of its interests, other than the interests of the market, a society's enclave that wishes to replace it as a whole. In other words, from the perspective of a kind of management focused on calculation, we insist on the possibility of another kind of management, within organizations and between organizations and society, a *social management*. It is, therefore, the opposition to strategic management, insofar as it "tries to replace technobureaucratic, monological management with participatory, dialogical management, in which the decision-making process is exercised through different social subjects" (TENÓRIO, 1998, p. 16, free translation)<sup>6</sup>. It is a "dialogical managerial process in which decision-making authority is shared among the participants in the action (action that can occur in any type of social system – public, private or within non-governmental organizations)" (TENÓRIO, 2008, p. 39, free translation). This seminal concept, one of the most cited in the literature on this subject, assumes Jürgen Habermas' communicative action<sup>7</sup> and deliberative democracy as its analytical premises, inspiring other conceptualizations and propositions *of* and *about* social management. Currently, there are multiple concepts and a wide polysemy surrounding social management (ARAÚJO, 2012)<sup>8</sup>. There are similarities and distinctions between those who affirm and defend what social management might and might not be, with the prevailing notion that it is essentially dialogical and participatory; focused on changing and innovating standards and patterns; aimed at boosting socio-territorial development, strengthening democracy and consolidating citizenship and governance, as the main ideological values and structuring elements governing it (ARAÚJO, 2012).

Why do we insist on keeping the concept of social management on the academic agenda? There are possibly two reasons. One of them is related to the exhaustion of a model of political and economic organization that, from the perspective of a society submitted to the canons of the market, does not meet the republican needs, nor the common good of that same society, since the concentration of national income, here and elsewhere, under the control of a few, prevents the majority of the population from enjoying the results of the national production. In turn, the political decision-making process is subject to representativeness, at its different levels, in which those elected by the population only serve the interests of those who financially enhance their elections. Hence, society does not have control over these or other processes that affect it managerially. Why is society managerially affected, attacked? Because the technobureaucratic stratum – either public or private – is not well trained and it creates social values to understand and to serve the general interest of citizenship and/or the public good. The stratum is trained to attend, at most, to the bureaucratic and/or technical formalism – usually to the private interest. In the case of Administration and other areas, such as Production Engineering, standardization and profit have been the curriculum reference of these qualifications.

Once again, we reinforce that the intention of this text is to re-present what has already been said on other occasions, in order to value the concept of social management, whose meaning seeks to be antithetical to that of strategic management, which in turn does not even allow being questioned, given its arrogance. In social management, "the truth only exists if all participants in the action admit its validity, that is, the truth is the promise of rational consensus, it is not a relationship between the individual and his perception of the world, but an agreement reached by means of intersubjective criticism" (GIOVANNI and NOGUEIRA, 2015, p. 412, free translation).

Therefore, what do we intend to do? Maintain in rehearsal, with no possibility of being definitive, a managerial concept that is closer to the republican meaning of *res publica* than to a managerial concept that only excludes other elements, without adding or incorporating anything.

Readers will note that this alleged set of words exposed here lacks content written exclusively in the field of Administration, that is, the text was not outlined based on the contents originated in such applied social science. This is because the knowledge produced in this area fails to account for the complex context, to which it should submit itself, that is, to Society. Hence, there

<sup>6</sup> Cançado (2011), Araújo (2012), Coelho and Menon (2019), Aguiar-Barbosa and Chim-Miki (2020) point out that the article published by Tenório (1988), in the *Revista de Administração Pública* (RAP), a Brazilian journal in the Public Administration field, is probably the first national text to deal, conceptually, with the term 'social management', being thus considered the foundations of its first generation.

<sup>7</sup> There is no need to describe, in this article, the Habermasian social theory; we would like, however, to highlight two of the five social actions issued by Habermas – the strategic and the communicative ones –, which enabled the establishment of the concepts of strategic management and social management by Tenório (1998). Strategic action: "when there can enter into the agent's calculation of success the anticipation of decisions on the part of at least one additional goal-directed actor. This model is often interpreted in utilitarian terms; the actor is supposed to choose and calculate means and ends from the standpoint of maximizing utility or expectations of utility" (HABERMAS, 1984, p. 85). "Communicative action refers to the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations (whether by verbal or by extraverbal means). The actors seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement. The central concept of interpretation refers in the first instance to negotiating definitions of the situation which admit of consensus" (HABERMAS, 1984, p. 86).

<sup>8</sup> See Araújo (2012, p. 72), who proposes a comparative analytical framework on concepts and conceptions of social management traced by Singer (1999), Dowbor (1999), Carvalho (1999), Fischer (2002, 2009), Filho (2003, 2008), Maia (2005a, 2005b), Boullosa and Schommer (2008, 2009). Also see Cançado (2011).

is a need for subordinating the reading of the managerial and/or organizational phenomena to a critical understanding of such phenomena, under the risk of mystifying an area of knowledge that is below its potential, which is originally the market. On the other hand, we must consider that, although the text seeks to substantiate its writing with arguments from philosophy and/or social theory, it does not intend to state either one of these knowledges. The intent was only to travel over learning through different knowledges that could best explain the organizational phenomena, predominantly auxiliary to the harmful contradictions of a market-centred society.

As in other disciplines of a functionalist nature, management seems to be closer to processes of subordination than to knowledges endeavouring to promote human emancipation. Therefore, the text developed here seeks to address an imperative need: to focus its content on the social question and its expressions<sup>9</sup>, that is, on the general well-being, and not exclusively on the economic question meaning the material well-being. Social here will be understood not only as an adjective, but also in a substantive way, as belonging to “a public space of inter-relations” (ARAÚJO, 2012) or “to society, or [that] concerns society as such, that is, to the phenomena and the social relations that constitute it” (LALANDE, 1996, p. 1041, free translation). In this way, organizations and the way they promote and manage their social relations, internally and externally, tend to trigger the dynamics of societies. Therefore, to discuss the social is to do it under a bias in which knowing its meaning is not the privilege of any particular kind of knowledge, but of all those knowledges that deal with social relationships, the social question and its mutations. In other words, it demands plural knowledges, epistemes and ontologies, not based on the logic of coloniality in which the power of knowledge acts in order to maintain the Eurocentric hegemony as a superior perspective (QUIJANO, 2005). Social management thus brings a possibility of epistemological and ontological decoloniality, which, in an interdisciplinary way, seeks for a radical humanization of management from a dialogical perspective, so that it can constitute a more liberating force, and not an oppressive one. In addition, the concepts of social management are proposed by Latin American theorists, especially Brazilians (ARAÚJO, 2012), who state them based on practices theorized in a meaningful way and in a context of social struggles<sup>10</sup> for political, economic and environmental changes, promoted by multiple social actors mobilized in different (inter)organizational forms, around new modes and purposes for management.

