# 26. Enacting responsible management: a practice-based perspective

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### 1. INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter proposes a theoretical and methodological approach to investigating the ways in which individuals, organizational, social and environmental settings are entangled and, draws on post-humanist practice theory (Gherardi, 2017: 55) to discuss *managing responsibly*. Instead of using three interrelated and partially overlapping concepts, namely, sustainability, responsibility and ethics, the chapter proposes to assume managing responsibly as 'care', as a dimension of 'doing' responsible management in situated practices of organizing and managing.

We concur with others that the concept of responsible management may be understood as 'the integration of sustainability, responsibility, and ethics (SRE) into the managerial practice(s) of 'normal' managers' (Laasch, 2018b: 12). We extend this understanding by drawing on a practice-based approach, advocating no the study of managers as individuals or collectives, nor managerial work and activities, nor management discourse in isolation, nor education or learning as separate activities – but rather for the study of the social and material effects of their interconnections. In doing this, we maintain that a normative understanding of 'managing responsibly' is co-constructed and is emergent within a 'texture of practice' (Gherardi, 2006: 55), that is, as part of the surrounding and interacting practices in a specific site. 'Texture' is therefore understood as 'a weave or a web of interacting elements that resists operational definition' (Cooper & Fox, 1990: 575, drawing on the introduction of the term into organizational studies by Emery & Trist, 1965).

We illustrate how a practice-based approach can unpack multiple enactments of what might constitute managing 'responsibly' (or not) recognizing that there may be a range of competing beneficiaries in different contexts. For example, the chapter considers what might constitute responsible management in a purely market-focused business context, in publicly-subsidized contexts, as well as what it might look like in our case study, an ecovillage co-operative setting. In business, shareholder return on investment is paramount, while in aged care settings for example where marketization ideologies have taken hold in the management of such publicly subsidized services, we argue that efficiency and cost reduction may be being given primacy over effectiveness of care outcomes. In the ecovillage setting, economic sustainability remains a necessity but it does not give primacy to profit alone. This distinction recognizes that there is an implicit value in talking about the kind of responsible management we hold to, which we recognize might not be a panacea for every context. However, a practice-based approach

The term 'texture' of practice denotes 'connectedness in action', i.e. how each practice is interdependent and connected to other practices. This term brings out the definitive feature of texture, its endless series of relationships which continually move into each other.

enables us to illustrate how managing 'responsibly' (i.e. responsibly as an embedded value of managing) surfaces in different contexts and therefore how the analysis of 'responsibility' can be transferred as a theory-method package (Clarke & Star, 2008) to other contexts.

The chapter concludes with a call for a deeper understanding of the everyday 'doings' when examining managing 'responsibly' in organizations. Using a practice-based approach and a specific language to deal with managing 'responsibly' in the context of situated management practices, can shed light on whether *in situ* practices are affording more or fewer opportunities for participating and learning how to participate in sustainable, responsible and ethical practices. Furthermore, the chapter considers how managing 'responsibly' may be enacted as a 'care', a collective knowledgeable 'doing' – a 'caring' as 'an ongoing sociomaterial accomplishment and not an object or a quality that is added to work' Cherardi & Rodeschini, 2015: 1). Without such understandings it is concluded, there is scant prortunity for addressing the kinds of changes in doing 'responsible management' required in an increasingly resource-fragile world.

### 2. WAYS IN WHICH RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT IS UNDERSTOOD

In recent years the concept of responsible management has been investigated from a number of perspectives including: responsible leadership (see for example Greige Frangieh & Khayr Yaacoub, 2017; Pless & Maak, 2011) and responsible management education—in the context of organizations, Laasch and Conaway (2015) maintain that responsible may be understood as 'a type of management the sumes responsibility for the triple bottom line (sustainability), stakeholder value (responsibility) and moral dilemmas (ethics)' (p. 2) The triple bottom line (TBL) (Elkington, 1998), continues to be used as a key organizatio measure of sustainability performance and refers to the economic, social and environmental outcomes resulting from organizational work. This collective measure is often used as a signal by organizations of sustainable business practices (Isil & Hernke, 2017). This approach argues that an organization (and managers at all levels) carries responsibility for creating value for stakeholders (workers, suppliers, customers, society, environment etc.) not only shareholders. In this approach, the actions of the organization extend to their supply networks (Branden-Jones, 2015) and beyond. What has also been identified is that managers in enacting organizational work to achieve TBL outcomes, may be faced with ethical dilemmas and potentially conflicting priorities (Pless & Maak, 2011).

More recently, in interrogating this literature Laasch and Moosmayer (2015) maintain responsible management has become an overarching term (and concept) to capture the actions of managers embracing sustainability, responsibility, and ethical principles in their work. One of the drivers for this shift has been a recognition that although much investment has been made by business schools in their educational programs to encompass responsible management (as SRE), the translation of this knowledge into the activities of managers in organizations has not been as expected (see also Prahalad, 2010; Schneider et al., 2010). Üçok Hughes et al. (2018: 196) critiquing the approaches of business education, maintain that this theory practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to responsible management has occurred as a result of 'the lack of practice gap in relation to

taking a practice-based approach we maintain, and as others have begun to (see for example Laasch, 2018a, 2018b) that the knowledges about 'management' which managers (who have undertaken business education) bring with them into organizations, inform how they enact their managing practices (e.g. responsibly within a profit-maximization model) in these contexts.

