

THE DUALITY OF DESIGN(ING) SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

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ABSTRACT

Project success is of intense interest to practicing project managers, yet suffers from vague and narrow conceptualizations in the literature. Responding to this gap between theory and practice, we tease out the dynamics of the design(ing) duality in relation to project management. Our argument is informed by the contrasting management theories of Taylor (design) and Follett (designing), and it is illustrated by drawing on two different types of experience in a large Initial Training Network project funded by the European Commission. We suggest that a comprehensive appreciation of project success requires an interweaving of the substantive and processual understandings reflected in the design(ing) duality

KEYWORDS

Design, designing, Follett, Taylor, *being/becoming*, ontologies, människosyn

INTRODUCTION

Despite decades of theoretical and empirical development, the field of project management continues to be criticized for inadequately addressing the needs of the practice domain (Söderlund & Maylor, 2012), producing research that frequently fails the relevance test in relation to the actual experience of project based working. Broadly the challenges facing project management scholars are twofold. Firstly, on a practical level, practitioners of project management are vitally concerned with reasons for the success (or failure) of their projects. It is crucial for them to be able to gain some sort of purchase on what might constitute ‘success’. However, within the scholarly literature, ‘success’ is regarded as a slippery concept, so scholars disagree on vital questions about the criteria and conditions that might influence project success or failure (Hodgson & Cicmil, 2008; Söderlund, 2004), and perceptions of project success continues to be “in the eyes of the beholder” (Müller and Jugdev 2012). Secondly, scholarship in this field continues to be dominated by a relatively narrow theoretical terrain which, by attending primarily to issues of rational decision-making, standardized controls, risk management and instrumental outcomes (Pinto, 2002), reveals a pervasive, albeit often unconscious taint of Taylorism. This theoretical orientation explicitly neglects more critical concerns about the pluralistic (Söderlund, 2011b), socio-political (Hodgson & Cicmil, 2008), situated (Viviane Sergi, 2012) and discursive (Cicmil, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2016) dimensions of project management. Indeed, Hodgson and Cicmil (2008) go so far as to suggest that the very narrowness of this dominant theoretical perspective may itself be the cause of project failures (Maylor, 2001).

In response to these challenges, scholars are increasingly calling for a more inclusive and more comprehensive understanding of project management that can better inform future developments in this field. A number of alternative theoretical framings have been suggested,

including shifting to more of a social science orientation that addresses the sociological and psychological aspects of project organization (Söderlund, 2004), extending understandings of what actually goes on in projects by adopting a practice-based approach (Blomquist, Hällgren, Nilsson, & Söderholm, 2010), and engaging a radical process ontology to reconsider unfolding project trajectories as emergent consequences of collaborative social action (Packendorff, Crevani, & Lindgren, 2014). Although these alternative framings certainly chip away at the normative assumptions of Taylor's (1911) scientific management, his rationalistic and mechanistic approach to the design of work continues to dominate the field of project management today, more than 100 years later, as it pursues standardized and optimized outputs at the expense of a more humanized appreciation for the collaborative and creative work of designing.

We find it puzzling that the Taylorian view still prevails in a field that seems ripe for what Kuhn (1975) describes as a 'paradigm shift'. In tackling this puzzle, we take inspiration from Albert Einstein, perhaps one of the greatest paradigm shifters in scientific history, who reputedly said "the world we have created is a product of our thinking: it cannot be changed without changing our thinking". But "changing our thinking" is no easy matter. It requires a deep dive to investigate the philosophical assumptions that underpin our current thinking and to open up options for alternative thinking. For this reason, our argument here takes a deep look into the thinking that informs Taylor's scientific management, and compares this with the thinking of Mary Parker Follett, a contemporary of Taylor. We have chosen to build our comparative argument around these two scholars because, although they were both highly influential thinkers during the USA's progressive era (1890-1920) of social activism, political reform, and commitment to the transformative potential of science, they came to radically different conclusions about the purpose and proper form of management. In effect, we see Taylor and Follett as standard-bearers for two different traditions of thinking, traditions that

although incommensurable are nevertheless complementary, each offering insights not revealed by the other.

We argue that such contrasting intellectual traditions constitute a ‘duality’, where we use this term to imply an ontological distinction between two different ways of seeing and engaging with our worlds. Each way of seeing is, as Burke (1984, p. 49) observes, also a way of not seeing; thus each gives us only a partial perspective. Dewey (1917) explains that a duality – an ontological distinction – is not the same as a dualism, which he sees as an epistemological construct that distinguishes between two opposing knowledge categories, each of which depends on the other for its definition (e.g. ‘rational’ may be understood in opposition to ‘emotional’ and vice versa). Perhaps the most famous example of duality comes from the debates in physics about the nature of light. Is it a particle or is it a wave? Of course the answer is that it is both, but we perceive it as one or the other depending on the apparatus that mediates our observation (Barad, 2007). It is not possible to invent an apparatus that simultaneously perceives both the particle and wave nature of light because each aspect of the duality is constructed on a profoundly different assumptive base. Dualities are also evident in the social sciences, where Giddens’ (1984) distinction between structure and agency, and Latour’s (1986) separation between the ostensive and the performative are familiar examples. In each case, the two aspects of the duality are built on quite different ontological assumptions, one entitative and the other processual, so there is no possibility of integration or resolution based on some sort of median ‘third way’. Rather, a duality invites us as researchers to engage with alternate ways of experiencing in order to broaden knowledge and knowing about our complex worlds.

In this paper, we tease out what we call the duality of design(ing), which on one hand imagines projects in terms of the rigorous implementation of design plans (informed by

Taylor), and on the other considers project work as an emergent process of designing (informed by Follett). Each aspect of this duality is constituted as a distinctive world view, an intellectual edifice comprised of a set of coherent assumptions about ontology (what is real), epistemology (what is knowable), apparatus or methodology (how we know), axiology (what is valued), and ethical considerations (what is moral). Our starting point is the *being/becoming* ontological distinction that has been popularized in the organizational literature by Chia (1995), but is in fact a perennial duality that can be traced back at least 2500 years to the Greek philosophers, Parmenides and Heraclitus. A *being* ontology assumes a reality comprised of separate and distinct units of substance, entities that are stable in themselves but can move around in relation to each other. Knowledge, then, is a matter of apprehending these fundamental units and their aggregations using research methods that are designed for this purpose. A *becoming* ontology, by contrast, assumes a reality that is expressed in the intermingling, performative flows of a world that is in continuous process. Here, knowing is experienced as the ongoing and emergent production of newness, and research methods seek to engage directly with these flows and movements.

