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Is management research relevant ? A systematic analysis of the rigor-relevance debate in top-tier journals (1994–2013)

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Abstract. Since the field of management science came into existence, many scholars have raised questions about the rigor of the knowledge produced by management research about and the relevance of this knowledge to practice. In this article, we question the causes of the continuation of the rigor-relevance debate within management science. To do this, we build on science and technology studies and on the analytical framework of scientific controversies. By analyzing 253 articles published in 11 top tier journals between 1994 and 2013, we identify four typical positions on rigor and relevance in management research: gatekeepers' orthodoxy, collaboration with practitioners, paradigmatic shift and refocusing on common good. Although contradictory, these positions co-exist within the debate and are constantly being repeated. This debate, which has developed within a specially adapted space in academic journals (the hybrid forum) contribute to the "scientification" of management sciences. We link these findings to the literature on scientific controversies and discuss their implications for the rigor-relevance debate.

Keywords: rigor, relevance, impact, scientific controversies.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of the Gordon-Howell (1959) and Pierson (1959) reports, the questions raised about the rigor and relevance[1] of management research have been part of a recurrent debate (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014; Beyer & Trice, 1982; Davis, 2015; Kieser, Nicolai, & Seidl, 2015). In the overwhelming majority of cases, the authors who participate in this discussion argue that a balance between rigor and relevance should be reached. They suggest different ways to improve the relevance of the knowledge produced by management research and stress the importance of the impact criterion for both academics and business schools (e.g. Barthélemy, 2012; Barthélemy & Mottis, 2016; Beyer, 1982; George, 2016; Hambrick, 2007; Igalens, 2016; MacIntosh, Beech, Bartunek, Mason & Cooke, 2017; Mangematin & Belkhouja, 2015).

1. As Bartunek and Rynes (2014) explain, this literature has many names: *impact, usefulness, academic-practitioner gap; rigor-relevance debate, theory-practice divide,* etc. In this article, we shall use the term "rigor-relevance debate" to refer to these contributions.

Alongside these positions, meta-literature has recently emerged that analyses the content of the rigor-relevance debate in a systematic way (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014; Kieser et al., 2015; Nicolai & Seidl, 2010). This meta-literature shows that over the years, the rigor-relevance debate has given rise to more and more contributions, without really coming up with solutions. This situation could cause the debate to dry up. Surprisingly, the debate persists and this translates into an ever-increasing number of articles, papers and reports on rigor and relevance; conferences and round tables, and special issues of academic journals (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014). This situation leads us to question the causes of the continuation of the rigor-relevance debate within management science.

To answer this question, we build on science and technology studies (Callon & Latour, 1991; Latour, 1987; Law, 2008). We therefore join a number of researchers who have used this literature to understand the conditions under which knowledge in management science is produced (Cabantous & Gond, 2014; Cochoy, 2010). More precisely, we use the analytical framework of scientific controversies (Collins & Pinch, 1979; Engelhardt & Caplan, 1987; Lemieux, 2007). Based on the properties of scientific controversies, we underline the unique features of the rigor-relevance debate to explain why it has continued for so long.

By systematically analyzing 253 contributions published in leading top-tier journals between 1994 and 2003, we identify four typical positions. These focus respectively on: i) the gatekeepers' orthodoxy and the transfer of research results toward practitioners; ii) the development of projects in collaboration with practitioners, iii) a paradigmatic shift of management research and iv) refocusing management research on the common good. We show that these four positions do not share the same conception of relevance and that they have different views on the origin of the gap separating academic research and management practice. We show that, although this is an ongoing debate, the arguments employed by the advocates of each position have not changed and are constantly repeated. Even though none of these solutions seems to be able to establish itself as dominant, our results show that the rigor-relevance debate has three main functions within the community of management researchers. It plays a phatic role by allowing researchers from different thematic, disciplinary, and geographical silos to interact. It also makes it possible to create a closed space (e.g. in the forms of presidential addresses of the Academy of Management, special invitation-only fora, editorials, and essays that do not undergo a double-blind review process); such spaces bring together the contributions of researchers who are authorized to take part in these events. Finally, as controversies are a feature of scientific disciplines, the existence of the rigor-relevance debate bestows the attributes of science onto management research.

This article begins with a presentation of the scientific controversies framework. We then present our data collection and analysis procedures. Following this, we detail our findings and discuss their implications for both the rigor-relevance debate and the literature on scientific controversies. We conclude with an epilogue, which aims to move the debate forward.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since the 1960s, science and technology studies have been interested in the production, diffusion and effects of scientific statements (Bloor, 1976; Callon & Latour, 1991; Latour, 1987; Law, 2008). From this perspective, scientific truth does not take hold on its own, and scientific facts are constructed and negotiated through scientific controversies (Law, 2008). Scientific controversies can therefore be defined as "*intellectual change and developments within and about science*" (Engelhardt & Caplan, 1987: 1). Even though there is no "*pure, ideal and transhistoric form of controversy which the empirical cases that we encounter stem from*" (Lemieux, 2007: 194), the work done by scholars of science and technology studies makes it possible to highlight three recurring properties.

THE CONFLICTUAL NATURE OF CONTROVERSIES

The literature on scientific controversies focuses on the conflictual nature of scientific activity (Fabiani, 2007; Lemieux, 2007). Controversy interrupts the usual state of stability to give rise to an episodic and spectacular confrontation between different actors who defend conflicting positions (Fabiani, 2007; Litli, 2007; Pestre, 2007).

Opposing sides attack each other with arguments, words, experiments and propositions (Litli, 2007)[2] . It is therefore through rhetoric that those participating in the controversy try to win over the other side and get scientific legitimacy in the eyes of the public (Latour, 1987). The participants can also create alliances to impose their ideas on their adversaries, involving other actors and objects and enrolling them by force or through more cunning means (Callon, 1986).

The conflictual nature of the controversy can even play a social role as ritual game (Fabiani, 2007). Controversies are thus events where new knowledge can take shape, be compared to other ideas and ultimately prevail (Litli, 2007).

CONSTITUTIVE FORUM AND CONTINGENT FORUM

The controversy takes place within two spaces: the constitutive forum and the contingent forum (Collins & Pinch, 1979). The constitutive forum is a space dedicated to scientific discussions. It is composed of academic journals, scientific conferences and even academic associations. The audience is mostly peers (Lemieux, 2007). On the other hand, the contingent forum is a place of public debate where popular knowledge, opinions and rumors are shared. It gives rise to arguments that are not necessarily based on scientific knowledge.

Even though these two fora are separate, they remain dependent on each other (Brossard, 2008; Callon, 1981)[3] . Yet not all controversies take place there (Lemieux, 2007): Some can be contained and will take place within academic circles to a large extent, as happened in the case of the anomaly concerning solar neutrinos (Pinch, 1981; 1986). Meanwhile, others are more exposed to the general public[4].

2. In particular, see Shapin (1984) on the confrontation between Boyle/ Hobbes on the air pump or Farley and Geison (1974) on the Pasteur/Pouchet debate on spontaneous generation.

3. Brossard (2008) therefore shows how the newspaper *Le Monde* played a key role in the rec ogni t i o n of homoeopathy as opposed to traditional medicine before the publication of articles in academic journals.

4. See the case on the attempt to recognise paranormal sciences (Collins and Pinch, 1979 ; Measom and Weinstein, 2014).

DIVERSITY OF CLOSURE MECHANISMS

Closure ends the state of instability caused by scientific controversy. In this regard, Engelhardt and Caplan (1987) identify several closure mechanisms such as consensus, the introduction of a new scientific argument, the use of non-scientific arguments (religious considerations, for example), the negotiation of a truth that is acceptable to all parties, the forcing through of a position (making moves to block a publication, for instance), or even participants.