We wish to position our work alongside those who have begun to consider alternative ways of understanding responsible management, particularly shifting our understanding from a concept (of management) to an action (of management). In a structured literature review Laasch and Moosmayer (2015) maintain that responsible management may be understood as a term encompassing managers' activities related to sustainability, responsibility and ethics as these three concepts are enacted together in the work of managers. Taking a competency-based perspective they identify a portfolio of competencies to inform human resource management and professional development of managers in responsible management. This work draws attention to the activities and knowledge of managers undertaking responsible management. Laasch (2018b) further develops his understanding of responsible management as the activities of managers and proposes three conceptual shifts to understand responsible management understanding. First, he maintains that responsible management needs to be differentiated from other related concepts (i.e. corporate social responsibility, sustainable business and social enterprise). Behind this perspective is the shift in the 'unit of analysis from the organizational level to the individual, group' (1 and a processual positioning focusing on activities of individual managers who are managing 'responsibly'. Second, he distinguishes between the fields of research which focus on responsible management education and those which focus on managerial activities outside the educational context. Third, for Laasch, the focus should be on everyday managers (i.e. in non-specialist roles focused on ethics or sustainability) who manage aspects of organizational functioning and how these managers manage responsibly.

Below, we use the notion of practice in a theorized way, encompassing more than 'what managers do', drawing on a practice-based approach for understanding and researching responsible management. By taking this approach we endeavour to bring to the fore theoretical underpinnings which provide a platform for section 4 in this chapter, where using extant examples, we illustrate how a practice-based approach can facilitate the unpacking of multiple enactments of what might constitute managing 'responsibly' (or not) in organizations.

### 3. A PRACTICE-BASED APPROACH FOR UNDERSTANDING AND RESEARCHING MANAGING 'RESPONSIBLY'

'Practice' is a 'polysemous term' (Gherardi, 2011: 60). The word 'practice' carries with it a multiplicity of ideas, perspectives and uses. Therefore 'practice' refers to and carries with it a multiplicity of ideas, perspectives and uses, including philosophical, theoretical, empirical (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011) and also an everyday meaning. Gherardi (2019), following Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015) distinguishes three ways to the study of practice: commonsensical theories of practice, general theories of practice, and domain specific theories of practice, maintains that a practice-based approach may be understood as a methodology within a field (e.g. work, urban planning, art, medicine etc.) that delimits a thematic area within which we might ask, *how is the object* (i.e. management, art, medicine etc.) accomplished? Therefore, when we take a practice-based approach to responsible management as a thematic area, we

inquire into *managing*, since we operate an epistemological shift from ontological issues (what an object (such as managing responsibly) 'is onto-epistemological ones (how an object (managing responsibly) is done, and how it is to be accomplished within situated practices). In focusing on how managing responsibly is done, and how it comes to be accomplished within situated practices, we draw on four principles of a practice-based analysis: situatedness, practice as a situated knowledgeable doing, the interconnection of practices as part of a texture of practices and agencement, explained more fully below.

First, the principle of *situatedness* brings to the fore how a practice assembles humans, nonhumans, tools, technologies, rules and discourses and how practices happen in time and space and in connection with other practices. The focus is on how the practice at hand may be done differently; how that practice may be enacted with greater or lesser social effects. The shift from questions of ontology to questions of epistemology and specifically, to questions that Barad (2007) defines as ethico-onto-epistemology, means that managing 'responsibly' cannot be isolated from its ethical and political judgements (its values) and the epistemic practices that enact managing 'responsibly' as a doing. Thus, when considering practices of responsible managing we ask: *How is responsible managing accomplished in situ?* While management studies pursue universal and de-contextualized principles, responsible managing, studied using a practice-based approach, focuses on the here and now of a (*in situ*) mode of ordering humans, nonhumans, tools technologies, rules and discourses that produce (or not) responsible effects in terms of sustainability, responsibility, and ethics.

Second, practice as a *situated, collective knowledgeable doing* is the operating definition and the second principle for a practice-based approach. Many authors look at practice as a set of sayings and doings, however these activities are important in their being enacted as knowledgeable activities. 'Knowing in practice' is what happens in a practice as a way of ordering heterogeneous elements in a coherent whole by making aesthetic and ethical judgements which are socially recognized and collectively sustained. In this regard, responsible managing practices are now being increasingly incorporated in, and into, organizations and organizing activities. As workers, women movements, communities and countries articulate the impact of organizational practices on their lives, these discourses encapsulate a desire for normativity (community agreement) of what has become acceptable or not in a twenty-first century organization. This is evidenced increasingly, by the multiple voices calling for the knowledgeable practical application of the regulation of modern work practices in a range of countries previously excluded from scrutiny (see for example Dahan et al., 2016). This approach illuminates a growing focus on the sociomaterial dimensions of business sites in the context of a world of finite resources and growing labour and social inequality.