The content explored here consists of interpretations, including continuous self-clarification, of the decoding that the authors make of a theme whose novelty or resistance is still in process. However, this does not mean that the positions previously taken, at the beginning of this debate in the 1990s, have changed. On the contrary, our position, and that of others who also follow this attitude, is that the meaning of social management intended here opposes that of strategic management. Thus, some questions are part of this interpretation. To what extent is it possible to discuss management meanings without clinging to the universal parameters of instrumental rationality? To what extent is it conceivable to debate and to practice management processes that are not subject to market calculation? To what extent is it admissible, in a world dominated by the exchange-value, to point out paths based on use-value? To what extent is deliberative management possible, to the detriment of delegated management? This text is not intended to provide answers, just to induce them. Therefore, we will focus the discussion under the parameters projected by modernity.

### **IN ADDITION TO THIS INTRODUCTION AND THE REFERENCES, THIS TEXT WAS DIVIDED INTO THREE ADDITIONAL ITEMS IN THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE: “MODERNITY”, “ENLIGHTENMENT OR BARBARISM?” AND “FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: SOCIAL MANAGEMENT OR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT?” MODERNITY**

The incentive to replay the concept of social management will be developed from two periods of human history: modernity – already surpassed for some, what justifies the concept of “postmodernity”, while, for others, it is still a project of humanity – and hypermodernity. Modernity refers to a “new way of thinking and a new world perspective inaugurated by

<sup>9</sup> The social question concerns the effects of the capitalist system, generating capital/labour relations and class struggle. This analytical category gained new diffuse contours thanks to the historical-cultural elements and to the changes in the world of work and in the productive processes; to the relations between the State and society; to social policies, mainly the so-called “principle of exclusion”, which ambiguously refers to the indigenous, racial and gender themes (WANDERLEY, 2008). “The social question, therefore, starts to be configured as the fight against the expressions of inequality, poverty and social exclusion. These expressions are confronted in this third Millennium – from renewed charity and corporate philanthropy to actions in different costumes –, created by capitalism to strengthen the capital, to the detriment of the subjects” (ARAÚJO, 2012, p. 59, free translation).

<sup>10</sup> “Social struggles are also pedagogical scenarios in which participants exercise their pedagogies of learning, unlearning, relearning, reflection and action” (WALSH, 2013, p. 29, free translation).

the Renaissance in opposition to scholasticism and the medieval spirit, being developed in the 16th and 17th centuries with Francis Bacon, Galileo and Descartes, among others, until the Enlightenment, of which it is the main expression” (JAPIASSU and MARCONDES, 1990, p. 170, free translation). Lyotard presents the idea of a “postmodern condition” as the need for “overcoming modernity, above all the belief in science and emancipatory reason, considering that these are, on the contrary, responsible for the continuous subjugation of the individual”. Habermas, in turn, defends the “project of modernity”, since it “is not yet finished, but needs to be carried forward, and only through it, by valuing critical reason, will it be possible to obtain the emancipation of man from ideology and political and economic domination” (HABERMAS, 1987). Gaulejac’s work (2007, p. 33) points out that hypermodernity is a term initially proposed by Max Pagès, in 1979, and further developed by Nicole Aubert, in 2004, and by Gilles Lipovetsky, in order to describe “the exacerbation of modernity setbacks”. This involves the “irrational ‘domination’ of instrumental rationality, the achievement of technological and economic progresses, which are factors of social regression, the achievement of individuals’ autonomy, which puts them under dependence”.

Primarily, we advert that the position taken in this article follows the perspective according to which modernity is yet to be achieved. Consequently, we advocate that managerial concepts and practices do not meet the project of modernity, perhaps only that of a capitalist modernity<sup>11</sup>. In turn, the managerial concept and practice that we call upon must be similar to the postulates of the Enlightenment, a convergent moment between the history of philosophy and modernity. This corresponds to the emergence of a turning point, enabling man to have his own light through reason<sup>12</sup>: a substantive that distinguishes men from animals to the extent that it allows human beings to reason, to understand and to judge – ethically – their relationship with nature and with other men, acting as a social being. Reason is the human capacity that can lead to managerial and operational practices orientated to the common good<sup>13</sup>, the central axis of a shared management, such as social management. Thus, understanding the importance of modernity, of the Enlightenment (Illustration, Philosophy of Enlightenment, Century of Light), is a *sine qua non* for understanding an alternative meaning that intends to be a managerial logic that differentiates it from the predominant, from the hegemonic one, from strategic management.

Therefore, the meaning of Enlightenment, here described as a reference to the concept of social management, accompanies the work of Sérgio Paulo Rouanet (1993). In *Mal-estar na modernidade* (Malaise in modernity, in free translation), he conceptualizes Enlightenment as “an *ens rationis*<sup>14</sup>, an *ethos*, an idea, not an epoch or a movement [like] Illustration, [...] a moment in the cultural history of the West. As a construction, the Enlightenment has a merely conceptual existence: it is the theoretical distillation of a current of ideas that flourished in the 18th century” (ROUANET, 1993, p. 13, free translation). It is the engendering of a project not yet concluded in the history of humankind, one that we would like to be the basis of a managerial mode (social management) equidistant from the one (strategic management) that produces alienation, conformism, consumerism, particularism, productivism and, in short, lethargy. Next, we will try to expand the discussion of the meaning of the modernity *ethos*.

The concepts of modernity and postmodernity have been transversal to Western thought, both with regard to studies of the themes related to aesthetics and in debates involving Social Sciences. Such allusions, in some cases, are used out of sheer fashion, as we often pronounce them without even knowing, for sure, what exactly we are talking about. These concepts are presented as contradictory, especially because postmodernity is distinguished from modernity by the fact that the prefix

<sup>11</sup> [The] capitalist modernity is cumulative [...] it is both global and unequal- the product of the same process that is expressed in different ways in different places” (MENDONÇA, 2014, p. 62-63, free translation).

