

## How Neoliberalism and Management Redefined Social Class Conflicts

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### Abstract

*Social class inequalities between workers and wealthiest capitalists have grown while neoliberalism expands globally. Yet, there is no apparent emerging social class conflict. The question we address is: How Neoliberalism bypasses social class conflict? Through a theoretical analysis and an empirical research, we discover that social class conflicts have been redefined with neoliberalist global expansion and ongoing management innovations. Our paper addresses this question in two streams. First, we present a critical literature analysis of the Social Class Theory and its evolution. Second, we present the empirical methodology with the conceptual and operational framework analysing 30 sets of meta-data case studies of social conflicts. The research results reveal the elite's regime and its increased capabilities with neoliberalism and management to bypass social conflicts by complexifying the system and reframing representations on conflicts. We discuss what the capitalist regime means for the future of humanity and future major conflicts.*

**Keywords:** Social Class, Neoliberalism, Management, Conflicts, Complexity

### Introduction

There is a persistent general confusion between claims that the world is a better place to live for the world's growing population, while we still hear about the growing human suffering, the excluded, extreme poverty and human hardship. Nations and international organizations have implemented wealth distribution and equal opportunity public policies, and even social development programs around the world. But we still fail to see how the global regime could be the cause for this social inequality and social exclusion. There is a persistent paradox where modern capitalism decreases poverty in world population, while maintaining some people in extreme poverty and hardship (Piketty 2013). We tend to believe that bad luck, lack of knowledge, or lack of efforts or motivation due to lack of good values, or mental illness or physical disabilities to explain this social exclusion phenomenon.

An extended literature and empirical research demonstrate how it is structurally difficult to eliminate poverty and life dissatisfaction. In fact, even when some poorest population come out of extreme poverty there is an increase living condition and general life dissatisfaction (Roser & Ortiz-Ospina 2019). Despite a relative decrease in poverty, there is an increased social inequality, the inferior social class despair remains, while the middle-class encounters life dissatisfaction, there is no particular social and political agenda to find a structural solution to human sufferings (Max 2013, Lopes 2012, Coulangeon & al. 2004, Matouk 2005, Longhi & Nijkamp 2007). The more neoliberalism takes us into an extensive and intensive global capitalism, the less we here about social class inequalities (Dubet 2012, Atkinson 2006, 1995).

Our research problem is that neoliberalism expands worldwide on one hand, human suffering and life dissatisfaction is growing and increasing social inequalities with poverty and wealth concentration is structurally maintained on the other hand (Piketty 2013). According the Marx and Engels (1846) proletarian revolution would occur with collective consciousness. But the current inequalitarian regime is maintained despite knowledge and collective consciousness (Dubet 2012) and there are no apparent social class conflicts to rebel against these regime consequences.

**Research question:** *How neoliberalism bypasses social class conflict?*

Our general question raises the issue that for two centuries, the modern industrial and technological economic regime confused the issue about global social inequality. For a short historical period, the Keynesian State interventionism would address social inequalities as a public policy issue (Heilbroner 1970). But since the 1980s the neoliberalist deregulated economic system has flourished, and with it, social inequality issues (Roser & Ortiz-Ospina 2019, Bourguignon and Morrisson 2002, Bourguinat 2005, Lopes 2012). Instead of reviving the Keynesian policies to respond to the middle and inferior social classes impoverishment, the deregulated financial system innovated sophisticated new financial products, including consumption credit to counterbalance declining consumption power (Freitag & Ernst 2008, Gerbier 2004). By doing so, the capitalist regime keeps public opinion confused between the actual standards of living and wealth distribution (Dubet 2012).

The underlying question legitimizing our research is why would it matter? If we conquer famines and pandemics, ensuring mankind survival as a species, why would we be concerned with social class inequality? The concern is that the wealthy and powerful upper elite utilize the worlds' wealth and natural resources for their own agenda (Atkinson 2006, Rousseau 1762).

Despite numerous democratic Nations, humanity gives away the power in the hands of a few people to serve their dreams and vision. Given the level of the upper world elite, we believe that it is the most profound dominating situation of all time in the history of mankind (Piketty 2013). Why would the modern man give away the power to self-determination to sustain such a regime? Does it mean that we, as a species, would adopt a slavery attitude towards the elite mastering economic wealth and political power that comes with it (Rousseau 1762). Wouldn't it be cynical to give away democratic freedom of choice and decisions over mankind future in the hands of a few, just like any totalitarian regime? Would that mean that we wouldn't make any other choices for humanity?

Until we answer these legitimate questions, we believe that we need to understand why social class as a representation of the common social space is declining and how it effects our ability to address fundamental issues for humanity.