The third principle of a practice-based approach is that practices of managing responsibly will co-exist with other practices in a texture of practices, an interconnections-in-action linking every practice to other interconnected practices. Practices can consequently cut across boundaries, be they organizational, institutional, community or practitioner ones. Organizational practices can also extend beyond organizational boundaries just as social practices extend across into organizations. Connected to the image of a *texture of practices*, is the fourth principle: agency as emergent (agencement<sup>2</sup>). A posthumanist practice-based approach denies

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Agencement has been used as a philosophical term by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) with the sense of 'in connection with', which gives a first good approximation of the term. The problem, however, is that its translation into English as 'assemblage' has changed the original meaning. The French term

centrality to humans as the only 'perpetrators' of intentional action; people are not the sole entity to 'possess' agency. Instead practice is understood as an *agencement* of elements that achieve agency in their being connected, including humans and nonhumans. Nonhumans include materialities such as artefacts, time and space. Responsible managing can therefore be seen as an *agencement* of humans, and nonhumans, more than just what humans alone are doing and/or what discourses they are engaging in, and as such *agencement* embraces the social and the material.

A focus on sociomaterial practices, illuminates the sociomaterial impact of what is taken for granted and termed *externalities*<sup>3</sup> of business (e.g. waste, carbon pollution, increased workloads, work related health-harm on employees and community by economist to the fore that managing 'responsibly' (or not) is 'done' *in situ* – in consulting agencies, in business school education, in training places, on selection committees, in supply-chains, with global impacts. This principle of 'agentivity' means that we do not study managers as individuals or as collectives, nor just managerial work and activities, nor management discourse in isolation, nor education or learning as separate activities. Rather we study the social and material effects of their interconnections. The normative understanding of 'responsible managing' is co-constructed and is emergent from the texture of practices. Responsible management is thus not an isolated, but rather an interconnected doing within a broader texture of practices of organizations, communities and societies enacted through everyday 'doings' of work.

Next, we illustrate using extant examples, how a practice-based approach can unpack multiple enactments of what might constitute managing 'responsibly' (or not), recognizing that there may be a range of competing beneficiaries in different contexts.

### 4. MANAGING 'RESPONSIBLY' IN A TEXTURE OF PRACTICES

In this section we explore the *situatedness* of management, how management practice itself as an *agencement*, brings together humans, nonhumans, rules and discourses and so on together with other practices (i.e. those of economies, industries, society) forming a texture of practices understood within different kinds of organizations (e.g. for-profit, not-for-profit, government etc.). We propose that the enactment of certain kinds of managing practices forming a texture of practices in for-profit organizations, are propelled by profit (ends/outcome/purposes). These kinds of enactments adopt particular kinds of measurement (rules about what constitute appropriate outcomes), unbridled growth, consumerism and consumption (including

in fact has a processual connotation – the idea of establishing or forming an assemblage. It focuses on process and on the dynamic character of the inter-acting between the heterogeneous elements of the phenomenon. While a certain use of the term 'assemblage' risks rigidifying the concept into the thingness of final or stable states, the French term *agencement* works as an evocation of emergence and heterogeneity. The term *agencement* is the key to connecting with the vocabulary of becoming and with the temporality of practice as it unfolds.

Factors whose benefits (called external economies) and costs (called external diseconomies) are not reflected in the market price of goods and services. Externalities are a loss or gain in the welfare of one party resulting from an activity of another party, without there being any compensation for the losing party. Externalities are an important consideration in cost–benefit analysis: Business Dictionary Online: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/externalities.html.

discourses about what constitutes appropriate values guiding decisions) (Daly, 2013; Shove et al., 2009; Trentmann, 2016).

The texture of practices of for-profit organizations related to the exchange of goods and services are enacted in economies and industries in the social, material and historical context of a market paradigm. The market paradigm influences practices of managing how organizational 'doings' are conducted and the measurement practices enacted in business demonstrate what matters in such sites. The numerative measurement of business performance including triple bottom line (TBL) approaches (i.e. social, environmental and financial) it is argued, may still privilege certain enactments of managing 'responsibly' driven by an underlying imperative for the achievement of financial performance (i.e. increased market share and sales due to customer preferences for 'responsible' business) and may not be sufficient to achieve social and environmental (sustainability) outcomes in practice (Milne & Gray, 2013). In fact, critics of the TBL approach argue that organizations are using TBL as a mechanism for achieving legitimacy and responding to market and governmental pressures (Sridhar, 2012); may enact TBL as merely 'window-dressing' (Kolk, 2003: 289), without actual shifting or challenging what is done (Isil & Hernke, 2017). This focus makes possible certain kinds of practices of managing 'responsibly' (e.g. energy reductions; waste minimization in supply chains) but not others (e.g. purchasing from suppliers who meet international labour standards; distributing harmful products such as tobacco to countries with poor public health education). Approaches such as TBL though often identified in the responsible management literature as a mechanism to demonstrate how an organization is being responsible (Isil & Hernke, 2017) are still embedded in the market paradigm of profitability and may only lead to certain ways (but not others) of managing 'responsibly'.