<sup>12</sup> Reason: “1. Faculty of judging that characterizes human beings. The ability to well judge and to distinguish the true from the false, [...]. 2. In a more specific sense, reason is the ability, starting from certain *a priori* principles, that is, established independently of experience, to establish certain constant relations between things, thus allowing the arrival at the truth, or to demonstrate, to justify any hypothesis or statement. In this sense, reason is discursive, that is, it articulates concepts and propositions to draw conclusions from them according to logical principles. 3. Reason is also identified with natural light, or the knowledge that man is naturally capable of, as opposed to faith and revelation” (JAPIASSU and MARCONDES, 1990, p. 209, free translation). “In current language, reason is synonymous with understanding. In fact, it walks alongside understanding, but it overcomes it. [...] it is on the move [...]. Craves reflection; it opposes arbitrariness. It accomplishes the self-knowledge of each person and, by knowing limitations, personal humility, opposes arrogance. [...] reason does not exist by nature, but only by decision. It does not happen by itself, as a natural fact and as the totality of concrete human existence, insofar as it has the character of nature, but it is born of freedom” (JASPERS, 1958, p. 49-57, free translation).

<sup>13</sup> For Matteucci (2010, p. 106-107, free translation), the idea of the common good originates from Catholic political thought, mainly with Tomás de Aquino and Maritain, based on solidarity. It distinguishes itself from the individual good and the public good. “While the public good is the good of all because they are united, the common good is that of individuals because they are members of a State. It is a common value that individuals can only pursue together, in harmony”. For this reason, it presents analogies with the “general willingness” and is related to the economic analysis of collective or public goods, with the conceptions of neo-contractualism. A category that makes explicit the attempt to achieve greater social integration through consensus.

<sup>14</sup> *Ens rationis* would be an “object of thought artificially created by the spirit for the needs of the speech and with no existence in it, no concrete representation. In this sense, all abstract and general ideas were sometimes called ‘reason entities’; but this term is mainly used in a pejorative sense, to insist on the verbal or unreal character of what is so called” (LALANDE, 1996, p. 304-305). Despite the derogatory sense that an abstract thought may acquire, here we will not use it in that way. Alongside *ens rationis*, we will use *ethos*, an idea referring to values that influence the concept of social management.



“post” (after) attributes antithetical content to modernity, since this concept – modernity – is said to be aged, to be already a part of the past. However, there is no consensus on this, considering the positions of Jean-François Lyotard and Jürgen Habermas, for example. The first defends the existence of a postmodernity, while the second claims that modernity persists as a project. There are still those who consider postmodernity a fad, as part of an abundance of concepts that arise every day, and that we, in the academic world, must know them to be *in* (fashion), not *out*.

What is behind this issue, for Rouanet, is plain and simple nonsense, since there is in Brazil a very familiar nonsense festival, “which seems to follow the tendency to reappear cyclically in certain periods of our history, with the aggravating factor, in this case, that it is an imported ‘bestialog’. [...] Somehow, people think that modernity has aged. The modern has become out of fashion.” (ROUANET, 1986, p. 87, free translation).

According, in turn, to Zygmunt Bauman and Carlos Bordoni, commenting on the thought of François Lyotard, modernity would not have aged precisely because postmodernity is a moment of modernity. Thus, postmodernity “was the time for learning which of the promises of modernity were fraudulent or naïve pretensions, which of its ambitions were manifestations of condemnable hubris, and which latent intentions were covered up by loudly declared objectives” (BAUMAN and BORDONI, 2014, p. 85, free translation).

For the sociologist and feminist Maria Lugones, “modernity organizes the world ontologically in terms of homogeneous, atomic, separable categories” (LUGONES, 2014, p. 935, free translation). Thus, there would be a first modernity – the colonial one –, which refers to the moment of the colonizers’ conquest, and a second one – capitalist –, which emerged with the Industrial Revolution. The colonization of the Americas and the Caribbean imposes a dichotomous hierarchy between the human and the non-human, as well as between men and women, civilized and non-civilized<sup>15</sup>. “The European, bourgeois, modern colonial man became a subject/agent, able to decide, for public life and the government, a being of civilization, heterosexual, Christian, a being of mind and reason” (LUGONES, 2014, p. 936, free translation). In this sense, Dussel points to Latin America as the first European colony, and Africa and Asia, as the first “peripheries”:

The colonization of the daily life of the Indian, of the African slave shortly after, was the first ‘European’ process of ‘modernization’, of civilization, of ‘subsuming’ (or alienating) the Other as ‘oneself’; but now no longer as the object of a warrior praxis, of sheer violence – as in the case of Cortês against the Aztec armies, or of Pizarro against the Incas –, but of an erotic, pedagogical, cultural, political, economic praxis, that is to say, the dominance of bodies by sexual machismo, culture, types of work, institutions created by a new political bureaucracy, etc., domination of the other. It is the beginning of domestication (DUSSEL, 1993, p. 50, free translation).

Svampa (2016, p. 17-18) points out that there would be three currents of thought. The first works from the perspective of “subordination” or “post-colonialism”, which “questioned the national or nationalist and Marxist paradigms, as well as focused on the need to think of the subaltern as such, as something irreducible whose voice we cannot appropriate nor entirely know, in a framework in which, in addition, identities are always migrants and changing”. The second, the “decolonial”, seeks to epistemically interpret our “insufficiency” and points out the need to know classical and contemporary thinkers from Latin America, in order to better understand and expand the reading of *abya yala*. Here we will identify, in alphabetical order, some of these thinkers: Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, Aníbal Quijano, Bolívar Echeverría, Catherine Walsh<sup>16</sup>, Darcy Ribeiro, Enrique Dussel, José Carlos Mariátegui, José Martí and Walter Mignolo. This perspective, initially developed by Quijano through the category “coloniality of power”, later called by Edgardo Lander “coloniality of knowledge”, emphasizes that Social Sciences naturalised the concepts and categories of the very social sciences, vaunted with the expansion of the colonialism. Besides that,

this naturalization of the different dimensions of modernity has, as its floor, the defeat of our traditional cultures and popular or plebeian cultures and the triumph of a new (capitalist) reality, which organized time and territories differently. [...] and, therefore, also the naturalization of the superiority of some

<sup>15</sup> “Only civilized people are men or women. Indigenous peoples of the Americas and enslaved Africans were classified as non-human species – as animals, uncontrollably sexual and wild (LUGONES, 2014, p. 936, free translation).

<sup>16</sup> Walsh presents the idea of decoloniality and decolonial pedagogy, with references in the project of modernity/coloniality, which, since 2004, has been opening a new phase of reflection and discussion. It purposely removes the “s” from the terms *descolonial* and *descolonizador*, by Fanon (2008), an author who analyses racism, including epistemology, as something socially generated by European colonisers in the perspective of racialization and dehumanization. Walsh, therefore, classifies decoloniality, from the perspective of Paulo Freire, as the idea of a liberating pedagogy. “The decolonial denotes, then, a path of continuous struggle in which it is possible to identify, make viable and encourage ‘places’ of exteriority and active alter(n)ative constructions” (WALSH, 2013, p. 25- free translation).

knowledges over others. This naturalisation process was accentuated with the professionalization of the social sciences (SVAMPA, 2016, p. 18-19, free translation).