Complementing these ontological, epistemological and methodological elements, we introduce the notion of ‘*människosyn*’¹, a Scandinavian word that has no direct parallel in the English language. It refers to the general nature of humanity, combining the ontological status of how people are constituted and developed to be the way they are, with humanitarian values, or value statements, that are embodied and expressed in people’s practical relation to the world (Hammerlin & Larsen, 1997). As such it describes the attitudes to human life that unite members of any given society, so different cultural (and disciplinary) groups may have quite different *människosyns* that reflect deeply embedded moral practices. We argue that the

¹ The Swedish spelling is used here. In Norwegian and Danish it is ‘*menneskesyn*’

design(ing) duality is characterized not only by ontological, epistemological and methodological differences, but also by profound differences in människosyn. As a consequence, although design and designing offer complementary world views, the fundamentally different assumptive grounds upon which each is built preclude collapsing them into a single grand unified theory of project management.

The main contribution that we seek to make in this paper is to **revisit the notion of ‘success’** by teasing out a conceptually more complex understanding of project management that engages this duality in both its design and designing aspects. To accomplish this, we begin by interrogating the distinctive philosophical assumptions and människosyns that constitute each of these aspects by exploring the biographies and seminal ideas of both Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915) and Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933). We then proceed to elaborate the distinctions between these two positions using empirical insights from DESMA (DESIGN Management)², a project that simultaneously exhibits both Taylorian and Follettian aspects. DESMA was a € 3.4 million Initial Training Network project funded for four years from 2012 by the European Commission. The aim of the DESMA project was to develop a number of new Early Stage Researchers as the basis for an experimental research laboratory distributed across Europe creating leading-edge knowledge about cross-disciplinary challenges and opportunities in Design Management, while also exploring the role and potential of design practice as an approach to innovation³. The project, which involved a consortium of four universities and eight companies across six European countries, was managed by the first author supported by a management team comprising representatives of each of the four partner universities.

² See European Commission Results website for details <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/101589/brief/en>

³ “Design practice” refers to designing as a professional practice, which has its roots in the arts.

FRAMING OUR ARGUMENT

In many ways, Taylor and Follett shared similar goals for the advancement of professional management, but their different backgrounds, work experiences, and theoretical sources led them to fundamentally different conclusions about the practice of management. To gain a deeper appreciation for their differences, and especially how their different ontologies and människosyns are grounded in their personal experiences and are integral to their respective views of success, we locate their contributions in their respective biographies and published works. Table 1 summarizes the key points of the discussion that follows, illustrating how life experiences, ontologies, människosyns and views of success are intimately entwined.

Table 1. The world views of Taylor and Follett

	Taylor	Follett
Defining life experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studied engineering by correspondence • Professional career in the factory environment; advancing from shop floor to management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studied history, political, science, philosophy, literature etc. in various intellectual milieus • Professional career in teaching, law firm, social work
Overall purpose	Efficiency; to increase national efficiency by reducing wastes of human effort	Development; to liberate peoples' creative spirit by establishing democratic governance
Ontology	<i>Being</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one best way • Management is a rational science • Ruled by generic laws and principles • Reality as separate and distinct units 	<i>Becoming</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrative unity • Organizing as a democratic social process • New possibilities are continuously emergent • Reality as the intermingling of performative flows
Människosyn	System first; People subordinate to system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers seen as lazy, selfish and untrustworthy • Managers intellectually and morally superior • "Scientific" rules to replace personal judgement • Relies on external control 	People first; Authority and organizational forms emerge out of democratic group process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith in all humankind • Everyone has something to contribute to work • Creativity and development emerge from collaboration • Relies on self-control
Requirements for success	Design optimal system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specification of tasks • Selection of most suitable workers • Establish control and reward system 	Designing dynamic whole <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish group organization • Get fullest contribution from everyone • Foster collective responsibility and shared rewards

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training – in task efficiency; for workers by managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education – in participating in group processes; for managers and workers together
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Frederick Winslow Taylor and the Principles of Scientific Management

Taylor was a mechanical engineer who grew up in Philadelphia. As the son of a Princeton educated lawyer, he expected to follow in his father’s professional footsteps. After studies in France and Germany, and 18 months of travelling in Europe, he entered the Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. Although he was subsequently admitted into Harvard to study law, health issues lead him to choose an alternative path as an apprentice patternmaker and machinist. His early shop floor experience was gained at Enterprise Hydraulic Works in Philadelphia, a pump-manufacturing company. After a 4-year apprenticeship, Taylor became a machine-shop laborer at Midvale Steel Works, where he was quickly promoted to time clerk, journeyman machinist, gang boss over the lathe hands, machine-shop foreman, research director, and finally chief engineer of the works. During this period he also obtained a degree in mechanical engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology, where he was the only student to successfully study by correspondence. In 1893 Taylor opened an independent consulting practice in Philadelphia, which provided opportunities to work with a range of different clients as he developed and refined his own management system.

Taylor’s lifelong commitment to better management climaxed with the publication in 1911 of his book, *Principles of Scientific Management*, which was primarily concerned with “the larger question of increasing our national efficiency”. In his view “wastes of human effort”, which he had observed going on every day and everywhere, had to be reduced (1911, p. 5). He reasoned this would require a systematic form of management free from arbitrary decisions based on rules-of-thumb or any individual’s own personal judgment. Taylor had experienced first-hand the often bitter conflict between workers and managers. The reactions

from the workers when he “told them plainly that he was now working on the side of management, and that he proposed to do whatever he could to get a fair day’s work out of the lathes” (1911/1919, p. 50) were so strong that Taylor called the ensuing conflict ‘a war’. As a consequence he was determined to change the system of management so that “the interests of the workmen and the management should become the same, instead of antagonistic” (1911, p. 66).