**Specific research question is: how does the elite transform social representation of social class and social conflicts?**

To answer this specific question, we will present the findings in terms of social class conflict attenuating forces and how the plutocratic elite has an interest into the peoples' deceptive confusion about the global neoliberalism capitalist system.

The present social class literature analysis studies its origin and its dynamic. From this critical analysis, we will present the empirical research conceptual and operational frameworks and the qualitative meta-data case study methodology. The results cover three level of inductive analysis to iteratively correlate with the Social Class Theory. The major research discovery is that the current modern regime is deliberately reframing and confusing knowledge about human sufferings to attenuate social tensions. The two major forces mitigating social tensions and maintaining the regime are the neoliberalist global economic integration and management innovations. We explain how social class conflicts representation have been strategically complexified as a mean to confuse collective consciousness in maintaining a very sophisticated regime.

### **1. Literature on Social Class Theory**

Social hierarchy is often pointed as a necessary evil to organize complex social cooperation. Nevertheless, archaeology studies find the historical moments where Mesopotamia created social hierarchy 7300 years ago while it appeared in Peru and Mexico 3200 years ago (Flannery & Marcus 2012). The archaeological findings demonstrate how social inequality historically happened as a simple social choice to organize social order by unequally distributing privileges and resources by social status (Herzfeld 2012, Fouquet & Broadberry 2015). Whether societies were in agricultural surplus or not, whether it was a territorial issue, or the growing population to be organized, the hierarchical focus was useful to distinguish individuals. Interestingly, these distinctions were based on the level of an individual power. Originally, there was three sources of power: 1) Leadership (mana); 2) expertise and 3) Bravery and toughness (Flannery & Marcus 2012). These three sources of power are still fundamental in modern societies, as if nothing has changed over 7000 years.

Eventually, the distinction between secular and religious societies allowed a hereditarian dimension to this individual power (Chan & al. 2020, Rousseau 1762). This is how religious civilizations aligned mystical, spiritual and religious power with an hereditarian social hierarchy (Chan & al. 2020, Flannery & Marcus 2012, Shankland 2012).

Over time, the Order regime allied with the Religious regime (Weber 1905). Alternatively, the castes regimes moved from a religious to a race and ethnicity hierarchy founded even in the Ancient Egypt (Subedi 2013). Caste regime logic is the origin for the racist view of the world by integrating individual and group distinctions with inter-group repulsion within the regime and with other regimes (Subedi 2013, Bouglé 1908). These hereditary hierarchical regimes would include a profession to a personal social class status. With the repulsion culture inspired by castes regimes, we find the racialist regime is a social construction currently maintained in cultural believes despite contradicting scientific evidences about human races (Bouglé 1908, Baker 1998, Flannery & Marcus 2012, Dubet 2012, Durand 1981, Jorde & Wooding 2004, Seamster & Ray 2018).

These findings demonstrate how regimes function in the elite's interests of power and privileges and their view of the world (Marx & Engel 1846, Amin 1992, Freitag & Ernst 2008, Gurvitch 1966). Notably, all these hereditary hierarchical regimes would include a profession and a personal status for each social class (Subedi 2013). Isn't surprising to see that hierarchy is the predominant way to organize social order. Social hierarchy is even more of an omnipotent belief that natural and biological sciences support the idea.

For instance, ethology finds hierarchical social structure in any socially organized species in the animal and insect world (Luo et al. 2018, Lane & al. 2014, Pohorecky & al. 2004).

Environmentalists even refer to a hierarchical order in the global ecological system as hierarchy of needs (Butter & al. 2017, Dietsch 2016). Anthropology, psychology and neuropsychology not only find social hierarchy in all family settings, but they find that these hierarchy have a biological function in individual overall health and wellbeing (Luo & al. 2018, Lane 2014, Stieglitz & al. 2014). Consequently, relating human neuropsychology with the natural sciences and even biological health and longevity legitimate social hierarchy as not only natural, but also healthy for the individual well-being and longevity by comparing themselves with the lower social class ranks which are less fortunate (Lane & al. 2014).

The neuropsychology and ethology findings are interesting enough to understand why hierarchical social structure are maintained. The vast majority of the population gain major benefit in comparing themselves to the unfortunate inferior social class (Lane & al. 2014). The middle and upper class, even the upper inferior social classes benefit from it in terms of health, well-being and longevity. Interestingly, sociologists abandoned studying such a central phenomenon (Dubet 2014). Sociologist address social hierarchy as a social distinction (Bourdieu 1979) or a social justification (Boltansky and Thevenot 1999). They are not studying elite’s interests or the impact of these hierarchical social structures. The phenomenon is therefore perceived as natural and inevitable. It creates a level of impotence for the elite’s power and privileges to define the world while subordinating the rest of the world’s interests, view of humanity and its future to their wishes as the governing elite (Rousseau 1762, Marx & Engel 1846, McCloskey 2015).