The third current of thought indicated by Svampa (2016) would be that developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, called “epistemologies of the south”. It “points to the search for knowledge and criteria for the validity of knowledge that give visibility and credibility to the cognitive practices of classes, peoples and social groups that have historically been victimised, exploited and oppressed by colonialism and capitalism” (SANTOS apud SVAMPA, 2016, p. 19, free translation)<sup>17</sup>.

Quijano’s analysis provides a historical understanding “of the inseparability of racialization and capitalist exploitation as constitutive of the capitalist power system that was anchored in the colonization of the Americas” (LUGONES, 2014, p. 939, free translation). Thus, coloniality implies racial discrimination, exploitation and forms of work control (slavery, servitude), the Eurocentrism dominating subjectivities and a system of control of collective authority around the hegemony of the nation-state (QUIJANO, 1991, 1995; QUIJANO and WALLERSTEIN apud LUGONES, 2014). The ideology of strategic management associated with the logic of modernity/coloniality, as brought by the Administration field, ends up reinforcing these implications. Social management, on the contrary, comes up against the conformity with the *status quo* brought by the market society, which operates under the prevalence of capital over labour, or a necessary and even vital condition in all types of organizations (ARAÚJO, 2012), disregarding people’s values and diversity.

These disagreements brought by different authors, in relation to modernity, may be based on the following question: does the inexorability of modernity remain nowadays or is the contemporary inspired by another paradigmatic category? If we consider that the term “modern” has existed “since the fifth century of the Christian era”, or if we consult dictionaries of the Portuguese language, we will find that the term “modern” identifies the time in which a person lives and that modernity is the quality of what is modern (JAMENSON, 2005, p. 27, free translation). So, why discuss its opposite, “postmodernity”, if modernity is always in process? Why reaffirm and move forward with the concept of social management as a decolonial construct, as a counterpoint to the modern colonizing and capitalist logic of strategic management?

Despite all of this, as already mentioned, modernity can be studied as a category in the history of Western philosophy. It would refer to a time starting from an epistemological rupture with a past in which man had no right to think, to reflect on his condition as a being *for himself*. His *cogito* was subsumed by an already given thought, a knowledge originated in a light that came from the summit, from Heaven. Man could not have his own light, his own enlightenment; consciousness was not made through experience, through reflection, but through the divine, the absolute, or those who mediated the celestial and the mortals<sup>18</sup>. With modernity, the secularism and the mundane have made themselves present; reason began to impose itself. Therefore, “modernity replaces God with science, at the centre of society, leaving religious beliefs for private life” (TOURAINÉ, 1994, p. 18, free translation). Rationalities then began to be produced, and the concepts of “reason” and “rationality”<sup>19</sup> became fundamental for the social sciences due to the emergence of specialized knowledges, which, among other factors, started to represent a rupture in man’s knowledge and in their actions before others and before nature.

This rupture takes as a reference the replacement of a scholastic-based epistemology<sup>20</sup> with another to which the thinking of authors such as Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Hugo Grócio (1583-1645), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), René Descartes (1596-1650) and John Locke (1632-1704) converge – authors who consider that all certainty, all truth, should be subjected to a rational analysis. Modernity arises with the purpose of freeing individuals from religious beliefs, thus, creating the modern man. Modernity, however, follows its illustrative, enlightening purpose, illuminating the 18th century through the philosophy of Voltaire/François Marie Arouet (1694-1778), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Denis Diderot (1713-1784), Baron d’Holbach (1723-1789), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Marquis de Condorcet/Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat

<sup>17</sup> The cited book is: SANTOS, B. S. *Refundación del Estado en América Latina: perspectivas desde una epistemología del sur*. Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> “The beginning of the 17th century marks the true entry into modernity [...] [its] ephemeral character favours an increase in scepticism. The process is slow at first, only reaching an intellectual elite, but once launched, nothing stops it. From the almost unanimity of the medieval faith, to the extreme dispersion of current beliefs, we are witnessing a kind of entropy of religious thought” (MINOIS, 2014, p. 211, free translation).

<sup>19</sup> *Rationality*: “1. [...] Rationality is the characteristic of what is rational, which is in accordance with reason. [...] 3. Max Weber (The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, 1904) distinguishes between rational evaluative action (*Wertrational*) and rational instrumental action (*Zweckrational*). The first characterizes an action that is carried out according to certain values and that is self-justifying, such as ‘rituals’ in certain cultures. The second characterizes an action or procedure that aims at specific ends or objectives as rational, seeking to carry them out through calculations and the adequacy of the means to these ends; in this way, the ends would justify the most effective means of obtaining them. Weber identifies the instrumental reason with capitalism and the development of technique and industrial society” (JAPIASSU and MARCONDES, 1990, p. 208, free translation).

<sup>20</sup> “Scholastic is characterized mainly by the attempt to reconcile the dogmas of the Christian Faith and the truths revealed by the Sacred Scriptures with the classical philosophical doctrines, with emphasis on Platonism and Aristotelism”, and developed between the 9th and 17th centuries (JAPIASSU and MARCONDES, 1990, p. 84, free translation).



(1743-1794), as well as French Revolution's philosophy (1789) and its consequences. Hence, the terms "*Illustration* [clarification - *Aufklärung*], French Revolution and Modernity constitute a trio with seductive characteristics of a chronological sequence": first with "illustrated preaching", second with "revolutionary realization" and third with "the modern world" (ROUANET, 1993, p. 140), or, who knows, of a quartet, by means of a "clandestine philosophy"<sup>21</sup>. In the case of Administration, modernity – by its substantive "modernization" – promotes the rationalization of the production process by incorporating science and technology, whose exacerbation promotes, in turn, strategic management, contrary to the assumptions of modernity, such as the emancipation of man.

In turn, postmodernity would be a category formulated in the first decades of the twentieth century, meaning a change in aesthetic thinking, and not a category indicating a certain period. From the 1970s, however, the concept started to be disseminated as a characteristic of an epoch that is varied, multiple, determined by differences. The text of philosophical conception that seeks to break the modern meta-narratives of class duality or the systemic whole is *The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge*, by Jean-François Lyotard, a work in which, "simplifying to the extreme", *postmodern* is defined "as incredulity toward metanarratives"<sup>22</sup> (LYOTARD, 1984, p. xxiv). In the book, the author states that "postmodern knowledge [...] refines our sensitivity to differences" (LYOTARD, 1984, p. xxv), or the "trend towards the temporary contract in every area of human existence: occupational, emotional, sexual, political – ties more economical, flexible, creative than the bonds of modernity" (ANDERSON, 1998, p. 26). In this way, postmodernity would constitute a rupture with a past in which reason was the men's pathway to reach, intellectually, the age of majority and independence in relation to those – people or institutions – submitting them. The term is also used to characterize societies considered developed and disapproving positions regarding the use of great metaphysical narratives and philosophies (ARAÚJO, 2012).