A recent example to illustrate our discussion above includes a recent investigation into banking and financial malpractices in Australia.<sup>4</sup> Though this illustrative example is a local one for the authors, it is indicative of the practices that have occurred elsewhere (i.e. in the US with the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 and the Global Financial Crisis). All these examples reveal how giving primacy to financial outcomes has enabled certain (mal)practices to surface. The Australian public enquiry specifically revealed how practices of managing giving primacy to financial outcomes enabled certain (mal)practices or managing '(ir)responsibly' to prevail. This was despite the fact that many of the organizations under investigation had sustainability statements and codes of ethics statements and reported on their achievements of such outcomes. The Chief Judge, who led the public inquiry, stated in his final report:

[T]he pursuit of short-term profit at the expense of basic standards of honesty... from the executive [and] staff were measured and rewarded by reference to profit and sales ... When misconduct was revealed, it either went unpunished or the consequences did not meet the seriousness of what had been done. (Hayne, 2018: xix)

What is evident from the above example is that increasingly a multi-dimensional perspective is necessary for a wholistic understanding of what managing 'responsibly' per se could become. The practices of the Australian banking and financial industry are enacted (or not) in certain

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The Royal Commission into the Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Service Industry in Australia, 2018.

kinds of ways in the practice texture which constitute financial institutions as organizations and industry (which are always in the making) to emerge and not others.

Furthermore, certain ways of managing 'responsibly' are becoming increasingly important to citizens and the community at large and organizations which maintain financial primacy at the cost of more sustainable livelihoods and social benefit may be publicly challenged for such decisions. At the same time such challenges may lead to broader shifts in the social and historical practice texture. For example, Dosdall and Rom-Jensen (2017) grawing on the case of the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 highlight that social change was 'brought about by the disruption of the expectation that the U.S. government would predictably save all those institutions considered too-big-to-fail' (p. 2017). Similarly, Sorensen and Miller (2017) drawing on examples from the United States and many, outline how exposing financial accounting abuses that resulted in company collapses, led corporate governance practice (i.e. altering the texture of the practices surrounding them) to be reformed in both these countries.

Managing 'responsibly' is important to all settings, but is particularly so in organizational contexts where there are vulnerable populations. An example of such is the aged care sector, where shifts in the ways in which care is provided have emerged. What was once predominantly 'care in the public domain [is now] associated with an increasing reliance on private capital and competition between a variety of providers, with public agencies competing alongside private for-profit and not-for-profit agencies' (Fine & Davidson, 2018: 503). Models of care under marketization, privilege financial and efficiency practices not only for for-profit providers but also for existing not-for-profit providers who must compete in the same market (Fine & Davidson, 2018) and therefore shift the practice texture of organizations in the sector prior to marketization. In this instance, aged care services, previously professional, have in many cases, sacrificed themselves to the monetary imperative of profit at the cost of quality and even social responsibility.

With a growing aging population in Australia, the state cannot meet demand and must therefore rely on private investment (Baldwin et al., 2015). As 'for profit' practices are now emerging in these contexts, certain kinds of managing 'responsibly' may put at risk existing practices of 'caring' for vulnerable population: it is becoming more difficult to pay attention to the traditional social and material needs of beneficiaries as these are now measured monetarily and no longer as components of a professional calling. In fact, at the time of writing this chapter, a Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has been announced in Australia, signalling yet another look at everyday 'doings' of managing this sector and incumbent organizations.

In contrast to the cases outlined above, many for-profit organizations are offering ethical options for investors, while at the same time many organizations are actively practising responsible management (Australian-Ethical, n.d.; OzHarvest, n.d.), or support 'shareholder action' toward managing more 'responsibly' (ACCSR, 2017, 2019) as well as the United Nation Principles of Responsible Investment (UNPRI, 2019). A practice-based approach enables us therefore to make sense of the kinds of shifts towards responsible management that may or may not be occurring. Furthermore, a practice-based approach may enable insights into a natural becoming or not towards practices which respond to global and local social and material changes where sustainability, responsibility and ethics are more than a reporting mechanism and actually reflect changing practices.

In an organizational site where profitability is privileged, practices are focused unidirectionally towards achieving this end. In a for profit organization, responsible management

may involve ensuring that benefits or profits to shareholders are maximized, to the exclusion of what economists called 'externalities' (i.e. social, material and other 'costs') (Fotopoulos, 2007). Today, in the majority of enterprises, decision-making and measurements of performance privilege the individual (company or shareholder) and the financial bottom line. This is a zero-sum game where there is always a loser.

The discussion above has illustrated how a practice-based approach, focusing on *situatedness* and the concept of a *texture* of practices can inform understandings about how the reproduction of certain kinds of practices, and not others, is anchored in certain kinds of sites and historical and sociomaterial conditions; how these enable or constrain possibilities for certain practices of managing and not others to become interwoven to form a certain practices' texture. By engaging with a practice-based approach, multiple rationalities and how these are negotiated and renegotiated are made visible.