Based on his conviction that “[i]n the past man has been first [but] in the future the system must be first” (Taylor, 1911, p. 7) he set out “[t]o prove that the best management is a true science, resting upon clearly defined laws, rules, and principles, as a foundation” (1911/1919, p. 7). These principles, he argued, are applicable to all kinds of human activities, from the simple actions taken by individuals to the more complex systems found in all organizations, including our homes, farms, churches, philanthropic institutions, universities and government departments. For him then, scientific management consists of “a certain philosophy” that combines “the four great underlying principles of management”: “*First*. The development of a true science. *Second*. The scientific selection of the workman. *Third*. His scientific education and development. *Fourth*. Intimate friendly cooperation between the management and the men” (Taylor 1911/1919, p 130).

Taylor’s belief in scientific rationality and his pursuit of efficiencies through optimized human effort, end goals, worker selection and performance measures reveals a profoundly reductionist view of a machine-like world comprised of component parts that relate to each other through simple and predictable causalities. By focusing his scientific inquiries on the accurate and objective representation of the entities that comprise this reality – workers, managers, structures, systems, rules, routines – Taylor endorses a positivistic methodology that seeks to discover generalizable knowledge constituting a system capable of, amongst

other things, counteracting worker tendencies towards “soldiering”. In this his purpose was ultimately to achieve efficiency gains that would benefit both workers and managers. This combination of methodology and epistemology is philosophically consistent with an ontology of *being* (Chia, 1995), with its concerns for the essential qualities of ‘things’.

Taylor undertook many experiments aimed at improving the efficiency of labor, using his findings to persuade his readers that “whenever these principles are correctly applied, results must follow which are truly astounding” (Taylor, 1911, p. 7). Most famously, he developed a law of pig iron handling based upon the scientific observation that “a man in loading pig iron from piles placed on the ground in an open field on to a car which stood on a track adjoining these piles, ought to handle (and that they did handle regularly) 47½ long tons (2240 pounds per ton) per day” (Taylor, 1911/1919, p.60). From this, he was able to define in precise detail the task of an optimal pig iron handler, where the definition of “the task” is fundamental to his scientific management.

“The work of every workman is fully planned out by the management at least one day in advance, and each man receives in most cases complete written instructions, describing in detail the task which he is to accomplish, as well as the means to be used in doing the work. And the work planned in advance in this way constitutes a task which is to be solved, as explained above, not by the workman alone, but in almost all cases by the joint effort of the workman and the management. This task specifies not only what is to be done but how it is to be done and the exact time allowed for doing it ... so that both good and careful work are called for in their performance” (Taylor, 1911, pp. 48-49).

Making a distinction between the higher functions of management and the ordinariness of workers’ tasks, Taylor maintained that once tasks have been accurately detailed, an

“intelligent gorilla” could be trained to do them. Indeed, “it is impossible for the man who is best suited to this type of work to understand the principles of this science, or even to work in accordance with these principles without the aid of a man better educated than he is” (1911/1919, p. 49-50). Once task design has been optimized for efficiency, Taylor further realized the need for elaborate control systems to overcome what he saw as the inherent laziness of workers who “deliberately work as slowly as they dare” (1911/1919, p.43). In this manner, he sought to shift power away from workers and towards managers and their control systems, thereby avoiding dependence upon workers’ experience or personal judgments.

In another study Taylor examined a bicycle factory where 120 girls were assigned the task of inspecting tiny steel balls used in bicycle bearings - a job that required the closest attention and concentration. The “scientific selection” of girls best suited to this task was based on a test that measured their response times to visual stimuli, but “unfortunately this involved laying off many of the most intelligent, hard working, and most trustworthy of the girls ... because they did not possess the quality of quick perception followed by quick action” (1911/1919, pp. 89-90). In further pursuit of his scientific ideals, Taylor implemented a reduction in working hours for the bicycle factory workers. His time studies had shown that the girls spent a considerable part of their time in partial idleness, talking and half-working, but when their working hours were reduced, they nevertheless continued to produce the same quantity of work and thus to take home the same wages. Taylor observed “no doubt some people will say these girls were brutally treated. They were seated so far apart they could not conveniently talk while at work ... [but by] providing the most favorable working conditions ... [the girls could] really work instead of pretending to do so ... [thereby ensuring] what they most want, namely, *high wages*” (1911/1919, pp. 92-3, italics in original).

Wages are one of the key levers in Taylor's scientific management. "A reward, if it is to be effective in stimulating men to do their best work, must come soon after the work has been done" (1911/1919, p.94). As most workers are only able to look forward a week or so, the average workman must be able to measure what he has achieved, and get the rewards for it, by the end of each workday. So for instance, before the girls in the bicycle factory finally "worked to their best advantage", it was "necessary to measure the output of each girl as often as once every hour, and to send a teacher to each individual who was found to be falling behind to find what was wrong, to straighten her out, and to encourage and help her to catch up" (1911/1919, p.94). Taylor rejected democratic models involving cooperation or profit-sharing on the grounds that workers respond to immediate rewards rather than the delayed gratification of end-of-year results. He argued that "it is neither right, nor just that [workers] should share either the profits or the losses, since these may be due in great part to causes entirely beyond their control and influence, and to which they do not contribute" (1911/1919, p. 95).

Throughout Taylor's thinking we see evidence of a particular människosyn that values workers for their physical capacities in a very narrow sense, while valuing managers differently for their superior intellects. In effect, workers are seen as the cogs of a machine that has been cleverly designed by managers for optimum performance. Taylor sees these two groups as differently constituted in practice, and certainly different in their educational experiences. Whereas workers are characterized as lazy and willing to cheat if they get a chance and having more concern about their own material gains than the wellbeing of the group, managers are the selfless and intelligent experts of industry.