The bases on which this breach occurs, however, are the same as those that arise with the advent of capitalism, under which the exchange-value, the purchase of labour power – fundamentals of this economic movement – maintain the relationship of dependence, of subordination, from the employee to the purchasing agent of human potential. Therefore, modernity is yet to happen and the prefix "post" was added to it, to signify that we live changes, ruptures, but, in reality, those are all mere insinuations. "There is no social disruption, because we continue, to the best of my knowledge, to live in a capitalist system [...] but in spite of all its metamorphoses, the systems continue, today as yesterday, basing themselves on the social stratification and on the private appropriation of the surplus" (ROUANET, 1986, p. 88, free translation). Or, as Habermas (2015, p. 37, free translation) tells us, "[with] this 'post', the protagonists want to distance themselves from the past (...), [hurried] farewell gestures". Although in the world of labour, of organizations, with the incorporation of new technologies, notably those of information, functional changes have become a reality, the phenomenon occurs through the process of modernization, technical updating, not modernity.

Organizational and work flexibility would characterize a postmodern management or, as some might wish, a post-Fordist or post-industrial management, as organizations start to act for the integrated differentiation of the organization, of production and of work, under the trajectory of technological innovations and changes, in the legal conception of employment. A conception that contradicts the Fordist one, since it is based on the forecast of a growing market, which would justify the use of specialized equipment to obtain economies of scale, mass production and job security. Flexible technologies and/or equipment now emerge with the purpose to meet differentiated demands; both in quantity and in the composition of products or services, as well as new ways of regulating the workforce that essentially seek to deregulate the legal guarantees of this same strength. Society's organization, however, is economically managed under the laws of the market, in which the calculation to exploit favourable conditions (therefore, profit) fuels its survival – or results, as some prefer<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> "[...] 'clandestine philosophy' is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating pages in the history of thought and ideas. What is meant by this is a broad philosophical-literary 'movement', whose mark was the circulation (generally secret and anonymous) of hundreds of anticlerical and political criticism works in the period between the 16th and 18th centuries. Such works (printed and handwritten) reflected the common need to express unorthodox ideas in a society still hostage to religion. After all, it is necessary to remember that the Inquisition still burned its 'heretics' and 'wicked' in the middle of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution" (MARSAIS, 2008, p. 9, free translation). Under the scope of clandestine philosophy, we will find the so-called radical Enlightenment, whose "main motto is: all people have the same basic needs, rights and status, regardless of belief, religious, economic or ethnic groups to which they belong; and therefore, everyone should be treated in the same way based on isonomy, whether they are blacks or whites, men or women, religious or not and that everyone deserves to have their personal interests and aspirations equally respected by law and government" (ISRAEL, 2013, free translation).

<sup>22</sup> "Meta-narratives are philosophies of history that narrate universal and stable explanatory models, that is, they are 'meta-knowledges' that establish the perspective of knowing reality and being able to achieve a more just world; to be able, through knowledge, to emancipate man, to bring him light, to save him from obscurantism, from savagery, from alienation" (SILVA, 2012, free translation).

<sup>23</sup> "The system of power which lurks in modern forms of flexibility consists of three elements: discontinuous reinvention of institutions; flexible specialization of production; and concentration of without centralization of power. The facts which fall under each of these categories are familiar to most of us, rather than arcane; it is rather to assess the personal consequences of these facts" (SENNETT, 1998, p. 79).

Thus, the modernization undertaken so far lacks modernity, because reason, required since the Enlightenment, has not yet made itself present. Rationalities have since happened; new perspectives were created, and the inexorability of scientific-technological advances contributed to this, as is the case with microelectronic-based technologies and/or information, which, undoubtedly, as the saying goes, “shortened distances” and favoured the approximation between people (even if virtual). Significant advances in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy are indisputable facts. Areas such as health are today dependent on these technological advances. Technological benefits, such as information technology, foster education. We could also list other factors promoted by contemporary technical-scientific rationalities, especially those originated in information technologies, but we stop here, since the reader can imagine them. In its origins, however, reason is critical; it is concerned with the emancipation of man, potentially pointing out the contradictions that might arise. So, how could we exercise reason in the daily life of organizations when its recurring *leitmotiv* in decision-making processes, might it be state or private, is still the search for results and/or profits through rationalities, not for the general well-being? Perhaps, the answer may lie in thinking or looking for other ways of management, other than those who maintain the master-slave relationship. A kind of relation explained by Hegel in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (2011), whose metaphor refers to a threshold situation that we could perceive through hierarchies and through certain attitudes within and between formally organized social systems, as well as certain social relationships.

## ENLIGHTENMENT OR BARBARISM?

If we recover the three expressions that referenced the French Revolution, in 1789, and that served as the foundations of modernity and as a movement in search for human emancipation – liberty, equality and solidarity –, it would seem that, until the beginning of the 21st century, those fundamentals are still to be practiced, perhaps with the exception of solidarity.

*Liberty* concerns the absence of any kind of discrimination or marginalization of the human person. Thus, “conditions must exist in which individuals can actually exercise their freedom in order to achieve the maximum degree of self-realization and self-direction of which they are capable” (OUTHWAITE and BOTTOMORE, 2003, p. 244). *Equality* provides that everyone has the right to be considered as equal, and should not be subjected to any type of discrimination. Implicitly, social equality is, therefore, “the idea that people should be treated as equals in all the institutional spheres that affect their life-chances: in their education, in their work, in their consumption opportunities, in their access to social services, in their domestic relations, and so forth” (OUTHWAITE and BOTTOMORE, 2003, p. 204). *Solidarity*, in turn, is the action by which people support each other mutually, towards a common goal. It is important to understand that solidarity can have different meanings. Care shall be exercised in order to avoid those meanings nearing the logic of aid, since it resembles the “elegant exercise of power”, never identified as power, but captivated by the illusion of liberty (GRONEMEYER, 1992, p. 53). Aid becomes the antithesis of rights and universalism. In this way, aid is scheming; it aims at eliminating deficits; it institutionalized and professionalized itself, similarly to the deduction of strategic management. Despite the ambiguity that such an expression may contain, here we use it as “reciprocal dependence; characteristic of beings [...] connected in such a way that what happens to each one of them has repercussions on the other or on the others” (LALANDE, 1996, p. 1051, free translation). Therefore, the adopted meaning of solidarity is one in which people make commitments to each other under mutual correspondence.