## 5. ENACTING MANAGING 'RESPONSIBLY' THROUGH CARING PRACTICES AS COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGEABLE DOINGS

Our imperative in this section of the chapter is twofold. We illustrate ways of doing work where social and material considerations are taken-into-account and we also consider managing 'responsibly' as a *situated, collective knowledgeable doing* enacted (or not) as 'care' amid various sociomaterial settings of an ecovillage community which is achieved as an ongoing accomplishment (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2015). We maintain that an ecovillage may be understood as a microcosm of a social, economic and material texture of practices formed in a paradigm alternative to the market economy. Through the discussion of this empirical case we seek to further illustrate the kinds of understanding that a practice-based approach may illuminate – how activities are enacted and how the shared understandings among those enacting the practice of organizing an ecovillage community (Roelvink & Gibson-Graham, 2010) 'knowledgeable doings' which enable the ongoing repetition of the *in situ* practices.

In contrast to the market economy paradigm discussed above, we introduce alternative paradigms for understanding the economy as a multi-faceted phenomenon. The 'diverse economy' (Gibson-Graham, 2008) and de-growth paradigms (Latouche, 2009) as alternatives to the market economy have emerged in response to certain kinds of sociomaterial changes – climate change, social disconnection, loss of biodiversity, depletion of resources, poverty. We understand these alternative paradigms as enabling different ways of managing 'responsibly', which we argue is enacted as 'care' and thus forming a *texture of practices* of a different kind. When we take the economy, as '... diverse processes and inter-relations through which ... human and more-than human [activities] constitute livelihoods' (Gibson-Graham & Miller, 2015: 1) and consider a 'society built on quality rather than on quantity, on cooperation rather than competition' (Latouche, 2009: 18), our understanding of what managing 'responsibly' might be, shifts.

These perspectives critique the limitations of the market economy and emerging organizational practices which privilege financial and shareholder outcomes over social or environmental outcomes; 'more instead of better consumption ... [and] private instead of public investment in man-made rather than natural capital' (Martínez-Alier et al., 2010: 1741 emphasis in original). We stress that it is not that aspects of such ideologies (i.e. those of

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sustainable livelihoods and sustainable businesses) and ways of being don't exist or are not enacted practices or don't matter to managers/for profit-organizations. Rather we emphasize, that in certain contexts, responsible management remains an espoused value or may be enacted as managing 'responsibly' in different ways emerging from, forming and privileging, certain kinds of *situated*, *collective knowledgeable doings* over others.

We take the phenomenon of ecovillages (or eco-communities cf. Blažek, 2016) as examples of the enactment of aspects of diverse economies and de-growth ideologies discussed above. Ecovillages are not a new, nor a uniquely Australian, phenomenon and therefore provide insights beyond the Australian context. Ecovillages have a history spanning at least 50 years and encompass about 10,000 communities across five regional networks (Africa, Europe, Latin America, North America and Oceania-Asia). They all share values and goals underpinned by principles of sustainable development (Carroll, 2009). The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), as a peak body for ecovillage communities around the world, provides an encompassing definition of an ecovillage:

... an intentional, traditional or urban community that is consciously designed through locally owned, participatory processes in all four dimensions of sustainability (social, cultural, ecology and economy) to regenerate their social and natural environments. (GEN, n.d.)

Drawing on various examples of ecovillages globally, it is noted that residential, economic, community, organizing and managing practices co-occur in an intertwined nexus of ecovillage social and material life. Ecovillages, therefore, may be considered unique places to illuminate a broader understanding of what constitutes examples of managing 'responsibly' enacted in social, material and economic contexts that encompass features additional to markets and monetary flows.

The philosophy underpinning our illustrative site, *Blacksnake* ecovillage, discussed herein, is to live a sustainable lifestyle while enhancing the quality of life. In this community this has been enacted through a number of sociomaterial practices including financing practices (i.e. limiting capital borrowings and focusing on self-funding of projects); building and construction practices (i.e. designing environmentally sensitive homes and social spaces to minimize ongoing financial and environmental costs); community sustainability practices (i.e. shared community spaces, permaculture gardens and community-owned solar power grid and waste water management systems) – forming a *texture of practices*. This texture allows us to illustrate how this community is coming together and experimenting with practices of caring for the environment and caring for community whilst attempting to establish an ethical and responsible village economy and enacting managing 'responsibly' as care.

The ecovillage is both a community as well as a site organized as a cooperative which requires *managing*. Managing in the cooperative structure is enacted through what are termed sociocratic practices, involving shared decision making based on consent and work through overlapping 'circles' (i.e. groups of people tasked to achieve certain community goals). These circles include the Board of Directors (which is necessary for the legality of the cooperative structure), the Community Development, Land, Buildings and Infrastructure and Business Development circles. Each circle comprises member volunteers (Buck & Villines, 2007). Furthermore, the strong sense of community at the ecovillage has fostered a variety of exchange practices which in other contexts would be enacted through monetary exchanges but which are predominantly enacted as non-monetary exchange transactions in the ecovillage.