Success for Taylor then, is a pretty straightforward concept: design an optimal system and ensure tasks are executed according to plan. In a time when social Darwinism and the

promise of scientific method were among the most dominant influences, the positive reception and popularity Taylor's ideas gained is not surprising (Dent & Bozeman, 2014). Today however, the adoption of this ontological stance in researching human activities is increasingly critiqued, and his människosyn is certainly inconsistent with contemporary post-industrial thinking. Arguably however, these principles of scientific management, and especially their underlying assumptions about ontology and människosyn, continue to reside just below the surface of many mainstream theories of project management with Taylorian derivatives such as objective performance appraisal, managerial hierarchy and efficiency measures being taken uncritically as given.

Mary Parker Follett and Democratic Governance

Mary Parker Follett was born in Quincy, Massachusetts to a relatively well-off middle class Quaker family. She studied philosophy, scientific method and psychology, graduating from Thayer Academy with top grades at the age of sixteen. That same year though, her father died and she became responsible for the care of her disabled mother and their household. In order to continue studying, she enrolled at Ticknor School, taking American history, political economy and philanthropy by correspondence, and was then admitted to "The Annex" (a Harvard facility for women renamed Radcliffe College by the time she graduated) as a "special" student with high ambition but modest financial means. Over six years, of which she spent two in England at Newnham College for Women, she studied history, economics, political science and philosophy. Subsequently Follett taught political science in a girls' school, worked as an assistant in a Boston law firm, and took another year to study philosophy, ethics and literature in Vermont, before ultimately embarking on a career in social work, which appealed to her as a way of contributing to society. She became heavily involved in the settlement house movement, joining the Roxbury Neighborhood House in

Boston, where she reportedly exhibited a unique capacity to engage with people from all walks of life and at all social and educational levels (Parker, 1984).

The evolution of Follett's thinking can be traced through four key publications. Firstly, her final exam thesis, *The Speaker of the House of Representatives*, was published in 1896 and came to be highly regarded in government circles. It provides an historical analysis that explores the political influence and expressions of power of the Speaker. This work offers many insights into the workings of the democratic system and laid the foundations for her emerging ideas on democratic governance. Then *The New State*, published in 1918, builds on her settlement house work to advocate the replacement of hierarchical institutional governance with networks of groups. In her view, group process is both the "secret to collective life" and the "key to democracy". She was fiercely opposed to the then popular proposals of reformers and professional experts who sought to govern new immigrants in "their best interests". Instead, Follett puts her faith in ordinary people, believing that by developing a sense of personal responsibility for government and an informed, independent judgment on political issues, citizens could become skillful practitioners of self-government. However, she also recognizes that this achievement will be possible only if practical methods are found for continuously creating collective will.

Later, her 1924 book *Creative Experience* stimulated considerable interest and resulted in numerous invitations to act as a management advisor to business and industry (Westlander, 2016). In particular, in 1924–5 she was invited to deliver a series of lectures to the Bureau of Personnel Administration during which she proposed a series of radical new ideas for better industrial management. These lectures were published posthumously in 1941 as *Dynamic Administration. The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett*. Throughout all of this work, the principle of integrative unity in human action runs as a continuous thread woven out of

the dynamic relationships that constitute the values of diverse communities. “I cannot emphasize too strongly the significance of finding the same underlying principles in every field of human activity. We find it in the arts – in architecture, in painting, in poetry, in music – that the fundamental principle of organization, is relatedness” (Follett, 1941, p. 201). In her view it is groups organized into local networks that offer hope for democratic progress, and this in turn leads her to be deeply skeptical of “experts” cast as founts of specialist or technical knowledge. “The expert is to many what the priest is, someone who knows absolutely and can tell us what to do. The king, the priest, the expert, have one after the other had our allegiance, but so far as we put any of them in the place of ourselves, we have not a sound society and neither individual, nor general progress.” (Follett, 1924, p. 4).

Follett invites us to think of organizing not as a pre-planned design, but as a relational and emergent social process that depends on the integration of all participants’ experiences. The success of such social processes depends crucially on education, but not in Taylor’s sense of scientifically training workers to undertake specific tasks defined by managers. Rather, workers and managers alike should be educated to participate cooperatively. This requires a collective sense of responsibility to be developed through functional relating, which is “the continuing process of self-creating coherence. ... If you have the right kind of functional relating, you will have a process which will create a unity which will lead to further unities – a self-creating progression” (Follett, 1941, pp. 200-201). Thus it is through direct and immediate actions that integrative unity is continuously produced. “Genuine integration occurs in the sphere of activities, and not of ideas or wills” (Follett, 1924, p. 150). This integrative unity cannot be accomplished by theorizing alone, nor by engaging dualistic distinctions such as thinking vs doing, ends vs means, or workers vs managers, which abstract lived experience out of its dynamic contexts. Follett is adamant that some definite activity has to be undertaken in order to produce unity. In making this strong commitment to

the creative emergence of social practice through the relationality and engaged participation of those involved, Follett is clearly subscribing to a set of philosophical assumptions that are very different from those of Taylor. Indeed we propose that her thinking is fundamentally informed by the perpetual unfolding of a *becoming* ontology with its allegiances to continuity and performative action.

Follett's approach to workplace conflict and its resolution is also fundamentally different from that of Taylor. She seeks to eliminate the "fight attitude" that is evoked by conflict, replacing it with an integrative attitude. Rather than avoiding conflict she suggests "we should set it to work for us" (Follett, 1941, p. 30). In her view, there are three main ways of dealing with conflict: domination, compromise and integration. The first entails a victory of one side over the other, and the second means each side gives up something in order to have peace. But neither of these alternatives really resolves the conflict. Integration, by contrast, means finding a new purpose that not only satisfies both parties, but also the situation itself is improved. It implies inventiveness, requiring people to take on a different attitude towards conflict in order to liberate their thinking from the boundedness of existing alternatives.

Elaborating this point further, she argues that the basic premise of Taylor's scientific management is flawed, because "as we have always known", in practice "no sharp line could be drawn between planning and execution". The "division between those who manage and those who are managed has been in part artificial" (Follett, 1941, p. 88). Indeed, if we are "to get away from tradition, prejudice, stereotypes, guesswork" (Follett, 1941, p. 125), it is necessary to apply the very same principles to managers' jobs as to workers' jobs.