The literature on hierarchical social structure is therefore an accepted empirical and theoretical phenomenon of study, whether it is found in the natural world or socially constructed as demonstrated in archaeology and neuropsychology. Consequently, this research assumes that any superior-inferior social relation is therefore a symptom of a hierarchical social structure, whether it is explicit, like in an organization, or tacit, like in a society.

1.1 Social Class Theory as Social hierarchy:

The literature on social hierarchy reveals four major regimes: Capitalist, Religious, Order and Castes. We are presenting a literature synthesis to distinguish their distinctiveness (figure 1).

| HIERARCHICAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE REGIME COMPARISON   |   |
|---|---|
| Capitalist Value  | Religious Value   |
| Innovation and industrial wealth creation   | Spiritual purity  |
| <b>CAPITALIST REGIME</b>  | <b>RELIGIOUS/CASTE REGIME</b>   |
| <b>Strategic decision makers:</b><br><u>High level of collective risk</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Top project innovators</li> <li>• Top Investing executives</li> <li>• Top executives</li> <li>• Politicians</li> </ul>  | <b>Spiritual leaders: Superior</b><br><u>High level of purity</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shamans</li> <li>• Pope and Cardinals</li> <li>• Rabbis</li> <li>• Mana</li> <li>• etc</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Administrative decision makers:</b><br><u>Medium level of collective risks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managers</li> <li>• Public administrative officers</li> <li>• Professionals</li> <li>• Organizational innovators</li> <li>• Personal investment planners</li> <li>• Political activists</li> </ul> | <b>Religious leaders: Middle</b><br><u>Medium level of Purity</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praying leaders</li> </ul> <b>Religious people:</b><br><u>Minimalist level of purity</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believers</li> </ul> |
| <b>Operational contributors:</b><br><u>Minimalist level of collective risks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers</li> <li>• Consumers</li> <li>• Citizens</li> </ul>  | <b>Others:</b><br><b>Non-Religious people considered impure and inferior</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-believers</li> <li>• Atheists</li> <li>• Disbelievers</li> <li>• Untouchables</li> </ul>  |

| <b>SOCIAL HIERARCHICAL REGIME</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Nobility Value</b>  | <b>Racialist Value</b>  |
| <p>Honour</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ORDER REGIME<br/>(Nobility)</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p><b>Monarchs:</b><br/><u>High level of honour</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• King</li> <li>• Tsar</li> <li>• Queen</li> <li>• Emperor</li> <li>• Dictator</li> </ul> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p><b>Nobles:</b> aristocrats/army generals<br/><u>Medium level of honour</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feudal lords</li> <li>• Princes, Dukes, marquess, earls, viscounts and barons</li> <li>• Army Generals</li> </ul> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Others:</b><br/><u>Low level of honour</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peasants, craftsmen, traders</li> </ul> <p><u>No honour</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminals</li> <li>• Vagabonds</li> </ul> </div> | <p>Race/Ethnicity</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>RACIALIST/CASTE REGIME</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p><b>Racial elite</b><br/><u>High level of privileges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privileged race</li> <li>• &amp; Their privilege ethnic groups</li> </ul> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p><b>Elite alliances:</b><br/><u>Medium level of privileges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closest racial and ethnic group to the highly privileged</li> </ul> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Others:</b><br/><u>No privileges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All other races and their ethnic groups</li> <li>• Metis</li> <li>• Zambo</li> <li>• Mulattos</li> <li>• Aborigines</li> </ul> </div> |

Figure 1 Hierarchical Social Structure Regime

According to a comparative analysis, all of these regimes share common characteristics. They all have three major classes. Each class may be sub-stratified. These regimes relate professions to a social status. Even the secular specificity is found in Order and racialist caste regimes. In other words, middle classes, and the economic dimension to hierarchically structure social spaces is not specific to the capitalist regime. However, religious, mystic and spiritual beliefs system tighten the hereditary legitimacy whereas capitalist regime finds it on meritocracy belief system. The ancient social hierarchy such as the Order, Religious, Castes and Racialist regimes (figure 2) have coexisted as integrated and allied regimes for thousands of years to rule societies and empires (Flannery and Marcus 2012, Bouglé 1908, Cosandey 2005, De Blois & Roy 1999, Durand 1981, Mousnier 1969).