These closure mechanisms can co-exist (Beder, 1991). One actor may claim for instance that a scientific consensus has emerged, when in reality it is the weariness of the other participants that has allowed the controversy to end. In addition, several positions can co-exist without one eclipsing the others (Revel, 2007). Finally, several controversies can be embedded and be based on different closure mechanisms.

With the above elements, it is possible to set out the theoretical framework of scientific controversies. This framework, which consists of three properties—the conflictual nature, the separation/interdependence of constitutive and contingent fora, and closure—is used to analyze the rigor-relevance debate.

METHODS

The literature published in academic journals is an appropriate way to enter study of the rigor-relevance debate. As Bartunek and Rynes show (2014: 1183), "*The debate has mainly taken place in journals aimed at academics rather than practitioners.*" This article is therefore based on a systematic review of the literature (Gough, Oliver & Thomas, 2012; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006).

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

We focus on an analysis of English-speaking literature related to the rigor-relevance debate. This focus should not be interpreted as meaning that we have adopted a position that management research is typically written in English. Nor is our aim to confirm that scientific English-speaking journals are the only space within which the rigor-relevance debate takes place. Among the French-speaking community alone, reports (e.g. Alexandre-Bailly & Lecocq, 2013; Kalika, Liarte, & Moscarola, 2016), papers (e.g. Barthélemy & Mottis, 2016; David, Hatchuel & Laufer, 2012), conferences (e.g. *Etats Généraux du Management*: General State of Management 2016, seminars (e.g. the 2010 summer seminar and the 2014 winter seminar of the *Société Française du Management*: French Management Society) and the media (e.g. Denis, 2015) have addressed topics related to the rigor-relevance debate.

Yet these contributions have not been published systematically, which makes it difficult to set up a systematic collection of data over a long period. It would therefore have been necessary to set up a collection system in parallel (based, for instance, on retrospective interviews with the contributors) in order to track the development of the rigor-relevance debate within the French-speaking community, but this would have raised some issues related to the possible comparison of different sources of data.

Period studied

In a speech given in 1993 (and published the following year), Hambrick (1994) urged the members of the Academy of Management to take part in the public debate. Although previous pieces of work had looked at this question (Beyer & Trice, 1982; Simon, 1967), this speech paved the way for many other pieces of work devoted to the issue of the relevance of management research. Consequently, the year 1994 constitutes the beginning of the period that we studied. To track the development of the number of contributions to debate during the 2000s, we decided to analyze the contributions published over a period of 20 years.

Sampling

As Patton explains (2015: 303), the sampling carried out in a systematic literature review draws on *purposeful sampling* procedures. This implies that there are precise criteria to include data in—and exclude it from—the sample. We first selected journals that have received a 4* ranking from the Association of Business Schools[5] (ABS) in both general management and its strategy categories, including the *Academy of Management Journal,* the *Academy of Management Review, Administrative Science Quarterly,* the *British Journal of Management,* the *Harvard Business Review,* the *Journal of Management,* the *Journal of Management Studies* and the *Strategic Management Journal.* We have also included journals that have devoted special issues to the rigor-relevance debate or related issues: *Organization Studies* (vol. 31, n°9-10) and the *Academy of Management Learning and Education* (vol. 11, n°2).

Finally, as the *Harvard Business Review* is included in the sample, we have also included two other journals aimed at academics and practitioners alike: the *MIT Sloan Management Review* and the *California Management Review*, but only the latter has published articles on the rigor-relevance debate.

The final sample is therefore made up of 253 contributions published in 11 journals. It encompasses editorials, essays, theoretical articles, empirical articles, articles recounting an experience (most often these are articles that describe how research projects carried out jointly by academic researchers and practitioners unfolded), meta-analyses of the literature, transcriptions of speeches and interviews, and comments and responses addressed to authors of previously published articles. Table 1 is as a summary of our sample. The exhaustive list of the articles can be found in Appendix 1.

5. We initiated the Data Collection in 2013 and used the 2010 ABS Journal Quality Guide (version 4). Since then, ABS has released a new version of its Journal Quality Guide in which the General Management category also covers Ethics and Social Responsibility.

	Editorials *e.g. Clark & Wright* (2009)	Empirical articles and articles recounting an experience *e.g. Tushman et al.* (2007)	Essays and theoretical articles *e.g. Avenier* (2010)	Literature reviews *e.g. Bartunek and Rynes* (2010)	Speeches and interviews *e.g. Tsui* (2013)	Opinions and comments *e.g. Hodgkinson and Rousseau* (2009)	Total
Academy of Management Journal	17	5	0	0	0	32	**54**
Academy of Management Learning and Education	3	8	10	3	3	16	**43**
Academy of Management Review	9	0	3	1	15	7	**35**
Administrative Science Quarterly	2	0	0	0	0	5	**7**
British Journal of Management	6	10	12	0	0	22	**50**
California Management Review	0	0	3	0	0	0	**3**
Harvard Business Review	1	0	3	0	0	2	**6**
Journal of Management	3	2	0	0	0	0	**5**
Journal of Management	5	2	5	0	0	17	**29**
Organization Studies	3	3	8	1	0	2	**17**
Strategic Management Journal	3	0	0	0	0	1	**4**
Total *Total expressed as a percentage*	**52** *20.6%*	**30** *11.9%*	**44** *17.4%*	**5** *2%*	**18** *7.1%*	**104** *41.1%*	**253** *100%*

Table 1 – Data inventory

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The contributions that make up the sample have been subject to an analysis based on systematic coding done jointly by the two authors of this article, using the QSR NVivo software (starting with version 10, then version 11). The analysis process was structured into three steps (Richards, 2014; Richards & Morse, 2012): descriptive coding, topic coding and analytical coding.

During the analytical coding, we sought to identify several typical positions in order to make the wide range of positions that exist in the rigor-relevance debate more understandable. Each position has been defined by a number of characteristics in order to define the boundaries of the position and to separate it from the other positions identified in the analysis. These positions can be called *ideal types*, in the Weberian sense of the term (Paugam, 2010; Weber, 1992; 1995). Although their characteristics cannot necessarily be found in every contribution to the rigor-relevance debate, they make the breadth of the debate understandable.

These four typical positions emerged from the analytical process. We used the techniques and procedures of grounded theory, as laid down in the “Gioia method” (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Langley & Abdallah, 2011). These analysis procedures involved going back and forth many times between the data and the emerging coding scheme, meaning that the categories (labels of typical positions and their properties) kept

changing until the final steps of the analysis. In order to make sure that the emerging coding scheme was stable and consistent, we constantly revised the content coded by the categories. The final coding scheme (data structure) is depicted in Figure 1. Additionally, Appendix 2 shows how contributions are distributed according to the four typical positions that we have identified.

In accordance with the standards of grounded theory, (Bernard, 2011; Gioia et al., 2013; Shah & Corley, 2006) and with our choice to analyze non-structured data (Morse, 1997; Patton, 2015), we have not sought to measure inter-coder reliability. When disagreements regarding the interpretation of the data arose, discussions between the two authors made it possible to clarify the analysis scheme and to define more precisely the boundaries of the categories used. These discussions led to the writing of a coding manual, which included a definition and an illustration for each of the categories used (Bernard & Ryan, 2009).

Based on these results, we ultimately carried out a re-reading by harnessing the properties brought to the fore by the literature on controversies (conflict, spaces and closure) in order to underline the specific characteristics of the rigor-relevance debate.