These include volunteering, care, and gifting. As one member of the community noted: 'The fact that you have a community means that you do things for each other without actually having to transfer cash.' A simple statement like this highlights the intersubjectivity of value, that is, of what is valued in the community and embedded in situated practice. Unlike value in economic approaches discussed above, which is either objective (exchange value) or subjective (use value), an interactive conception of value enables researchers to inquire into how value emerges in interactions that may or maybe not be mediated by a material artefact like money, which in turn assumes a situated value instead of being a universal means of exchange.

The development community infrastructure of the ecovillage (including know-how), is a necessary sociomaterial consideration for the development of sustainable economic enterprises and for supporting members in establishing micro businesses. The provision of 'shared spaces to those producing goods in a collective environment will both help to offset costs and overheads as well as optimize the creative value of collaborative work' (Cooperative, 2016). This socio-spatial dimension of ecovillage practices demonstrates how this community is envisaging coming together to create collaborative work 'responsibly'.

The Food Co-op, an organization operating through a cooperative legal structure, is a subsystem of the ecovillage and an economic enterprise, where both market and non-market behaviour may be observed (i.e. market behaviour is observed through the co-op's purchases of goods from suppliers for exchanges of money) but where non-market behaviour is especially dominant and visible. Members share the growing, the preparing of food and even the building or the renovating of kitchen facilities in organized ways. The way that practices relating to food, how these have played a strong role in bringing the community together and how these have fostered non-market values, are precisely what we would term, an enactment of care. The shift from a profit-only focus to one of social and material sustainability as a practical doing, is evident in one ecovillager's comment:

[M]embers ... pay a membership fee [enabling the bulk buying of products for resale] ... volunteer 4 hours ... get a 5% of their total buy for the year ... we're growing food ... making kombucha ... that's value-add to food [to] sell ... any profits go back into the Food Co-op ...

The sociomaterial value added to the community beyond the market paradigm, emerges through practices that are being sustained aesthetically by the members of the ecovillage. A practice is discursively and collectively shaped by those involved as they express what is appealing or tasteful in the enactment of the practice (Gherardi, 2009). Through the discourse of members, the sociomaterial dimensions of modern living are enunciated, and in being spoken, these regulate emerging practices. This is highlighted by one of the village board members:

There's a huge value in what we're doing ... acknowledging that the way consumerism ... the Western world have developed maybe isn't doing the planet well, and we actually have to shift behaviours, and we're doing it in a small way ...

Through the discursive practices that we have reported above we can identify a first process of enacting care in practice and we can name it as a process of material *imagining*. In situating the value of 'doing community' in intersubjectivity and reciprocity, a possible world is being imagined and anchored in the materiality of practising. The words for describing this world have been chosen, both for increasing distance from (consumerism) and for envisaging

a desired state (well-being). In the emblematic action of 'signing up', this 'belonging' is expressed as an engagement and a worlding.

Nevertheless, in the quote below we see enduring elements of the market economy (i.e. financial transactions through the exchange of money) however the speaker's words and wishes also emphasize first that the maximization of money (profit) is not the only imperative. For members, it is a 'doing' in everyday life: the sharing of goods and services, the belonging to a community, the leading of a fulfilling life, the sense of well-being, and the possibility of being creative, that are materialized through situated activities. This is illustrated in the following comment:

Caring for people ... having community ... a fair share ... how much you actually need to live ... sharing the rest ... that's ... community ... that's ... definitely non-monetary, but it will allow people to build monetary businesses ...

A principle of 'reality' is discursively enacted as an antidote to Utopia but also as a grounding for accountability and for an accountable identity. We call this process 'mobilizing accountability' since it is the process that produces a situated identity of caring people/caring community. In mobilizing accountability, the sense of collective responsibility is grounded in concrete activities.

The discussion above has demonstrated how a practice-based approach, drawing on an analvsis of practices, has brought to the fore patterns of regularity and practices as knowledgeable doings in the ecovillage organizational context. How the practices of managing a cooperative or a small business are enacted and how the shared understandings among those enacting the practice enable the recognition of, in the first instance, then the repetition and persistence of the practices. This approach enables the surfacing of certain kinds of accountabilities about the practice both normative and aesthetic (Gherardi, 2009) as 'caring for people and for community' which make a practice recognizable as a practice and as an institutionalized doing supported by a normative infrastructure (i.e. cooperative as way of organizing). We engaged with practitioners to understand meanings and terminologies used in a practice; as well as sought to understand the objectives of a practice, not as pre-existing, but as emergent in the doing.

Through community days, working bees<sup>5</sup> and member meetings, in the ecovillage there are opportunities for interaction on a weekly basis even though at the time of the research most members were yet to reside in the village. What was observed was that together the ecovillage community is learning how to enact care by participating together in the 'doings' of a community living sustainably. Underpinning a model of ethics of care is learning how to do the relationality among sociomaterial practices that produce care. When asked about ways in which an ecovillage community could be built, one member responded:

[There are] ... lots of things for people to participate [in] ... from social things through to agricultural kind of things ...