In the management of organized social systems, as well as concerning their relations with society, the deficiency of these fundamentals remain concrete until the present day. Hence the need to search for a managerial concept that can handle the Enlightenment desired or that can, at least, approach or move towards it. Social management is, therefore, a concept that seeks to maintain coherence with the norms of the Enlightenment project. To this end, we will turn once again to Sérgio Paulo Rouanet, in order to support his attempt of rapprochement, through Chapter 1, “Enlightenment or barbarism”, of the already mentioned book, *Mal-estar na modernidade* (1993), in which the author focuses on the categories that, par excellence, supported Illustration.

Rouanet systematizes the writing of his chapter, enunciating the crisis of modern civilization, in order to, then, conceptualize Illustration, as well as its underlying categories: universality, individuality and autonomy. These categories will serve Rouanet in the analysis of *liberalism and socialism* and, continuing and concluding his essay, in the description of the topic entitled *the Enlightenment idea and for an illuminist civilization*. However, in this text, we will not follow the script originally drawn by Rouanet in his work. We will rather focus only on what he calls the essential elements of the civilizing project of modernity

According to Rouanet (1993, p. 09), those essential elements are as follows: universalism, individuality and autonomy. He mentions, however, “this civilizing project is doomed to failure<sup>24</sup>”, because “universalism is being sabotaged by a proliferation of particularisms – national, cultural, racial, religious. [...] Racism and xenophobia are coming out of the sewage [and the closet] and are winning elections” [here and elsewhere]. In turn, “individuality [aided by information technology] is increasingly immersed in the anonymity of conformism and of the consumer society”. On the other hand, “intellectual autonomy, based on a secular worldview, is being blown up by the re-enchantment of the world<sup>25</sup>”, as well as “political autonomy [is being] transformed [into financial dependence under an] electoral choreography staged every four years” and the “economic autonomy [entrepreneurship]<sup>26</sup> is a sadistic lie for the three thirds of the human race who live in conditions of absolute poverty” (ROUANET, 1993, p. 10, free translation)<sup>27</sup>.

In spite of the contradictions previously exposed by Rouanet (1993, p. 14, free translation), “the first step in the construction of the Enlightenment idea [of its *ethos*] is to examine (...) the categories of universality, individuality and autonomy”. Thus, these categories are related to:

*[Universality]* Illustration was truly universal. According to it, the idea that all men were equal, regardless of borders or cultures, was far from a rhetorical abstraction. The world, it claims, was really a *civitas maxima*. It was a matter of formulating generic principles, based on reason and on observation, which could help human beings to access a civilised life. [...] Reaffirming all human beings equality in the face of reason, Illustration transposed the religious idea that every person is a children of God and equal before the Creator to the secular terrain of the philosophical and the political struggle” (ROUANET, 1993, p 14-15, free translation).

*[Individuality]*, “the individual is entitled to have rights, not only obligations (...). The whole exists for the individuals and not the individuals for the whole. In addition, [...], Illustration puts them in a position of externality in relation to the social world, which allows them to become observers and judges of their own society. [...]. The individualism of the Illustration, therefore, had the merit of placing the right to happiness and to self-fulfilment at the centre of ethics; and the merit of valuing a decentred individual, the man who frees himself from ‘natural’ bonds and who can place himself in the position of formulating ethical and political judgments, based on universal principles of justice, regardless of any local loyalties” (ROUANET, 1993, p. 16, free translation).

*[Autonomy]* “Intellectual autonomy was at the heart of the civilizing project of Illustration. The primary objective was to free reason from prejudice, that is, from opinions with no judgments. [...] Hence the crucial importance of education, as the only way to immunize the human spirit against the onslaught of obscurantism. [...] The ideal of intellectual autonomy [...] rests on a *petitio principii*, [...]: only an already free reason could battle for the liberation of reason. [In turn,] political autonomy consisted, for the Illustration, in the man’s freedom of action in the public space. [...] That is why the condemnation of despotism was the Illustration’s strongest contribution to the ideal of political autonomy. [As for economic autonomy, and although opinions may vary with respect to the means], everyone felt that material misery was an obstacle to material progress and to the exercise of civil rights and obligations” (ROUANET, 1993, p. 16-18, free translation, italics by the author and brackets added).

<sup>24</sup> “fazendo água por todas as juntas”, in a popular Brazilian saying (ROUANET, 1993, p. 9).

<sup>25</sup> “The tension between religion and intellectual knowledge stands out clearly whenever rational, empirical knowledge has worked consistently through the disenchantment of the world and its transformation into a causal mechanism” (WEBER, 1971, p. 401, free translation).

<sup>26</sup> “The myth of the millionaires who started their lives selling bags of popcorn at the intersection of avenues stimulates the productive effort of individuals, even – and this is fundamental – when they recognize that they will not get rich, they dispense or not the maximum effort they are capable of. The myth serves, however, to support the positive belief that the present stage of life is surpassable, and that the highest position in the ascension of each one will only be known, and awaiting, at the end of the competition” (SANTOS, 2017, p. 95-96, free translation).

<sup>27</sup> “The progress of **scientific research** in all fields is imaginable. Nevertheless, where is the concomitant **moral progress** that would prevent abuses in the use of science (in Physics, Chemistry and Biology, for example)? The entire world has benefited from very effective **technology**. However, **spiritual energy** did not keep up, although it could have controlled the risks of technology; these are felt everywhere; We come to the economy that operates on a world scale. But what are the resources of **ecology** to deal with the destruction of nature, also in a world scale, caused by industrialization? Throughout a complex evolution, **democracy** slowly imposes itself in many non-European countries. But no **morality** could counter the interests and thirst for power of leaders and pressure groups [...]: the faith in reason, progress and the great modern ideologies of nationalism, liberalism and socialism are strongly shaken” (KÜNG, 2012, p. 704, bolds by the author, free translation).