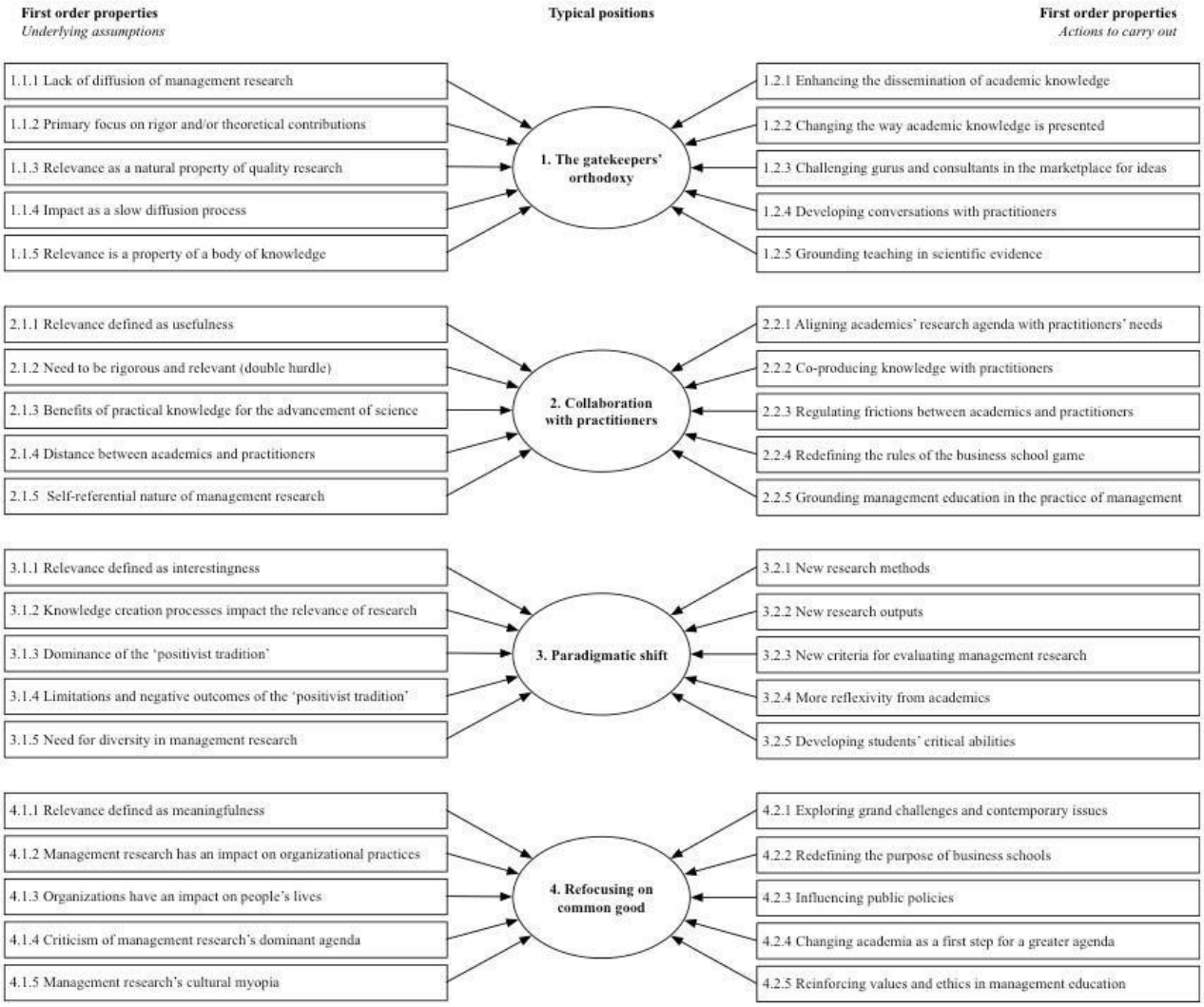

Figure 1 – Data structure

FINDINGS

By analyzing the data, four typical positions emerged among the contributors to the rigor-relevance debate. After presenting them, we will analyze the rigor-relevance debate through the prism of the theoretical framework of scientific controversies.

THE FOUR TYPICAL POSITIONS

Table 2 depicts the four positions identified in the rigor-relevance debate. These positions are presented in detail later.

Position	Definition of relevance	Origin of the problem	Proposed solutions
Gatekeepers' orthodoxy	Relevant knowledge is knowledge that is spread to practitioners.	Lack of effort by the academic community to disseminate knowledge.	Spread scientific knowledge and make it more accessible (through a commitment of the members of the community.) Make an effort to compete with gurus and consultants. Integrate scientific knowledge into teaching.
Collaboration with practitioners	Relevant knowledge is knowledge that is useful to practitioners.	The distance separating the research world and practitioners.	Align researchers' centers of interest with the needs of practitioners. Co-produce knowledge with practitioners within joint projects. Strengthen the practical side of teaching.
Paradigmatic shift	Relevant knowledge is knowledge that is interesting.	Dominance of a positivist tradition in management science.	Strengthen diversity within management research science (epistemology, methods, presentation of results and evaluation criteria.) Improve reflexivity among researchers and develop critical thinking among students.
Refocusing on the common good	Relevant knowledge is knowledge that makes sense and responds to the major issues facing the	Managerialism and ethnocentrism of management science	Take major issues facing the contemporary world into account when establishing research

Table 2 – Summary of the four typical positions

Gatekeepers' orthodoxy

The gatekeepers' orthodoxy is a position that is largely shared by editors of top tier journals: it considers that the problem of the lack of relevance in management research is due above all to the lack of dissemination to non-academic audiences. In an editorial published in the *Journal of Management Studies*, Clark, Floyd and Wright (2013: 1369) underscore the fact that "*the body of recent management research that speaks to relevant managerial problems has had little impact on practice, tending to be ignored in the media*."

Continuing with Kurt Lewis's famous words that nothing is so practical as a good theory, the lack of relevance in management research should not lead to a lessening of the requirements concerning methodological rigor and robustness of theoretical contributions; nor should it lead to a substantive change in the editorial policies of academic journals. "*Research in this field should not be speculation, opinion, or clever journalism; it should be about producing replicable work from which conclusions can be drawn independently of whoever does the work or applies the work result*," says Schendel (1995: 2). The founder and former chief editor of the Strategic Management Journal continues by saying: "I*f researchers can accomplish their work in [a rigorous] way, practitioners will find these pages, and all of our research, more useful to know.*" Two additional reasons are frequently cited to justify the gatekeepers' orthodoxy. It is difficult to judge *a priori* whether research work is relevant; relevance can be determined only after a long dissemination process. Besides, sometimes it is even difficult to evaluate it *a posteriori,* as relevance can actually emerge from accumulated bodies of knowledge, rather than isolated contributions.

For proponents of the gatekeepers' orthodoxy, the lack of relevance in management research is due less to its intrinsic characteristics and more to outside factors, such as the media's relative indifference to scientific research (Clark et al., 2013; Guest, 2007) or even practitioners' difficulty in accessing scientific publications (Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007). They recognize that the uninspiring presentation of research work (Boland, Singh, Salipante, Aram & Fay, 2001) and researchers' systematic use of jargon (DeNisi, 1994; Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007) can hinder the spread of academic knowledge. Consequently, "the '*relevance ghost' continues to haunt us from one conference to another, from one presidential address [of the Academy of Management] to the next*" (Cummings, 2007: 356). In order to banish the relevance ghost, these authors propose three types of solutions.