From the perspective of integrative unity, purpose is derived from, rather than antecedent to activity. Follett argues that we make two mistakes in regard to purpose: "we try to substitute an intellectualistic purpose for that involved in the situation, or, when the purpose appears

from out the activity, we think, by some strange mental legerdemain, that was the purpose which had been actuating us all along” (Follett, 1924, p. 82). But this thinking contradicts the nature of the social process, where every relation is potentially a freeing relation with its own emergent purpose. This view of organizing as a social process with an emergent purpose suggests an approach to control that is starkly different from that of Taylor. If the key problem of organizing is coordination of experience, then we can neither understand nor gain control without unity. In order to control a certain situation it is necessary to obtain the cooperation of those concerned in that situation. “The degree of control will depend partly on how far you can successfully unite the ideas of these men and yourself”. The self-directing, self-regulating character of an organism as a whole means that “the organizing activity *is* the directing activity. The interacting *is* the control” (Follett, 1941, p. 202).

Follett’s thinking expresses a *människosyn* that is radically different from that of Taylor. Her own life experiences led her to believe that everyone has potential to develop, and she sees it as the main task of democratic societies to ensure that developmental opportunities are widely available. She did not see power in conventional dualistic terms as ‘power over’ others, but rather as ‘power with’ others where “[o]ne person should not give orders to another person, but both should agree to take their orders from the situation” (Follett, 1941, p. 59). It is the situation that has authority rather than any individual. Working under someone, being subordinate, and being denied the right to use one’s own judgment is, in Follett’s view, demeaning. Working with someone in a shared situation is potentially much more rewarding, not only for the individuals involved, but also for the group and organization as a whole. Through this combination of ontology and *människosyn*, Follett thus offers a very different approach to project management that emphasizes relational cooperation and emergent designing rather than the more reductionist Taylorian view of tasks, goals and controls.

In terms of success, Follett is highly critical of Taylor's efficiency-driven approach. She observes somewhat ironically (Follett, 1924, p. 3): “[i]f the question were as simple as that, most of our troubles would be over; we should only have to get enough Intelligence Bureaus at Washington, enough scientific management into the factories ... and all life would become fair and beautiful. For the people it is assumed, will gladly agree to become automata when we show them all the things – nice, solid, objective *things* – they can have by abandoning their own experience in favor of a superior race of men called experts”. Her view of success reflects her overarching aim “to free the creative spirit of man”, which “is done through group organization” (Follett, 1918, p. 159). Success and progress of any business, for Follett, depends on “its ability to get his fullest contribution from every man in office or factory, store or bank” (Follett, 1941, p. 228).

TWO TALES OF DESIGN(ING)

DESMA was a complex project organized around four hubs, each comprising a university, a design firm, and a service or manufacturing firm. Each hub was responsible for a research theme, such as service design or design-driven innovation, with the university contributing academic expertise and the industrial partners providing practical experience. In collaboration, the hubs provided training courses for thirteen Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) who were distributed across the network and were undertaking PhD studies at partner universities. These courses structured the whole project, allowing the ESRs to get together to discuss and develop shared activities in the network, such as communication initiatives. Once a year a meeting with all partners and participants in the network was held to share and disseminate DESMA research. The final meeting, called DESMA Vibes, hosted 100 participants, including a diverse mix of senior researchers, practitioners and students.

In what follows, we present two different stories about how the DESMA project was managed. Firstly, Design for Success is the story of the Project Manager who was responsible

for the planning and execution of the contractual agreement with the European Commission. This story is constructed by the Project Manager from the records she kept both in the lead-up to, and during the project. From this perspective, success meant making sure the project was ranked as “successful” by European Commission standards. Secondly we offer an alternative story, *Designing Success*, in which the unfolding experiences of Ulises and Ariana, two of the ESRs involved in designing DESMA, are presented. This story draws on verbatim extracts from interviews conducted by the first author once the project was completed, during which Ulises and Ariana reflected on the success of DESMA from their own perspectives. The choice of these two informants, one studying at a Business School and the other in a Faculty of Art, is representative of the larger group of ESRs. Our purpose in presenting their story is not so much to provide an accurate account of the unfolding experience of the project, which after all is a very personal and subjective matter, but rather to capture the fleeting experience of these particular “workers” as a thick performance (Viviane Sergi & Hallin, 2011) of project success.

Design for Success (in the Project Manager’s voice)

PM: *The success of DESMA can, in the first instance, be traced back to the process of applying for the funding, which required compliance with the framework of assessment criteria specified by the Research Executive Agency (REA) of the European Commission. To assist applicants in navigating through the background, policy objectives and details for the call and to complete the 43-page electronic template for proposal submissions, there was an 81-page guidance document that was to be read in association with the 71-page overview of the Work Programme. Along with a variety of other supportive documents, these were available in the Participant*

Portal, the European Commission's electronic hub for research projects⁴. Ultimately, the expert evaluation of the DESMA proposal concluded that it was excellent and should be funded: comments included "this is an exceptionally well thought through training programme", "this is an excellent implementation plan", and "the impact of the proposed outreach activities is very well described". The strengths of the proposal were noted in terms of how well the planned activities addressed the pre-defined evaluation criteria.

To write a successful application it is essential to specify as clearly as possible the tasks to be performed throughout the project and the consortium's capacity to execute them well. For DESMA this meant specifying, for example, the structure of the ESRs' individual Career Development Plans, the structures, plans and quality assurance mechanisms of the training courses, the structure of the supervisory committees and a process for ensuring knowledge exchange between named expert supervisors and yet-to-be-recruited ESRs. For example, the recruitment process was described in terms of what channels would be used for disseminating the call, the criteria for selecting ESRs, what the applications should include, and the phased steps of the selection process. The purpose of the detailed descriptions is to be able to break down all activities into specific tasks, which can be formulated as "deliverables" that adhere to the specific language and regulations of the REA.