Concluding Rouanet's thought (1993) in a simplified way, we will evoke the final topic of his first Chapter, entitled *For an illuminist civilization*. "Rightly or wrongly, we now have the outline of the Enlightenment idea. Being originated in history, this paradigm is not arbitrary and, as an ideal construction, transcends history and escapes relativism" (ROUANET, 1993, p. 41, free translation). Using the Weberian argument of the ideal type<sup>28</sup>, Rouanet comments that his Enlightenment idea is an "instrument for investigating reality [even if] it should not be confused with it", as this *ens rationis* should be used to assist the "researcher to examine to what extent the empirical phenomenon approaches or distances itself from the ideal type". In the specific case of our study-related concerns, here is a question that could be asked, concerning the analysis of organizations linked to the private business sector: to what extent does the management reality of an organization "X" meet the enlightenment postulates? Alternatively, in the matter of decisions related to the public sector, as in the case of public policies, we may ask whether a given policy meets the Enlightenment paradigm. Indeed, are they aligned with public problems analysis and solutions or are they the result of eye-catching ideas and "windows of opportunity" sold out as rational? With regard to the so-called third sector, or non-governmental "private but public" organizations, the following question can be asked: do they seek to represent the different actors in civil society or do they only defend their own individual and/or group interests? The fact that an organization reports that it has a social purpose does not necessarily imply that they practice social management, as many of them, unfortunately, are still more aligned with the logic of strategic management.

In this way, "it is possible for us to know the extent to which certain [decisions] deviate from or approach to the ideal model, thus providing us with a common thread for interrogating reality" (ROUANET, 1993, free translation). According to Rouanet, the Enlightenment idea must be seen as an "instrument of analysis and normative standard. The two functions are interdependent. (...) *The illuminist civilization* [as Rouanet calls it] is the normative face of the Enlightenment idea. [...] Enlightenment or barbarism - it is necessary to make a choice, before others choose for us" (ROUANET, 1993, p. 45).

We cannot conceal, however, the discussions about the meaning of modernity, without mentioning the appreciation developed by Quijano on this theme. He comments that modernity is not an European, Eurocentric exclusivity, insofar as "the so-called high cultures (China, India, Egypt, Greece, Maya-Azteca, Tawantinsuyo), prior to the current world-system, show unmistakably signs of this modernity, including the scientific rationale, the secularization of thought, etc." (QUIJANO, 2005, p. 212, free translation). Further on, the author complements his thesis by saying that "the Eurocentric aspiration to be an exclusive producer and protagonist of modernity, and that all modernization of non-European populations is, therefore, an Europeanization, is an ethnocentric and, above all, provincial aspiration" (QUIJANO, 2005, p. 213, free translation)<sup>29</sup>. We could also include in this discussion thinkers like Enrique Dussel, with his original thesis on the covering-up of Latin America<sup>30</sup>, and Bolívar Echeverría, on the Baroque *ethos* as an alternative to capitalist modernity<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> "The ideal type in an abstract model that, when used as a standard of comparison, enables us to see aspects of the real world in a clearer, more systematic way. [...] The lack of fit between ideal types and the real worlds is not a problem, however, for it is not the purpose of ideal types to describe or explain the world. Instead, they provide us with points of comparison from which to observe it." (JOHNSON, 2000, p. 150).

<sup>29</sup> Aníbal Quijano justifies this position by pointing to several examples outside the Western European world that justify that, rational-scientific modernity, among other advances, did not have this Eurocentric exclusivity: "In fact, at this point in historical research, it would be almost ridiculous to attribute to non-European cultures a mythical-magical mentality as a defining trait, for example, in opposition to rationality and science as characteristic features of Europe, because apart from the possible or best conjectured symbolic contents, the cities, the temples and palaces, the pyramids, or the monumental cities, whether Machu Picchu or Borobudur, the irrigations, the major transport routes, the metallurgical and agricultural technologies, the mathematics, the calendars, the writing, the philosophy, the weapons and wars, they all account for the scientific and technological development in each one of such high cultures, since long before the formation of Europe as a new identity" (QUIJANO, 2000, p. 213, free translation).

<sup>30</sup> "Modernity was originated in medieval, free European cities, centres of enormous creativity. It was 'born', however, when Europe was able to confront its 'Other' and to control it, to overcome it, to rape it: when it could define itself as the 'ego' of a discoverer, a conqueror, a colonizer of Alterity, that constitutes Modernity itself. In any case, this Other was not 'discovered' as an Other, but it was 'covered-up' like the 'self' that Europe has always been" (DUSSEL, 1993, p. 08, free translation).

<sup>31</sup> "The Baroque ethos, like other modern ethe, consists of a strategy to make 'visible' things that can barely be seen: the capitalist updating of the possibilities opened up by modernity, [...] being baroque nowadays means threatening, judging and parodying bourgeois economy, based on the narrow administration of goods, at its centre and on its foundations" (ECHEVERRÍA, 2000, p. 15-16, free translation).

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: SOCIAL MANAGEMENT OR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT?

It is necessary to make a choice, before frivolous calculations eliminate the relations between men and women of different races, between humanity and nature or between humanity and organizations.

This text does not claim to be conclusive or to define, exclusively, the meaning of social management. As noted in the preambles of this article, the concept of social management is already on the agenda of the Brazilian Academy, but its understanding is not unanimous and the concept is still little known in this very Academy, not to mention the international context. There are those who, employing it, mistake social management for the management of assistentialist practices, the management of compensatory public policies or the management of third sector organizations and there are others who consider it utopian, untruthful. In reality, there is a dominant, hegemonic managerial mode in action, which includes the teaching-learning processes: the strategic management, a managerial configuration that has as its postulates the short-term, reduction, profit, reified values such as efficiency, productivity and the like. Under the *ethos* of the market and of exchange-value, efficiency, as well as productivity, seeks to be achieved by promoting stratified, hierarchical social relations, maintainers of the master-slave relationship, substantiated by the process of reification, of alienation<sup>32</sup>.

On the other hand, a large part of society, here and elsewhere, still lacks the basics for their livelihood: food, housing, education, health, security, transport, etc. They are dispossessed of general well-being, social justice, and social protection. Which parameters could minimize such deprivations generated by social, racial and gender inequalities, among others?

If we consider that the supply of these needs has been demanded since modernity, the parameter would be one that meets the privations that still afflict a large part of humanity, as well as the one that promotes the triad *liberty, equality and solidarity*. If we want to be consistent with the year that celebrates modernity, 1789, the republican practice should be the guiding principle of managerial actions, a path of possibilities based on a kind of management that is shared with society, with the totality, to the detriment of those market-oriented ones, that is, partial ones. For this enclave, the market, underpinned by exchange-value, has already been acting in a dominant manner, with the strategic management guiding the other's exclusion. What is needed are ideologies and managerial practices in which the other is included; an inclusion exercised under public spheres, in which its participants must actuate as active and deliberative citizens, dealing with the *res publica*. Therefore, to act in any sector of society in a republican way is to act for the sake of everyone, of the general well-being.