The first is to encourage the members of the academic community to play a more active role in spreading knowledge. The researchers are thereby encouraged to leave their "ivory tower" by publishing pieces in the general and professional press (Hambrick, 2005), and online; participating in radio, television and internet programs (Cummings, 2007; Hitt, 1998). These might be summaries of their own work (Rousseau, 2007; Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007) or of scientific knowledge on a given subject (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003). In order to improve the dissemination of scientific knowledge, researchers also need to write more simply (DeNisi, 1994), refer to concrete examples and even use anecdotes (Aldag, 2012) to illustrate what they are saying.

Second, academics are encouraged to compete directly with other actors operating on the management knowledge market, whether these be journalists, consultants or management gurus (Guest, 2007). Without letting rigor (researchers' main competitive advantage, according to

Cummings, 2007)fall by the wayside, researchers are recommended to get closer to the business world in order to better communicate with practitioners, through joint conferences, for instance (Hambrick, 1994).

The third type of solution is to integrate scientific knowledge into teaching more systematically (Kilduff & Kelemen, 2001). This idea responds to the profound questions several members of the academic community have asked, in the vein of Pearce (2004: 177), about their role as teachers: "*In the classroom, I fear I rarely have been completely open and honest about what I am doing—recycling and recombining the experiences, hunches, and anecdotes of others.*" This finding is also the starting point of the school of thought of evidence-based management, which seeks to refocus management education around rigorously-produced evidence (Ashkanasy, 2007; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006, Rousseau, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2012, Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007). According to its advocates, this perspective could allow teachers to play their role as curators of academic knowledge. Several difficulties linked to the implementation of evidence-based management are highlighted: training students, presenting scientific evidence attractively and combining scientific knowledge (which by its very nature is fragmented).

Collaboration with practitioners

To reduce the gap between research and practice, some authors encourage the academic community to move away from the dissemination approach (Shapiro, Kirkman, & Courtney, 2007). They believe that relevance can be reduced not to translating scientific knowledge, but to its usefulness for practitioners. "*What makes knowledge valuable to organizations is ultimately the ability to make better decisions and action taken on the basis of knowledge*" (Starkey & Madan, 2001: 5). The lack of rigor in research is not solely due to the distance separating academics from practitioners, but above all to the self-referential nature of the research. As Cohen, one of the rare practitioners to take part in the debate, explains (2007: 1015), "*Journalists and practitioners do not have the time or desire to read scientific research, and scholarly researchers do not have the time or desire to write for non-academic audiences".*

This situation arguably allows researchers to benefit from the respectability associated with scientific disciplines without having to worry about the practical interest of their work (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Palmer, 2006; Podolny, 2009; Schoemaker, 2008). Beyond the researchers' lack of interest in the practical utility of their work, the lack of time and incentives solely aimed at publishing in academic journals are also highlighted (Clark & Wright, 2009; Lambrechts, Bouwen, Grieten, Huybrechts, & Schein, 2011; Tatli, 2012).

To make academic research more useful to practitioners, the defenders of the collaboration with practitioners position put forward several solutions. First, it is important to recognize the potential theoretical contribution of knowledge developed by practitioners: "*Managers' and other practitioners' knowledge may often precede academics' knowledge*" (Bartunek 2007: 1328). Ways in which academics and practitioners co-produce knowledge need to be devised (Starkey, Hatchuel, & Tempest, 2004). 'Engaged scholarship'[6] (McKelvey, 2006; Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006a; 2006b; Van de Ven & Zlotkowski, 2005) and Mode 2 (Bartunek, 2011; Huff, 2000; Tranfield & Starkey, 1998) are two schools of thought that aim to promote such cooperation.

6. See the concepts used in the debate in Appendix 3.

Nevertheless, such a co-production of data can prove to be difficult to implement. Mohrman, Gibson and Mohrman (2001: 370-371) thus stress that "*creating a social system that fosters and houses collaboration between the two different thought worlds violates the norms of both communities.*" Procedures therefore need to be developed that make it possible to overcome frictions that could arise during collaborative projects and to provide feedback to the whole community in order to facilitate the running of future projects (Amabile, Patterson, Mueller & Odomirok, 2001; Mitev & Venters, 2009; Mohrman et al., 2001; Swan, Bresnen, Robertson, Newell, & Dopson, 2010).

Above and beyond research projects, the collaboration with practitioners position also has implications for the teaching of management. Wren, Buckley and Michaelsen (1994: 154) consider that in this regard it is unrealistic to "*expect students to learn to apply concepts by listening to someone else's examples [as this] would be like expecting them to be able to ski after having watched the Winter Olympics on television.*" It is therefore a matter of using teaching as a space to co-produce knowledge, in particular through executive education, experiments in real conditions (Knights, 2008; Wren et al., 1994; Wren, Halbesleben, & Buckley, 2007), and management games (Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007). Students' feedback will therefore improve academic research (Pearce & Huang, 2012 ; Tushman, O'Reilly, Fenollosa, Kleinbaum & McGrath, 2007).

Paradigmatic shift

Championed predominantly by European scholars, the third position pleads for a paradigmatic shift by profoundly questioning the epistemological foundations, methods and assessment criteria of management research.

The lack of relevance here, likened to a lack of interest, could be explained as "*the widespread, implicit belief among scholars that science has to be founded on positivist or realist epistemologies*" (Avenier, 2010: 1230). It is therefore vital to deconstruct a model inherited from physical sciences and geared toward the search for universal laws (Tranfield & Starkey, 1998). This deconstruction is justified by three criticisms.

First, the dominant paradigm is considered as contributing to distancing researchers from what is happening in the business world. The majority of management researchers are thus locked into supposedly scientific rationality (Barnett & Starbuck, 2007; Chia & Holt, 2008; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011), which leads them to systematically submit themselves to academic rituals such as significance tests and editorial decision processes. This prevents the research from thriving and being truly relevant (Starbuck, 2007).

Second, the static nature of the theories produced is also called into question. By considering their theories as products that are not bound by time, researchers are not interested in their being put into action by practitioners (Gabriel, 2002).

Third, the dominant paradigm does not take into account the capacity of scientific knowledge to transform the real (Starkey, Hatchuel, & Tempest, 2009; Van Aken, 2004; 2005; Zundel & Kokkalis, 2010). Hodgkinson and Starkey (2011: 361) believe that "*Science goes away when it assumes that the empirical is a straightforward mirror of the real."*

Even though they point their fingers at the limits of the positivist tradition, the advocates of a paradigmatic shift do not want to contribute to the emergence of a new orthodoxy that would standardize the field of management research. As Tsoukas, Garud and Hardy explain (2003:

1006), "*intellectual pluralism ultimately aids collective learning.*" The researchers who endorse the paradigmatic-shift position therefore propose alternative conceptions of management research, such as design science (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008; Hodgkinson & Starkey, 2012; Starbuck, 2004; Starkey et al., 2009; Van Aken, 2004; 2005), critical realism, or critical management studies (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). Besides this, several authors are involved in hybridization attempts. Notably, this is the case for Aram and Salipante (2003), who build on the work of Nonaka and the philosophy of sciences of Dewey; for Avenier (2010), whose approach combines constructivism and design science; and for Hodgkinson and Starkey (2012), who cross design science and critical realism.

Despite their different views, these authors suggest that several avenues are needed for a paradigmatic shift. The first is related to the diversity of methods used by management researchers, who would grant greater recognition to qualitative methods, such as action research, intervention research and grounded theory (Avenier, 2010; Hatchuel, 2001; Hodgkinson & Starkey, 2012).

The second touches on the nature of the results produced by management research. Those who advocate a paradigmatic shift therefore wish to complement the positivist agenda dominated by explanatory research and by research with causal links with other contributions that could resolve managerial problems (Van Aken, 2004), and contribute to organizational design by creating and implementing artifacts (Avenier, 2010), or by involving practitioners emotionally (Chia & Holt, 2008).