In this proposal-writing phase of the DESMA Project, we see many indicators of a Taylorian ontology of *being*. In particular, the use of pre-designed templates supported by copious information serves to constrain the style and content of proposals within a narrowly manageable range. This in turn allows for the application of pre-determined criteria to

⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html>

measure and compare the quality of every proposal. There is also a strong emphasis on the detailed design of tasks that will collectively constitute the project while also providing elaborate systems for controlling the project outputs. This concern for objective clarity at the outset aims to minimize the risks of misunderstandings or conflicts of opinion arising later in the project's life, thereby increasing the efficiency of the whole process.

PM: *Once funding was awarded, the details of the application were translated into a formal Description of Work with specified milestones and deliverables that became the basis of the research contract. The execution of the project was divided into three phases, starting with the recruitment of ESRs. Despite having a detailed project plan, a 5-month delay was incurred due to the unforeseen complications of interacting with other systems such as different immigration procedures in the host countries, and regulations and requirements for enrolment in PhD Programmes of the different universities involved. The second phase concentrated on training activities, mainly DESMA training courses and complementary skills training, and formulation of research projects. The third phase was dominated by execution of research projects and dissemination activities as the project's digital platform (website and social media channels) opened up new opportunities for a range of communication activities initiated by the ESRs. Reaching out to the public was an important part of the project, as one of the objectives was to create a platform for Design Management research. The activities of the 2nd and 3rd phase were more within the control of the management team and were thus concluded within the planned time frame. Altogether all deliverables and milestones were completed within the 4 year duration of the project without any serious deviations from the plan specified in the Description of Work. As the Project Officer at the REA noted; 'all Work Packages have been*

delivered with minor delays or slight deviations but they did not impact in a negative manner the objectives’.

Communications with the REA were digital, except for one personal meeting with the Project Officer and an expert reviewer when all ESRs and partners were required to attend the project mid-term review meeting. This forum allowed the REA to follow-up any questions relating to reporting as well as giving directions and recommendations for the next phase. Reporting consisted of seven different reports submitted electronically using specific formats (two periodic reports, two progress reports, one mid-term review report, one final report and one distribution report). These reports shared a common structure although they varied in scope and some new features were introduced as the project progressed. The scientific reporting, which was the vehicle for following up the activities specified in the Description of Work, consisted of a number of tables (durations and conditions for ESR employments, achievement of milestones and number of participants in open meetings) and some fields for free text relating to achievement of project objectives and work progress. The final report, submitted after project end, was a more extensive summary of all the activities within the project in terms of training, research and dissemination, which conveyed the impact of the project, including numbers of publications and connections with people. The space for free text in these report forms is rather limited, so being able to quantify impact was crucial. Each publication must be registered in the reporting system according to a specific format; if some piece of information in a reference is missing the system will not accept it. With 69 publications by 13 different people to register, collecting this information – ensuring all necessary items were in place – was the most time-consuming task of the reporting procedure.

Taylorian principles continue to be very evident as the project proceeds, not least in the standardized and highly restrictive formats required for reporting on progress. The importance of the project design comes into particularly sharp focus when the Project Manager was confronted with unforeseen circumstances, which ultimately had to be accommodated by exploiting flexibilities elsewhere in the plan. This discussion about the control and execution of the work is notable for its depersonalized and intellectualized emphasis on systems, which reflects the sphere of wills and ideas more than the sphere of activity (Follett, 1924). The participants in the project are effectively invisible and all attention is directed towards satisfying the funder. We can infer from this an underlying människosyn that values systems and generalized abstractions ahead of the human qualities of work, relies heavily on external control based on criteria defined by managers to be met by workers, and sees communication as a means of exchanging information rather than as an opportunity for creative dialogue.

PM: *Upon completion, the project was positively evaluated by the REA. The Project Officer considered it successful because it had “fully accomplished its goal to create a new generation of Design Management researchers able to bridge the Design-Management divide. The ESRs were excellent researchers” and “[t]he project has created the leading platform for discussion, research and development within Design Management, gathering participants from both disciplines and across all sectors”.*

Here, the success of DESMA is defined in terms of its accomplishment of specified tasks and production of promised outputs. According to Taylor (1911), if his scientific principles are correctly applied astounding results must follow, which perhaps explains how DESMA came to be ranked as a “flagship project” by the REA. But is this all there is to project success?

PM: *The main challenge in project planning and execution was accommodating the emergent nature of project work. As the overall aim of the project was the development of a new generation of Design Management researchers who were to drive the development of the field, achievement of this aim was dependent on ESRs' personal development and ability to collaborate in creating new visions and ways of working.*

Thus the Project Manager recognizes that if efficiency is pursued to its logical endpoint, there will be no space left for emergent possibilities and the novel thinking that arguably gives DESMA its “flagship” status. As an Initial Training Network, DESMA needed to develop boundary-crossing constellations across disciplines, across national borders and cultures, and across academic and industry practice. Furthermore, the arts and crafts basis of design practice, which DESMA aimed to exploit both in terms of how the project was executed and the research projects conducted, rests on a view of knowing and learning as the ongoing process of designing. So, rather than privileging the views of managers and funders as Taylor would advise, let us now turn to the participants themselves to appreciate their experience of designing an emergent project.

Designing Success (in the voices of two ESRs, Ulises and Ariana)

Ulises: *It was the whole journey that we went through that made DESMA successful, because it made us grow as individuals. We got to meet and work with all these people that came from different places, have different perspectives and views on things, have different institutional settings. Being exposed to this kind of diversity really changes you. It shapes who you are and how you see things, and it forces you to challenge the taken for granted assumptions we all have.*

What stimulated my imagination and creativity the most was in the very beginning when we were talking about what DESMA could be. I think that was a very exciting moment when we were like ‘there’s this DESMA thing; what do you want it to be?’ So I guess that was a very open-ended space for us to figure out what we wanted to do. Looking back it’s really interesting to see how DESMA was shaped by all these different ambitions and it sort of evolved into something that was beyond what we planned. It was an unfolding that became something, it was not our planning or anything. So that was very stimulating. I think it was good because it was so open. Dealing with uncertainty is always good. Because if it had been tightly framed it would have been detrimental to the end result.

Ariana: Yeah, the way DESMA was originally framed as a space “in between” that we could develop; that always captured my imagination. The original framing is why I’m here. We could rethink how we even approach this idea of a meeting between these disciplines. That’s just exciting to explore! And the diversity of the group was really exciting. In the beginning there was an excitement and energy for us to do this thing together. It was new uncharted territory and I think we all had this excitement about being able to shape this thing.