Collective learning is a key feature of the community. The site enables members to learn practices together as there are principally opportunities for them to do so. Sociomaterial con-

A day of locally organized community activity.

siderations and governances are an agencement that enables caring practices to occur. This is illustrated in the comment made by the father of a young ecovillage family:

... [We] were going to move to a farm and do our own sustainable thing ... ... there's a lot of value just in the people, and everyone that joins brings their own special unique skills ... I learned things ... and I was sharing [my skills] with other people, so it's value-creating in a non-monetary sense ...

Members in the community look out for each other, assist others and offer their skills as daily 'doings'. In this way, they see this as learning from each other and transferring their skills. They do not merely see this as offering free labour, and this is because they believe that the community as a whole will ultimately benefit. There are also gifting forms of exchange, for example, someone may offer a workshop on 'how to build' something with the expectation of reciprocity, getting assistance to undertake actual projects.

Members in the community are required to volunteer one hour per week. This seems paradoxical given that 'volunteering' is intrinsically voluntary, however many members do significantly more than the minimum because 'once they volunteer will want to do it again, because it's such a good feeling' [Member Coordinator of Volunteering Hours], which suggests an affective-relational upside to the very notion of volunteering.

The community members are considering a community currency as a member of the board explained 'there has already been talk about a local exchange trading system (LETS)'. This could emerge as an instrument of value and exchange. This exchange system would maintain an ongoing reciprocal flow of exchange and contribution in the community. Thus, the basic exchange of goods and services like every business continues to exist, but social and environmental aspects of that exchange are also measured, not solely profit.

Place and space have become flexible and this sociomateriality is one of the forces that makes us re-think what constitutes organizing, managing and creating value. This is articulated by a member of the ecovillage Board who has previously lived in an ecovillage in Europe and who embodies the knowledge of how to do it:

I think there would be that sense of loyalty and wanting to support local enterprise. Certainly, that's part of it ... I think the value system of people joining the co-op, of wanting to create local employment, wanting to create support for local businesses [is there] ...

At the ecovillage, an embodied ethics arises from the interaction of the members through caring for each other, through reciprocity not simply profit, and if there is profit, it has become a collective profit. Proposals for arranging the community café draw on previous learning experiences by members where a collective profit approach was successful. One community member, involved in the business team shared her experience of coordinating four community cafés in other sites:

My waitresses ... became my family ... I gave bonuses ... but you need to know your break-even points ... you give them the hours they want and work around their children and all of that stuff. I guess out in the real world [in a for-profit setting], maybe that doesn't happen ...

In imagining and in mobilizing accountability, a process of knowledge elaboration is tacitly implied; one in which creativity and innovation are not separated from the more traditional forms of learning and transferring what others know or have already put to the test. We call this process 'communal learning' of knowledgeable doings to stress how this learning is based on a sense of commons and how it sustains certain caring practices and not others.

Despite the very positive undertakings, these doings, enacted within the sociomaterial settings of a broader local community and governance may be contested and negotiated and at times creates a kind of communal fragility. For example, sociomaterial changes in the broader governance of the local community had a significant impact, creating delays and hindering the capacity for the ecovillage community to commence building their homes:

We had really nice relationships with the Council [local government authority] but when they amalgamated [with a neighbouring local government's authority] ... we didn't anticipate [the problems] ... I don't think we looked deeply into the risk management of the council amalgamation [and the impact on the ecovillage project] ...

The fragility of the ecovillage practices of managing 'responsibly' emerged when these practices came into tension with other pre-existing practices. For example, local government development approval practices which are based on a land use planning paradigm that privileges the separation of residential and economic spaces (i.e. common land use strategies in a market economy) were perceived as a significant threat to the ecovillage being granted approval to develop the land as 'mixed development' (i.e. residential, commercial and leisure). This was negotiated and during an interview about how one might build an eco-community the Project Director revealed that building the community was an ongoing journey:

[We've] been building the fabric of the community ... the social [infrastructure] ... the sociocracy ... we're now transitioning from just being a project ... now we're becoming the residential community that we're wanting to be ...

What we see is that the 'practices of care' are contested, negotiated, produced and reproduced over time, and are at times fragile in the changing sociomateriality of the setting. From our research in the ecovillage practices' texture, we have seen how on the one hand responsible management practices were born and consolidated through negotiations and compromises within a network of stakeholders, and on the other hand how fragile these practices were. We can say that fragility is what has put in motion a caring attitude in knowing-in-practice that expresses itself through three processes: imagining, mobilizing accountability and communal learning.