The third avenue proposes that notions of internal and external validity be replaced by new assessment criteria, such as the use of knowledge produced (Aram & Salipante, 2003; Avenier, 2010; Hatchuel, 2001), their testing in the form of prototypes (Van Aken, 2004), their beauty (Augier & March, 2007), or even the interest and reflexivity that they cause in the reader (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013; Learmonth, Lockett & Dowd, 2012).

The impact of the proposed changes goes beyond the production of management knowledge insofar as they call into question the role of the actors involved in the research production system. For instance, MBA programs are suspected of promoting a functional model that destroys any form of critical thinking in students (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Vince, 2010) and leads to an impoverished representation of what these organizations are, as well a form of detachment (Chia & Holt, 2008). Funded research is also subject to criticism, because it is believed to lead to the promotion of a utilitarian and restrictive conception of relevance, and prevents the dominant paradigm from evolving, which is the origin of the problem (Learmonth et al., 2012).

Refocusing on the common good

The fourth position involves redefining the objective of management research by refocusing on the common good. Consequently, relevant research should be able to provide answers to major social and societal issues facing the contemporary world.

The starting point for this position is to state that management and the activities of multinational organizations are not neutral in terms of their effects on the lives of other human beings (Glinow, 2005; Breyfogle in Podolny, Kester, Kerr, Sutton & Kaplan, 2009). Badaracco explains that "*Management, in all its forms, is a critical activity of modern societies, deeply and inevitably shaping the livelihoods and lives of most people on earth*" (Badaracco in Podolny et al., 2009: 108). In the United States,

multinational organizations are believed to be behind financial scandals, large-scale job losses, a surge in the number of homeless people, and the pension crisis (Tsui, 2013).

Often the finger is pointed at big multinational companies, yet the academic community is not free from all responsibility. Ghoshal (2005) is particularly vehement and develops the idea that these wrongdoings find their origin in academic theories based on dangerous hypotheses. Agency theory, transaction cost theory, and even Porter's Five Forces analysis, according to Ghoshal (2005: 76), are "*ideologically inspired amoral theories*" and have "*actively freed their students from any sense of moral responsibility*".This situation can be explained by the fact that management research prefers to study intangible objects, such as the performance of a business, productivity, or even organizational structures—to the detriment of human beings and people (Courpasson, 2013). Although some research work is interested in the role of individuals in organisations, such work is in the minority because the dominant research agenda draws on economics (Ghoshal, 2005; Pfeffer, 2005) and finance (March, 2007), and more generally on disciplines with a functionalist and productivist conception of human action (Courpasson, 2013).

Since academic theories are perceived as having a negative impact on managerial practices and, indirectly, on society, the advocates of refocusing on the common good believe that it is up to management researchers to redefine the goal of their discipline. For Barnett and Starbuck this idea is particularly salient: "*we [management scholars] should be protesting the bad things in our world and should be striving to create a better world*" (Barnett & Starbuck, 2007: 126).

The dominant managerialist and short-term agenda therefore needs to be shaken off and research projects focused on the long term should be developed (Ferlie, McGivern, & De Moraes, 2010). This, for example, would involve looking at the link between the world of businesses and "*grand challenges*" such as climate change, poverty, and the suffering of animals and analyzing the impact of current technological developments on society, or even exploring the implications of management research on public policies (Adler & Jermier, 2005; Clegg, 2002; Dutton, 2005; Ferlie, et al., 2010; Glinow, 2005; Ouchi, Riordan, Lingle, & Porter, 2005; Podolny, 2009; Schoemaker, 2008; Walsh, Weber, & Margolis, 2003; Willmott, 2012).

Even if respected scientific journals (Courpasson, Arellano-Gault, Brown, & Lounsbury, 2008) and academic associations (Ferlie et al., 2010; Moosmayer, 2012) were encouraged to play a role in shifting management research toward the common good, it is business schools and universities that would have to undergo the most significant reforms. They are encouraged to put the question of values at the heart of their strategy (Moosmayer, 2012), to redefine their mission (Willmott, 2012; Worrell, 2009), to apply more virtuous codes of conduct, to stop focusing exclusively on the private sector (Adler & Jermier, 2005; Barney, 2005; March, 2007), and to strengthen the ethical side of their teaching (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Moosmayer, 2012; Pfeffer, 2005; Podolny, 2009). Aware of the scale of these changes, the defenders of shifting management research toward the common good therefore advocate a collective effort that involves all members of the academic community. As Tsui concludes (2013: 177) in her presidential address to the Academy of Management: "*together, we can make a huge difference in changing the state of our profession for the better*".

THE RIGOR-RELEVANCE DEBATE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SCIENTIFIC CONTROVERSIES

The four positions that we have just identified allow us to clarify the terms used in the rigor-relevance debate. In order to understand why debate has been so long-tasting, we will now provide an analysis using the conceptual framework of scientific controversies.

Exchanges within the rigor-relevance debate: accumulation and reformulation

Scientific controversies are characterized by a certain level of conflict. Conversely, the exchanges within the rigor-relevance debate seem extremely cordial. Although the rigor-relevance debate allows for the expression of different positions, this has not translated into an open conflict. Even when they stand behind mutually exclusive positions, the participants seem to welcome all contributions to the debate with a certain degree of goodwill. Thus Tatli (2012: 22), while being opposed to the critical position that Ford, Harding and Learmonth (2010) advocate, does not neglect to say that these authors have raised "*very important"* questions. In their response, Ford, Harding and Learmonth (2012: 31) express their sympathy for Tatli's arguments: *We very much welcome Ahu Tatli's response. Indeed, we find ourselves rather sympathetic towards several of her criticisms of CMS* [critical management studies]. In the same way, the chief editors who defend the gatekeepers' orthodoxy position show some openness to contributions that are far removed from their habitual positions.

Even when the exchanges become relatively heated—as was the case between Pearce and Huang (2012) and Greve (2012) after the former cited the work of the latter as an example of non-actionable research—niceties are not dispensed with: "*Pearce and Huang (2012, this issue) have taken the welcome initiative of examining the value of research to management education*" explains Greve (2012: 272).

If the violence of the rigor-relevance debate seems to have been contained, it is because the content of the arguments exchanged seems less important that the discussion with other members of the community into which it feeds. The rigor-relevance debate therefore seems to play a phatic role.

As a result, the arguments put forward by the contributors are never really linked to the arguments of the other participants. Rather than contradicting the arguments that have previously been put forward, the participants seize the opportunity to respond in order to express their own point of view again. The rigor-relevance debate therefore proceeds from the accumulation of unconnected arguments that are constantly reformulated, whether within a position or between positions.

Within the position where the arguments developed converge, there is no real exchange of views. For example, there were discussions that took place within the position collaboration with practitioners between the end of the 1990 and the beginning of the 2000s, and many authors employed the Mode 2 concept as a solution to bring together the worlds of research and practice. Most notably, this concept was brought to the fore by the British Academy of Management (Starkey & Madan, 2001; Tranfield & Starkey, 1998) and discussed by different authors who in turn proposed Mode 1.5 and Mode 3 (Huff, 2000; Huff & Huff, 2001). However, the concept was abandoned the following decade (Bartunek, 2011) in favor of other approaches such as engaged scholarship. Even though these other

approaches provide a shared interpretation of the origin of the supposed lack of relevance of management research and propose similar solutions, they seem to ignore the arguments that were previously developed.