In this way, the purpose of this text, we insist, was to re-play a concept – social management – that, since the early 1990s, has been opposed to that of strategic management. Thus, this is a dissent, a heterodox perspective against the mainstream; a concept of resistance not taken as an end in itself or as a goal of politics, but as a beginning and as a possibility, as a tension between subjectification and active subjectivity<sup>33</sup>, in the relationship between oppression and resistance, with no appeal to the sense of maximum agency of the modern subject.

We intended to emphasize that the concept of social management must be submitted to the canons of modernity. In other words, the concept of shared, dialogical management must use the parameters of the Enlightenment to deal with technobureaucratic contemporaneity. Perhaps we can clarify this intention by resorting to Benjamin in his writing *On the Concept of History*, when, in the seventh thesis, he says that the task is “to brush history against the grain” (BENJAMIN, 2012, p. 245). Therefore, we shall act in opposition to the domain of instrumental rationality, thwarting the domain of strategic management, by means of another management concept that seeks to democratize social relations within organizations and between them and society.

Thus, with the support of the Benjaminian thesis, we would say that acting against the grain of strategic management, monological organizational thinking, through or based on social management, is the same as saying that the functionalist management process is the process exercised by the dominants. Opposing this authoritarian and technobureaucratic management, we advocate for the *ethos* of a shared management within the process of goods and/or services production. Likewise, we also seek – in this process of brushing against the grain – to point out the inherent contradictions of any type of functionality, seeking to promote participatory processes that imply better political organization of society.

<sup>32</sup> Nowadays, there is an attempt to call the worker a “collaborator”, an “entrepreneur” etc.

<sup>33</sup> “The subjectivity that often resists is expresses itself infrapolitically, rather than in a policy of public, which is easily situated in public contestation. Legitimacy, authority, voice, meaning and visibility are denied to oppositional subjectivity. Infrapolitics marks the return to the inside, in a politics of resistance, towards liberation. It shows the potential that the oppressed communities have, among themselves, to constitute meanings that refuse the meanings and the social organization structured by power. In our colonized existences, racially divided and oppressed, we are also different from what the hegemonic makes us. This is an infrapolitical victory” (LUGONES, 2014, p. 940, free translation).



The question is not one of “throwing the baby out with the bath water”, as in the popular saying, but rather submitting the functional practices based on instrumental rationality to a kind of rationality capable of promoting the intersubjectivity of social subjects, transforming them into a collective subject. Instrumental rationality must be subjected to the scrutiny of those concerning it; it must be horizontally legitimized, and not imposed from the top down. Therefore, the management we propose is not a mere participatory process in which those involved are only summoned, with no power of decision. The process that we propose, from the perspective of social management, is simultaneously dialogical and deliberative. Dialogical to the extent that everyone can reflect and expose their arguments and deliberative to the extent that decision-making is democratic. It is also dialectical insofar as it “ascribes a great importance to the search for and elimination of contradictions – a procedure that may have developed out of dialogue or discussion between interlocutors” (ALBERT, 1985, p. 58). Social management, by placing itself in opposition to strategic management, facilitates the understanding of its contradictions because it critically illuminates contradictions, highlighting its weaknesses and developing perspectives for its improvement. If we discuss strategic management through its canons, we can only propose reforms, palliative measures, in its way of acting, but not changes in the historical-social reality.

Departing from its *ethos* based on the Enlightenment, social management intends to identify the contradictions imposed by strategic management and to contribute to the emancipation of the social being, of its self-government through institutional arrangements and public spaces. Spaces in which the intersubjective understanding of social beings is promoted; spaces in which individual freedoms are subsumed to social freedoms, since an “individual cannot be free if not all individuals are free, and not everybody can be free if not everybody is free in what is common” (HABERMAS, 2015, p. 124). We bethink, therefore, that it is necessary to reaffirm and to advance in the understanding of and about social management, with regard to its original epistemological and axiological decolonial meanings. The embodiment of debates on inequalities and diversities (race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, and people with disabilities, among others) is increasingly urgent, and it seems to us that, within the scope of the Administrative Sciences, the logic of social management has more adherence than the logic of strategic management.

In summary, the concept of management here emphasized does not wish to be a concept of practices that conduct behaviours, as strategic management does. What we want is a management concept whose results and practices have meanings that meet the demands of society, the common good, through collective arrangements internal to organizations, as well as of those and society. To this end, it is necessary to learn from “collective memory”<sup>34</sup>, articulated with the decolonial bet, to understand what it is like to live in light and liberty in the face of darkness, neither imposing nor shaping rationalities based on dichotomous, classifying, hierarchical binarisms (WALSH, 2013).

Social management, therefore, intends to be consistent with the assumptions of modernity, notably those referring to the *res publica*, which requires that such a managerial proposal also be consistent, in the Brazilian case, with the 1988 Constitution. Unfortunately, that is not the case, since practices do not yet fully meet the Constitution’s fundamental precepts, since the exercise of citizenship does not occur through direct participation in the government of their political communities. Interacting with that, there is also the fact that the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary powers do not act in consonance with the Constitution. Following the thesis of the thinker Dolf Sternberger (2001), we lack to act in a patriotic way towards the Brazilian constitutional precepts.

Despite the “wounds of enlightenment”, Administration, as well as other applied social sciences, has contributed to these injuries, as “there is no remedy other than that of radicalized Enlightenment” (HABERMAS, 2015, p. 316).

As we conclude this text, Brazil, since 2016, has been going through a process in which the 1988 constitutional precepts no longer seem to make sense. In this case, we do not only point to corruption, which undermines all sectors of society, but also to the extent to which such precepts, related to active citizen participation, will be the object of practices within the not too distant future<sup>35</sup>. Wouldn’t it be naive to discuss, in this context, the possibilities of a democratic management process – a social management?

<sup>34</sup> “Collective memory was- and still is- a space between others, in which the pedagogical and the decolonial are intertwined in the same practice [...] Collective memory is the reaffirmation of what tradition teaches us, of what our ancestry teaches us [...] As the professor and grandfather of the Afro-Ecuadorian movement, Juan García Salazar, once said: ‘It is precisely collective memory because it is in the collective as a whole [...] it is a collectivized knowledge; it is the consolidation, what allows us to continue’” (WALSH and GARCÍA apud WALSH, 2013, p. 26- free translation).

<sup>35</sup> What is happening in Brazil is a constitutional rupture insofar as “[the] first consequence is that we have moved from the symbolic constitution to the degradation of the Constitution. On the one hand, the cynicism of the elites prevails. On the other hand, public apathy deepens. [...] In this context, the dismantling of social state institutions, which are already very precarious, stands out. This dismantling will continue to increase the already high inequality and social exclusion” (NEVES, 2017, p. 82).

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