The practices of managing 'responsibly' in the ecovillage case discussed herein and above provide insights into their enactment where an alternative to the market (only) paradigm is privileged. In the illustration presented above, our approach to understanding responsible 'managing' is visible in the ecovillage (and villagers' enactments as workers and managers in cooperative and associated 'businesses'), through 'alternative and non-market transactions', 'different ways of performing and remunerating labour' and 'distinctive ways of appropriating and distributing surplus labour' (Roelvink & Gibson-Graham, 2010: 147) Such, practices Roelvink and Gibson-Graham (2010) ntend, are part of an economic landscape that includes the above-listed, alternative practice, well as other practices within 'enterprises with capitalist, feudal, communal and independent businesses' (p. 1427)

We have illustrated how the ecovillage practices are entangled, and respectful of, the social and the material elements of the community – its people, the environment, the place and the space of the village. Such emerging practices suggest that not all individuals and groups are becoming 'ecologically illiterate' (Jackson, 2009: 123). That many 'entrepreneurs' – including the sociocrats of the ecovillage – are becoming aware of ways in which profit-only enactments of measurement are impacting deleteriously on people and places, we might call emerging evidence of a new ecological literacy and material imagining of how many now want to work and live and the kinds of organizations they want to belong to as workers and interact with as consumers. The villagers were learning to perform values that imagined a more sustainable, ethical and responsible future for themselves and their community.

### 6. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In this chapter we have maintained that understanding the ways in which responsible management practices are enmeshed in particular settings, can shed light on how more or fewer opportunities for participating are afforded for learning how to, and for enacting responsible management practices as these emerge *in situ* as a '*texture* of practices' (Gherardi, 2006) in specific sites.

From our illustration of the social historical context of many organizations which may enable certain kinds of responsible (or not) management practices to the discussion of an ecovillage case as a socio-economic organizational microcosm, the reader can infer the ethico-onto-epistemology of the practice-based approach we have used. When responsible managing is seen as situated practices, the focus is not on what responsible management 'is', but 'how' it is done, and what it 'does' (i.e. the situated activities producing social and material effects). Responsible management does not exist prior to or separated from the doings of organizing and managing enterprises (or communities). The implicit meanings are sustained in practice, become embodied even if difficult to access, but transpire in discursive practices, and in sociomaterial practices.

Our aim in the chapter has been to illustrate how a practice-based approach can unpack multiple enactments of what constitutes managing 'responsibly' recognizing that there may be a range of competing beneficiaries of what might constitute managing 'responsibly' in different contexts. For example, the chapter has considered what might constitute managing 'responsibly' in a purely market-focused for-profit organizational context (i.e. financial services sector), in a publicly subsidized private sector context (e.g. aged care sector) as well as what it might look like in our case study, the ecovillage setting (a co-operative enterprise and community). In for profit organizations, shareholder return on investment is paramount, while in aged care for example, where marketization ideologies have taken hold in the management of these public services, efficiency and cost reduction are now being given primacy over effectiveness of care outcomes. In the ecovillage setting, economic sustainability remains a necessity but it does not give primacy to profit alone. This distinction recognizes that there is an implicit value in talking about the kind of ethical responsible management we hold to. which we recognize might not be a panacea for every context. However, a practice-based approach enables us to illustrate how responsible management surfaces in different contexts and therefore can be transferred as a theory-method package (Clarke & Star, 2008) to the analysis of other contexts.

By reporting on our illustrative case of an ecovillage community we have shown how caring has been produced through discursive practices and in specific sociomaterial activities. In methodological terms a practice approach focuses on the following steps:

- 1. Identifying villagers' saying (discursive practices) underpinned by values, of their imagined more sustainable, etnical and responsible future, for example, 'now we're becoming the residential community that we're wanting to be';
- 2. Emphasizing *situated knowledgeable doings* that illustrate normative caring practices (the cooperative organizing structure and volunteering) and in other processes that mobilized accountability (through community exchange and reciprocity);
- 3. Recognizing the interconnection of practices in the *texture of practices* in for-profit settings and in the ecovillage setting the technological infrastructure that made possible different choices in the 'market' (those that gave primacy to sustainability over profit and those that gave primacy to alternative ways of considering what might constitute value);
- 4. Identifying the *agencement* of the human, nonhuman and ecological aspects of the ecovillage and highlighting ways in which people considered the social, the environmental and the material outputs and impacts of the ecovillage as an enterprise and community.

The changing panorama of degrading environments and declining resources is alerting us to the need to recognize critical interdependencies and ponder how we can enact care for people, places and things in the world more sustainably, responsibly and ethically. Our post humanist perspective has laid bare the entanglement of how the material and the social – these 'participants' in the world – are inextricably bound to each other, impacting one other continually and reciprocally. This has been contrasted with the logic of practice of for-profit sites and their increasingly catastrophic relationship to the social and material world we live in. What is privileged and what is not, and the consequences of these priorities including what things are done or not done and how they are done, are laid bare as the mechanics of the way that everyday 'doings' are enacted.

We propose that future research endeavours could (and possibly should) adopt a practice-based approach to explore how the theoretical limitations of the market (only) economy have led to environmental, human and social degradation in global as well as in national enterprise settings. With a growing focus now on stakeholders, corporations can be encouraged to consider the creation of value for *multiple* stakeholders amongst these being their employees, clients, communities, customers, suppliers and local ecologies. A practice-based approach perspective allows us to investigate the actual practices themselves, the *connections* within and between enterprises, and the social and material settings of which they are a part.

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