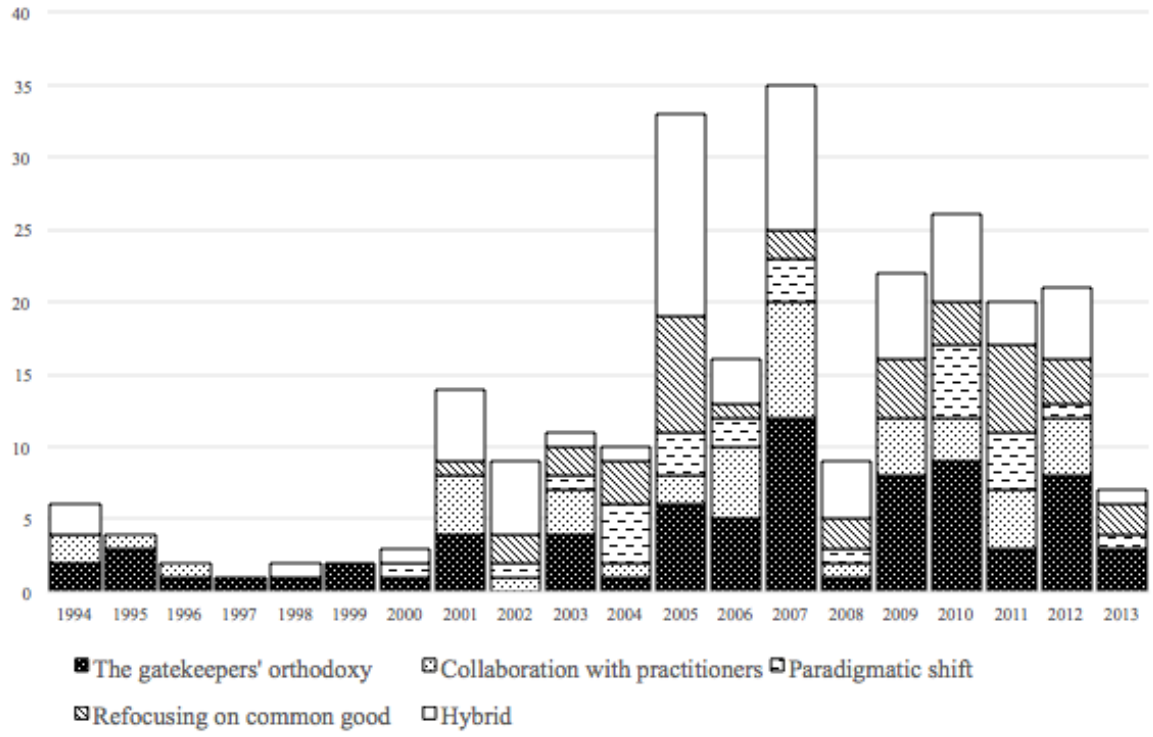

Figure 2 – Evolution of the rigor-relevance debate

As Figure 2 reveals, the four positions appear successively in the examined period. Historically dominated by the coexistence of the gatekeepers' orthodoxy and collaboration with practitioners, the debate has grown progressively richer. From 2001 onwards, it has given rise to the emergence of two new positions—the paradigmatic shift and refocusing on the common good. These contributions did not develop through opposition to ideas that were previously developed, but by introducing new arguments drawing on current events, such as the September 11 attacks of 2001 (Schendel, 2002) and even the Enron scandal (Clark, Floyd, & Wright, 2004; Clegg, 2002; Ghoshal, 2005; Rynes & Shapiro, 2005).

This phenomenon of accumulation and reformulation can also be found within certain contributions to the debate. In these hybrid contributions, which make up 29.2% of the sample, the arguments from different positions are assembled without being truly linked with each other. For example, in a response addressed to Kieser and Leiner (2009), who believe that it is neither possible nor desirable to make management research more relevant, Hodgkinson and Rousseau (2009) list arguments that are contradictory. Based on their respective previous work, they suggest improving the spread of knowledge produced by management

research via the concept of evidence-based management, developing collaborative research projects with practitioners and adopting a new paradigm, the design science approach, inherited from artificial sciences. This superficial expression of arguments from the gatekeepers' orthodoxy and collaboration with practitioners positions is also embodied by other contributions that bemoan how practitioners' needs are not sufficiently taken into account, while advocating a dissemination approach that does not call into question the content or the conditions that underpin knowledge production (e.g. McGrath, 2007; Rynes, 2007). Barney (2005) offers another example. In the form of an homage to Ouchi, he looks back on various financial scandals to encourage researchers to explore the major issues of the contemporary world. In this same article, he also advocates better dissemination of the knowledge produced by strategic research according to the canons of scientific rigor in order to improve the performance of companies.

Rigor-relevance debate space: a hybrid forum

The literature on scientific controversies suggests that they can take place in two different yet interdependent spaces: the constitutive forum (composed of academic journals, scientific conferences and academic associations) and the contingent forum (composed of the media, the public at large and extra-academic assemblies).

As we showed earlier, the rigor-relevance debate essentially concerns a research audience. It takes place in scientific journals, at academic conferences (some speeches then being published in academic journals, as is the case for the presidential addresses of the Academy of Management), and in reports commissioned by bodies that oversee the functioning of business schools and universities (which are then subject to discussion in journals).

Although the rigor-relevance debate mostly concerns academic circles, the space that is reserved for it seems to break the rules that generally apply to the constitutive forum in terms of method, double-blind review and even writing of contributions. Within the debate, comments (41.1%), editorials (20.6%), and transcriptions of speeches or interviews (7.1%) form the majority of contributions. Among the essays and articles published as part of the rigor-relevance debate, we note that there is an overly high number of special issues and invitation-only fora.

"*I asked Freek Vermeulen (a conference organizer and Academy of Management Journal board member) whether some of the conference participants might be interested in writing essays on combining rigor and relevance in honor of Ghoshal*," explains Rynes (2007: 745), who was editor-in-chief of the Academy of Management Journal at that time. He continues: "*The answer was a resounding yes. The five resulting essays follow*." When certain contributors participate in the rigor-relevance debate, they do so not because they have new arguments to showcase or a particular contradiction to point out, but because they have been invited to do so within a dedicated space, included in the constitutive forum.

In this specially adapted space, arguments outside of the strictly scientific framework can be developed. There are therefore many references to current events, such as the reference to pets that died during Hurricane Katrina (Glinow, 2005), including amusing comments such as "*You don't have to be a gorilla to understand them*" (Vermeulen, 2007: 756), and even personal testimonies like Denise Rousseau expressing her admiration for Herbert Simon (Rousseau, 2012). For Kieser, et al. (2015), these arguments that do not conform to the traditional academic debate

are sufficient to discredit the literature devoted to management research because they bestow a non-scientific character upon it. Without formulating such acerbic criticism, many contributors to the debate nevertheless stress that the quality of the exchange of views could be improved if these were based more on scientific results (Bartunek, 2011) and well-established theoretical frameworks (Jarzabkowski, Mohrman, & Scherer, 2010).

We show that the rigor-relevance debate takes place in a space that differs from the constitutive and contingent fora within which scientific controversies usually develop. Like Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe (2001), we call this space a "hybrid forum." However, it is not a public space, but a specially adapted space inside the constitutive forum, which is governed by rules that allow the use of arguments normally reserved for the contingent forum.

An instrument to make the field appear more scientific

As scientific controversies are important to those taking part in them, they establish complex mechanisms intended for their closure. However, and as Figure 2 shows, there was a surge in the number of contributions to the rigor-relevance debate between 1994 and 2013. The debate seems to be expanding rather than closing.

The absence of closure can be explained on the one hand by the absence of confrontation between the different positions, and on the other hand by the existence of the hybrid forum, whose rules allow the use of arguments that are normally considered as non-scientific within the framework of the constitutive forum.