Both ESRs emphasize the value of DESMA as a developmental opportunity that facilitated deeper understandings of themselves and their own motivations while also moving the project forward. Their excitement about the as-yet-unknown possibilities of the project reflects a willingness to engage directly in designing the unfolding project. They recognize that interacting with a diverse range of people served to stimulate creative thinking and the quest for novel solutions. In all of this, there is an underlying dynamic of continuous development

and liminality that is suggestive of an ontology of *becoming*, and especially Follett's integrative unity which is accomplished through learning that is rooted in shared experience.

Ulises: *Of course it was really challenging to be part of such a diverse group dealing with such open-endedness. Being a group of 13 ESRs there was frustration that we would have meetings when there was not an outcome that was satisfying, and in the end we felt that OK we spent the whole day talking, and that was really frustrating. Looking back now I realize that all those frustrations were part of getting along together and building what DESMA is. There was certainly tension, but tension can be good or bad depending on how you deal with it. I think it helped us a lot when we started to have all these informal gatherings outside the formal training programme, when we could just hang out and get to know each other. And I think conflict helped us grow as a group. It makes you realize this person works in this way, or these people work like that and you learn that through some sort of clash in the beginning. But then, the second time around, you know what to expect in a sense. So OK, I need to manage myself and others in relation to everybody else. Let's figure out how we are going to function together, what are our different roles. So I think we developed a cross-cultural ability to approach people with an open mind without being too sensitive.*

Ariana: *I do think we were successful when we got practical and actually did things. I still get frustrated that we talk about things at an abstract level. It's like we just get trapped in talking in an abstract way instead of actually carrying out or figuring out how would we do this. But when we had the DESMA Vibes meeting for example, when we had these events that had a nice mix of practitioners and academics and we had these conversations. That was a step in a direction that was hopeful.*

Ulises: *For me a real trigger for the dynamics in the group was when we moved on to doing things and were not just talking. That did a lot to the team cohesion. Like when a group of five of us had to work for organizing the tours in Latin America. The fact that we went out and talked to other people about DESMA made me realize how unique it was and how important it was, because I was getting an outsider's perspective and people were so keen to connect with us and do something together. It was also important for me in terms of having experiences together as a team. I mean real experiences, like flying and moving around in Mexico City in a cab, or 'oh no they stole my back pack' and everybody supporting each other. So it was a very human experience in the sense of the team going through things together.*

Whilst relationships can be frustrating, figuring out the relational dynamics of how to work productively together, developing an “integrative attitude” as Follett put it, was a huge part of the DESMA project. Beyond the formal aspects of project design, the informality of just being able to hang out together brought unexpected opportunities for collaborative designing. Both Ulises and Ariana emphasize the importance of actually doing practical activities together in order to develop cohesion and integration across the group. For them then, it was when they were operating in the sphere of activity rather than the sphere of ideas (Follett, 1924) that DESMA was at its most productive. In this they reveal a människosyn of respect for alternative viewpoints and a valuing of the differences that people can bring to creative work; one that relies on self-control rather than external control to simultaneously organize and direct activity (Follett 1941).

Ariana: *What is so interesting to me is what happened over time. As time went on people became more and more rigid, and we lost the group dynamic, because people went into their own research. And also, I don't know if it's related, but I felt people became*

more fixed in their views, so it was really interesting to see how people came in originally with an openness and over time it was like 'oh, we just can't do it in that way'. As researchers still being PhD students we were really confined by what research is and the kinds of audiences you write for and the kinds of publications you aim for. And how interesting is that to practitioners? I don't think we necessarily always bridged the divides in the way we disseminated our work. And I think we did have some interesting ideas to rethink even how we engage the kind of traditional formats of how we share our experiences, but we never really got there. I don't think we kept the imaginative and creative part alive, we didn't keep open that original possibility of what that space could be.

It became we take on the same approach and we just have to figure out interesting ways to do it. It became doing the same thing in new ways, in a new language. If we really want to cross these divides and create something truly new we cannot be confined by the standards that we needed to adhere to as PhD students. As the set-up was all about how design gets better at talking management speak, it made it difficult to take more of an artistic perspective and explore a truly different approach to understanding what we do. But I think it would have taken more designers to have done that to be honest, because people in other traditions get really uncomfortable when something hasn't been done before. So what happened was that we just kind of got sucked into the management paradigm. And I hate to put them against each other like that, but that's kind of the reality of it, of how it was set up, of how the situation was set up. So to me it was like you can never get out of it.

But this is typically how we do it these days, we set the structure and the formal objectives first. And that is so backwards to the way it would work from an artistic

perspective. If you want to radically change something, it would require a different set-up to let the structure develop based on the internal movement, because then we would have seen what the thing was that we wanted to do. You should just experiment your way ahead; OK that works, that didn't work. Then you end up somewhere completely different probably, because that's the nature of how original concepts develop. So that's how we would start.

In this extended extract, Ariana laments the loss of playful innocence as DESMA grinds towards its prescribed and predictable outcomes. She seems resigned to the inevitability that artistic and original ideas have to some extent fallen away, to be replaced by the standardizing force of management-speak. She nevertheless holds out hope for a more radical approach to doing project work, in which the Follettian dynamics of experimenting, learning, and designing take precedence over systems designed to maximize compliance, control, and efficiency. Arguably it is precisely these dynamics of functional relating that account for the real success of DESMA, but because they are emergent they could not have been articulated in advance nor defined within the formal Description of Work, so they remain invisible to external scrutiny.