Paradoxically, the absence of closure is interpreted by participants as a sign of the scientific nature and vitality of management research. For example, the discussion that followed the publication of Pearce and Huang's article (2012) was judged to be "*important and controversial*" (Bartunek & Egri, 2012: 245). On this basis, the editors opened a forum consisting of five comments and the right to respond, which we summarize in Table 3.

Articles within the forum	Main developments of the article	Subjects of the research avenues proposed
Pearce & Huang (article)	Analysis of 420 articles published in two leading scientific journals over a period of 60 years. Discussion on how actionable management research is.	The practices of editors of scientific journals. Levers to produce actionable research.
Ireland	Questioning of the context of the study and the empirical elements. Proposed recommendations.	Definition of actionable research. Influence of types of teaching on how actionable the research is. Influence of time on how actionable the research is. Influence of the discipline of the journal on how actionable the research is. Role of the editorial mission in how actionable the research is.
Greve	Justification of the author's article mentioned in Pearce & Huang (2012).	N/A
Stewart & Barrick	Justification of the author's article mentioned in Pearce & Huang (2012).	Effectiveness of the translation of the research results.
Aldag	Questioning of the entire article (hypotheses, logic, methodology, results, recommendations).	N/A
Martin	Development of an empirical study. Proposed recommendations.	N/A
Pearce & Huang (reply)	Taking the remarks into account.	Levers to produce actionable research.

Table 3 – Summary of the debate on Pearce & Huang's article (2012)

The analysis of this article shows that, except for the comment made by Aldag (2012), only to a slight extent are these articles linked to Pearce and Huang's words (2012). The main aim of Greve's (2012) as well as Stewart and Barric's contributions (2012) is to legitimize the actionability of the authors' past research rather than to engage in a real debate with Pearce and Huang. Martin's contribution (2012) also does not seem to attempt to provide closure in the sense that it includes ideas that are outside of the framework of the initial debate (in particular, on the cost of producing an academic article).

If not to resolve the problem of the lack of relevance of management research, what purpose does the rigor-relevance debate serve? For its contributors, the debate enables them to justify the validity of their prior research, to benefit from the springboard offered by the debate to publish new papers and to develop ideas that are not linked to the initial topic. At a more aggregated level, the debate helps to legitimize a field of management by bestowing upon it an attribute (controversy) that is characteristic of scientific disciplines.

The characteristics of the rigor-relevance debate

The preceding findings highlight three characteristics of the rigor-relevance debate. Even though it consists of a set of intellectual developments within and about science, the rigor-relevance debate (1) does stems not from an exchange of conflictual knowledge, but from the accumulation of arguments that do not give rise to a discussion of the arguments between the parties involved; (2) takes place in a specially adapted hybrid forum within the contingent forum (e.g. scientific journals, conferences and academic associations); and (3) does not aim to close the

debate, but to make the field appear more scientific. These elements are summarized in Table 4.

	Scientific controversy	**Rigor-relevance debate**
Confrontation	Exchange of arguments involving an element of theatricality, conflict and ritual.	Accumulation of arguments and stability of the arguments exchanged.
Space	Separation and interdependence of the constitutive forum (where scientific arguments are exchanged) and the contingent forum (where anecdotes and rumors are shared.)	Establishment of a specially adapted hybrid forum within the contingent forum that breaks its regular rules.
Aim	To close the controversy.	To make the field more scientific.

Table 4 – Characteristics of the rigor-relevance debate

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this article, we have analyzed the rigor-relevance debate by using the conceptual framework of scientific controversies. Based on a systematic analysis of 253 contributions published between 1994 and 2003 in 11 top-tier leading scientific journals, we feature four typical positions and have analyzed the rigor-relevance debate in the light of the analytical framework of scientific controversies in order to underline its characteristics. We now explain how our results contribute to both the rigor-relevance debate and to the literature on the rigor-relevance debate.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE RIGOR-RELEVANCE DEBATE

Relevance is a difficult concept to define. In a paper devoted to Harvard Business School, Anteby (2013: 58) recounts the experience of one of his colleagues after being asked about the meaning of relevance: "*He smiled before answering me more seriously: you shouldn't even ask me the question. If you had to define relevance, it would lose its plasticity. Not defining it is what makes relevance relevant."*

Our work has made it possible to clarify the terms of the debate on the lack of relevance of management research. Beyond the individual positions and the specific way each author thinks, we have shown that four typical positions can be identified. Each position is based on its own definition of relevance, provides a specific diagnosis to explain the origin of the problem, and proposes different solutions to solve it. Our results thus both confirm and enrich previous integration efforts.

The relationship between the gatekeepers'-orthodoxy and the collaboration-with-practitioners position resembles the dichotomy of Mode 1 versus Mode 2 (Starkey & Madan, 2001; Tranfield & Starkey, 1998), but also makes it possible to show that since the beginning of the 2000s, this coexistence has been left behind by two new positions, paradigmatic shift and refocusing on the common good.

Similarly, in a context characterized by an increase in the number of publications on the topic of research relevance (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014), it seemed important to us to build bridges between contributions that were not necessarily linked to each other by their authors. In this instance, we are thinking of the dissemination approach and evidence-based management, which were previously described as relatively impermeable (Kieser, et al., 2015) and which we have shown to share the same diagnosis of the origin of the relevance problem in management research and to propose similar solutions.

We think that the clarification of the rigor-relevance debate provided by our results might allow a better understanding of it. For the authors seeking to take part in it, our clarification allows for a better link with the existing literature and the development of contributions that do not simply reformulate arguments that were already stated in the past. Consequently, the identification of the four typical positions can serve as a starting point for the rigor-relevance debate to move forward (this debate being considerable stable over the period studied).

Our results also make it possible to better pinpoint the drivers of the rigor-relevance debate. We therefore continue along one of the research avenues suggested by Kieser, et al. (2015: 218) who would like to see the following development: "*The relevance debate should be treated in itself as an empirical phenomenon that is likely to affect both research and practice.*" We have shown that the exchange of arguments stems from another logic than that of scientific controversies as they are generally

theorized by favoring the accumulation of arguments rather than the convergence of these arguments. Our results make it possible to explain the feeling of déjà-vu expressed by some authors when reading contributions to the rigor-relevance debate (Demil, Lecocq, & Warnier, 2007, 2014; Gulati, 2007; Kieser & Leiner, 2009). In addition, the lack of willingness to close the controversy provides an explanation of the programmatic nature of the literature that has developed in the debate on the relevance of research (Kieser et al., 2015). This literature enables many contributions to be developed that simply prolong the debate indefinitely (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014). We show that this is made possible because the contributions take the form of positions, essays, speeches, and interviews, which are published in a specially adapted hybrid forum within the constitutive forum.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE LITERATURE ON SCIENTIFIC CONTROVERSIES

During the last decade, management scholars have turned to science and technology studies to understand how management is practiced in organizations (Woolgar, Coopmans, & Neyland, 2009). Beyond the use of concepts, this article also aims to allow management science to develop a contribution to science and technology studies. The objective of this article is to better understand scientific controversies by studying the rigor-relevance debate, as it has been done for other concepts from this research field, such as boundary objects (Woolgar et al., 2009) and performativity (Gond, Cabantous, Harding, & Learmonth, 2016).

This article shows that, even though it stems from a set of intellectual developments within and about science (Engelhardt & Caplan's scientific controversy definition, 1987), the rigor-relevance debate does not have the properties generally associated with scientific controversies. By showing that the debate stems from the accumulation and reformulation of arguments, and that it takes place within a hybrid forum, we have demonstrated that the rigor-relevance debate aims not to achieve closure, but to make the management field appear more scientific. Our results therefore call into question the underlying aim of controversies, which—beyond resolving a scientific problem—can play the role of legitimizing a research field by bestowing it with attributes from science.