DISCUSSION

What we see in these tales of the DESMA project is two very different perspectives on what constitutes project success. On one hand, the Project Manager and the project funders articulate success through a series of tasks, targets and timelines, which provide robust mechanisms for controlling and monitoring the progress and outcomes of the project. And yet, the Project Manager is aware there is something missing from this account of the project's success, something that is largely invisible because it has not been measured, and in fact may even not be measurable. On the other hand, the workers' perspective on DESMA as

expressed by Ulises and Ariana, focuses on the experience of being part of an unfolding journey, which is characterized by both thrills and spills as the ESRs learn together in their collaborative efforts to create something new and meaningful. They present this generative experience as exciting and stimulating, but ultimately unsustainable as the social dynamics of emergence are replaced by the need for individualized compliance with performance targets. Overall then DESMA demonstrates the co-existence and relevance of both of these perspectives on success, one informed by Taylorian principles of scientific management and the other by a Follettian commitment to democratic governance. What becomes apparent though, is that one (Taylorian) nevertheless comes to dominate at the expense of the other (Follettian) – in other words the differences between perspectives are settled through what Follett (1941) refers to as the domination model of conflict resolution as opposed to her preferred integration approach.

To understand how it is that Taylorian thinking continues to prevail in the field of Project Management, we have argued it is essential to develop a critical perspective that exposes the hidden assumptions within contemporary theory and practice. To this end, we have elaborated Taylor's thinking and motivations in some detail, revealing his commitments to an ontology of *being* and a *människosyn* that justifies treating workers and managers quite differently. Drilling down into these underpinning assumptions we have found that Taylor's thinking has a distinctive purpose, to maximize efficiency, which is associated with a particular form of organizational design involving hierarchical lines of accountability and control. This purpose and form are, of course, every bit as relevant today as they were in Taylor's time, but the DESMA example shows that this is not the full story of the project's success. To open this up further, we have introduced the alternative thinking of Follett, who builds upon an ontology of *becoming* and a *människosyn* that unifies workers and managers as equal contributors to the ongoing designing of work. For her the purpose of this

collaborative effort is to develop citizens capable of democratic engagement, and the form of organizing that supports this process is self-governing networks. This alternative purpose and form are increasingly evident in the contemporary project management literature (e.g. Cicmil et al., 2016; Packendorff et al., 2014; Söderlund, 2011a), but there is still a misguided tendency to try to either subsume the Follettian developmental purpose within a Taylorian form of organization, or to pursue Taylorian principles of efficiency in the open-ended context of dynamic and emergent networks.

The particular contribution that we seek to make in this paper is not to prefer either Taylor or Follett, but rather to value both as complementary aspects of what we have called the design(ing) duality. It is in the nature of a duality that these two aspects cannot be integrated simply by merging their purposes and organizational forms because, as we have shown, they are embedded in ontologies and människosyns that are not only different, but are profoundly incommensurable. That is, each aspect invokes a different world view couched in different philosophical assumptions, which in turn requires a different methodological apparatus to support empirical inquiry. As such, each must be researched separately in order to extract its distinctive perspective on the design(ing) of projects. The design elements drawn from a Taylorian view define a project as time-bounded, tightly constrained by pre-determined, quantifiable objectives and with a customized system to control the production of outputs. By contrast, a Follettian take on projects as developmental processes of designing would see them as continuously emergent and productive of creative outputs that could not have been foreseen at the outset. Both aspects of the design(ing) duality can offer something valuable to our understanding of project management, but only to the extent that their distinctive qualities are preserved. There is no 'third way' or 'happy mean' to be found here. In the same way, Cook and Brown's (1999) notion of a generative 'dance' plays across and between the epistemologies of knowledge and knowing in organizations. By retaining the distinctiveness

of these two epistemologies, generative possibilities can be found in their interplay. This is precisely how dualities can help us to extend our theoretical and practical understandings of complex phenomena such as projects.

We chose the DESMA project to illustrate this design(ing) duality because it explicitly sought an integration of science and art, theory and practice, in order to build a Europe-wide cross-disciplinary community of researchers in Design Management. Furthermore, it combined a developmental (Follettian) purpose with requirements for compliance to a standardized project management system, or organizational (Taylorian) form. By listening to the separate voices of the manager and two of the workers, we have heard quite different ideas about what made this project successful. The lesson that we take from this is that whereas design is important, so too is designing – and *how* they are combined has practical consequences. DESMA allowed these two aspects to co-exist by defining clear objectives, but not so tightly that there was no whitespace left for development (Maletz & Nohria, 2001). For example, the project plan specified that six courses should be delivered on specific topics (such as Design Management Methods), at given points in time, and offered by specified hosts. While executing these deliverables according to plan was compulsory, the actual content or pedagogical approach was left up to each host to decide. It was this conscious provision for flexibility that opened up developmental opportunities, not only for the ESRs, but also for the project more generally. Arguably, however, the whole idea of ‘projects’ as currently conceived in the Project Management literature, as well as the European Commission’s funding scheme for Innovative Training Networks⁵, is skewed towards the time-boundedness and control of a design perspective. In the case of DESMA, this bias no

⁵ The label of such research training projects has now been changed from “Initial” to “Innovative” Training Networks to better reflect the “[a]im to train a new generation of creative, entrepreneurial and innovative early stage researchers”. See: https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/actions/get-funding/innovative-training-networks_en

doubt contributed to project success from the design perspective (delivering pre-defined tasks within the required time frame), but we can we can also infer that this tight framing of the project hampered the potential success in terms of its overarching purpose of training creative, entrepreneurial and innovative researchers able to create long-term collaborations to redefine and develop the field. The invitation offered by our research then, is to consider how to better articulate success through organizational forms within and across projects that can support generative collaborations better suited to a Follettian människosyn and purpose.

In using Taylor and Follett as the standard-bearers to support our argument for the design(ing) duality, we are conscious that both pre-date the very notion of projects as a vehicle for organizing work. We may well ask then, how can they be relevant to contemporary thinking? Surely the literature has moved beyond these century-old ideas? On the contrary, the duality that distinguishes between design and designing, or more generally between entitative and processual world views is a perennial problem for researchers, especially those seeking to draw theory and practice more closely together. Whereas the theoretical and methodological apparatuses available for researching entitative world views are well developed and highly sophisticated, the same cannot be said for processual approaches. There is an urgent need for the community of scholars to engage seriously with the implications of an ontologically processual / designing / Follettian perspective if we are to rebalance the dominant entitative / design / Taylorian world view in our theorization and practice of Project Management as well as other domains of organization studies.

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