EPILOGUE

Even though they are solely based on English-speaking literature, the previous findings offer a quasi-exhaustive overview of the arguments that are exchanged by the members of the academic community concerning the rigor and relevance of management research. We hereby propose four ways to move this debate forward.

First, we have underlined the phatic function of the rigor-relevance debate by showing that the arguments used are constantly juxtaposed and reformulated. The scarcity of empirical publications using Mode 2 in top-tier journals (Bartunek, 2011) simply illustrates the fact that the majority of the solutions proposed within each of the four positions we have identified fail to be made operational. The aim is not to question the willingness of the participants in the debate on improving the relevance of research on management science. However, as there is a lack of implementation of the solutions proposed, we find it difficult to move the debate away from its purely phatic function.

Our analysis also leads us to stress the importance of teaching as a means to make management research more relevant. Depending on the position subscribed to, teaching makes it possible to spread knowledge produced by research (gatekeepers' orthodoxy); to provide opportunities to co-construct knowledge with students, particularly as part of continuous training (collaboration with practitioners); to encourage students to engage in critical thinking on management practices (paradigmatic shift); or to develop their sense of ethics or moral compass (refocusing on the common good). While these solutions are very different, they make it possible to stress the need for research activities and teaching to be better integrated in order to make management research more relevant.

The third avenue we suggest relates to the role of practitioners in the rigor-relevance debate. In fact, practitioners continue to play an extremely limited role. In the sample we analyzed, only seven contributions involve practitioners, which is less than 3% (Amabile et al., 2001; Cohen, 2007; Ouchi et al., 2005; Podolny et al., 2009; Saari, 2007; Starkey & Madan, 2001; Tushman et al., 2007). We therefore note that there is a discrepancy between saying on one hand that the role of practitioners has to be valued and that their expectations have to be taken into account, and seeing on the other hand the actual peripheral role that they occupy in the debate, and more generally in the academic world. Researchers tend to limit practitioners to a role where they confirm ideas, linked to their status as a subject of study. Continuing to see practitioners in this way does not seem to us to be the best way to make research in management science more relevant for practitioners.

Finally, we have demonstrated that the range of positions has widened over time (see Figure 2). This range contrasts with the growing uniformity of practices observed in different countries when measuring the relevance (or impact) of business schoolsand universities, as well as management scholars and their work. Indeed, these practices are mostly based on a dissemination vision of relevance defended in the gatekeepers'-orthodoxy position, which applies criteria such as frequency of citation, press coverage, and dissemination efforts. In this article, we have illustrated that relevance is not fixed and stable. It therefore seems to us a shame to narrow the field of possibilities at the very moment when there have never been so many lines of thought on how to make research in management more relevant.

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Appendix 1 – List of the sampled articles

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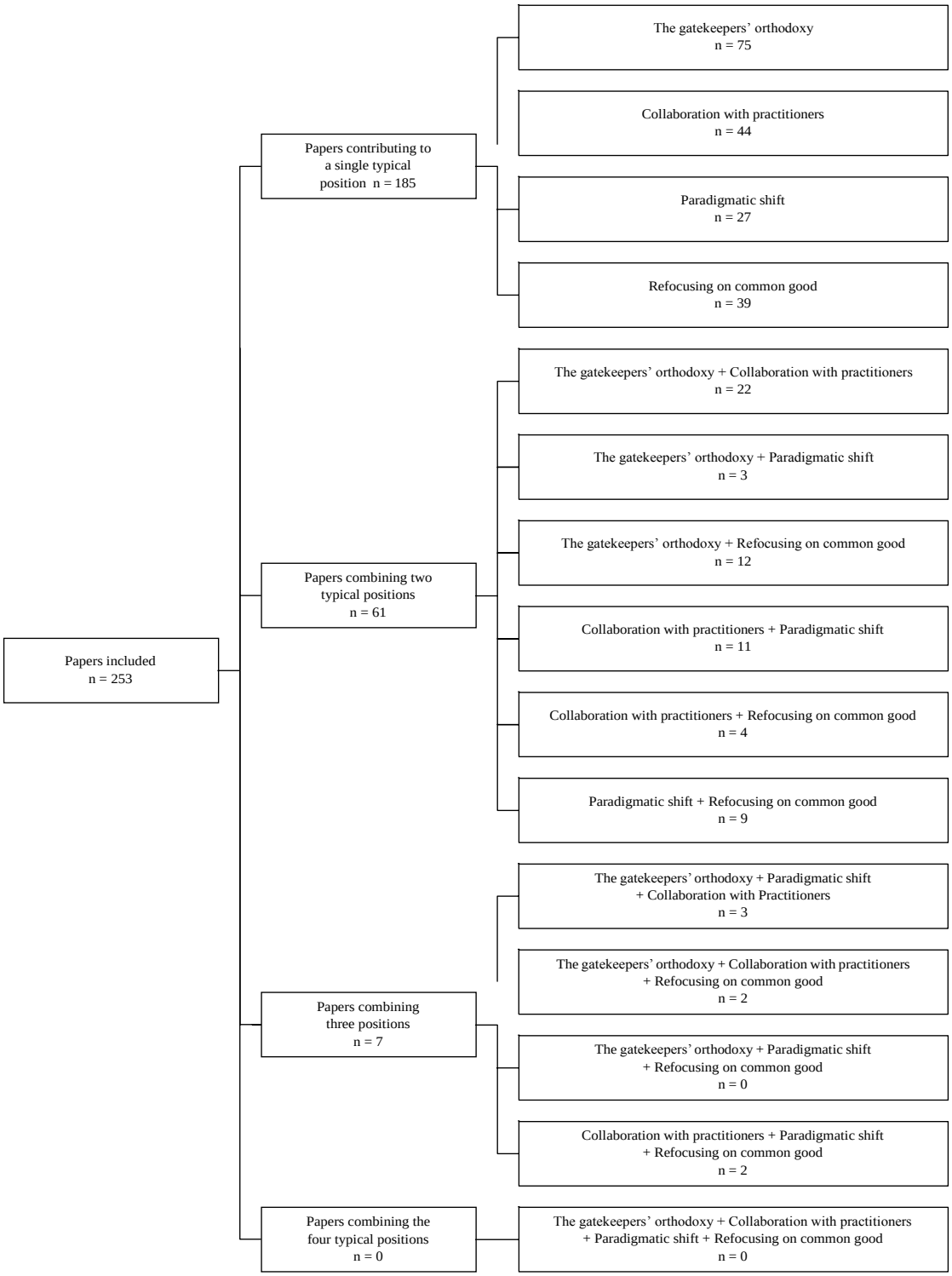
APPENDIX 2 – DISTRIBUTION OF THE ARTICLES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FOUR POSITIONS



APPENDIX 3 – DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS USED BY THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE DEBATE

Concepts	Definitions
Constructivism	Epistemological approach based on the idea that our view of reality is the product of human interaction with this reality, and not the exact reflection of this reality itself.
Critical management studies	All of the wide range of management studies inspired by critical theories that call into question the managerial logic and the link between management and neo-liberalism.
Design science	Research methodology that aims to create an artifact in order to solve a given problem.
Engaged scholarship	Research position that aims to use academic resources to solve practical problems.
Mode 2	Concept is based on the work of Gibbons et al. (1994) and presented as an alternative to Mode 1, which corresponds to the traditional mode of conducting research.
Critical realism	Epistemological approach according to which there exists an independent reality to our reflection on the subject of the study of science.

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