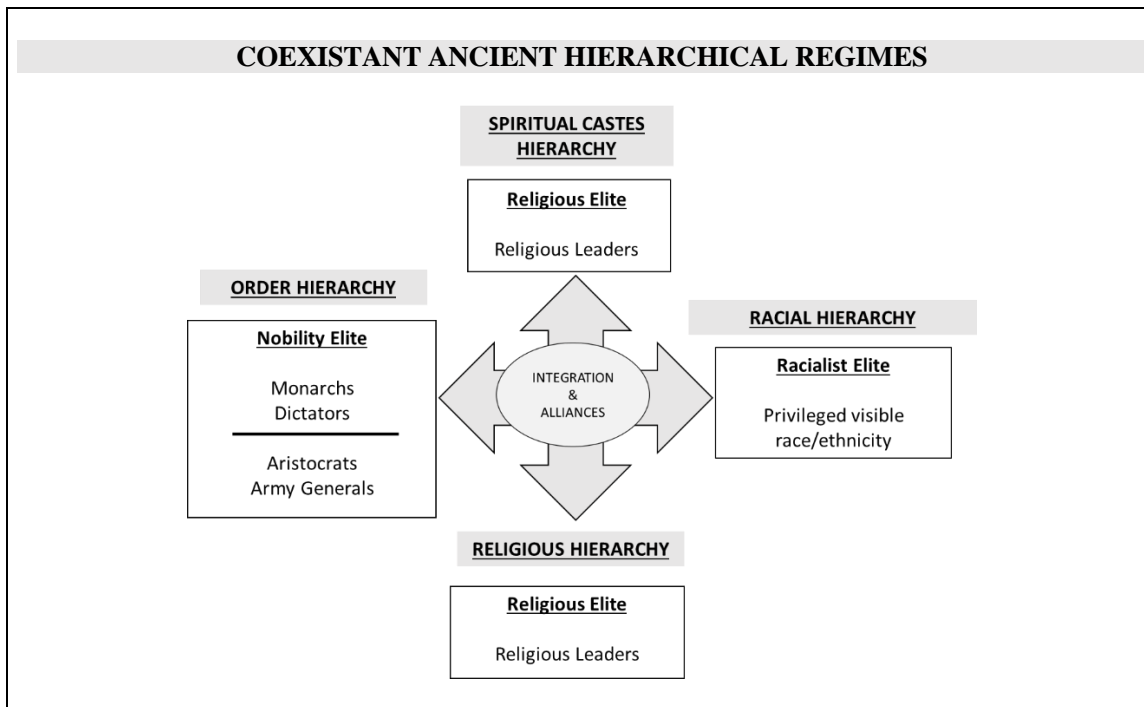


Figure 2: Coexistent Ancient Hierarchical Regimes

The caste regime racialist view of the world transcends its regime into all cultures (Subedy 2013, Jaffrelot 2010, Bouglé 1908). It is in this context that the literature critical analysis leads us to the hierarchical racialist social structuration (Seamster & Ray 2020, Braudel 1981.). Therefore, we have established, for our research purposes, a distinctive racialist regime to reflect the growing literature on the racialist phenomenon of hereditary hierarchical social stratification based on a “racial” perception of humanity (Jorde & Wooding 2004, Tetushkin 2001, Templeton 2013, Subedi 2013). Even if the genetic findings on races have discredited the relation between race and the color of the skin, racialist regime is culturally established on an observable characteristic, color of the skin, to create an inter-group repulsion as a function of any caste regime would do. This is the reason for considering the racialist/caste regime included in the social hierarchical literature findings.

One hierarchical social distinction (specific to the industrial capitalist regime) is the non-hereditary related social status. Individual social mobility is therefore a particular trait to the capitalist regime. Caste regime may allow social mobility, but only for groups, not for individuals (Bouglé 1908). Sociology points out how social reproduction of the social classes is common given how individuals born in wealthy families generally stay in upper social class (Bourdieu 1979). The capitalist regime is champion with its meritocracy perspective and its self-promoting individuals in the social hierarchy, particularly with innovating entrepreneurs (Schumpeter 1942).

These order and castes hierarchical stratification are still in effect today. If they were originally allied (Order and Religious) and integrated (Religious Castes and Racialist Caste), they come into conflict once the capitalist regime emerged as predominant (figure2). One could say that they compete one another to propose a new alliance with the secular capitalist system. Paradoxically, they are also in conflict with the capitalist regime because it is a meritocratic regime, valuing individuality and self-determination (figure 3). Alternatively, the ancient regimes are considered as unjustified discrimination against equal opportunity.

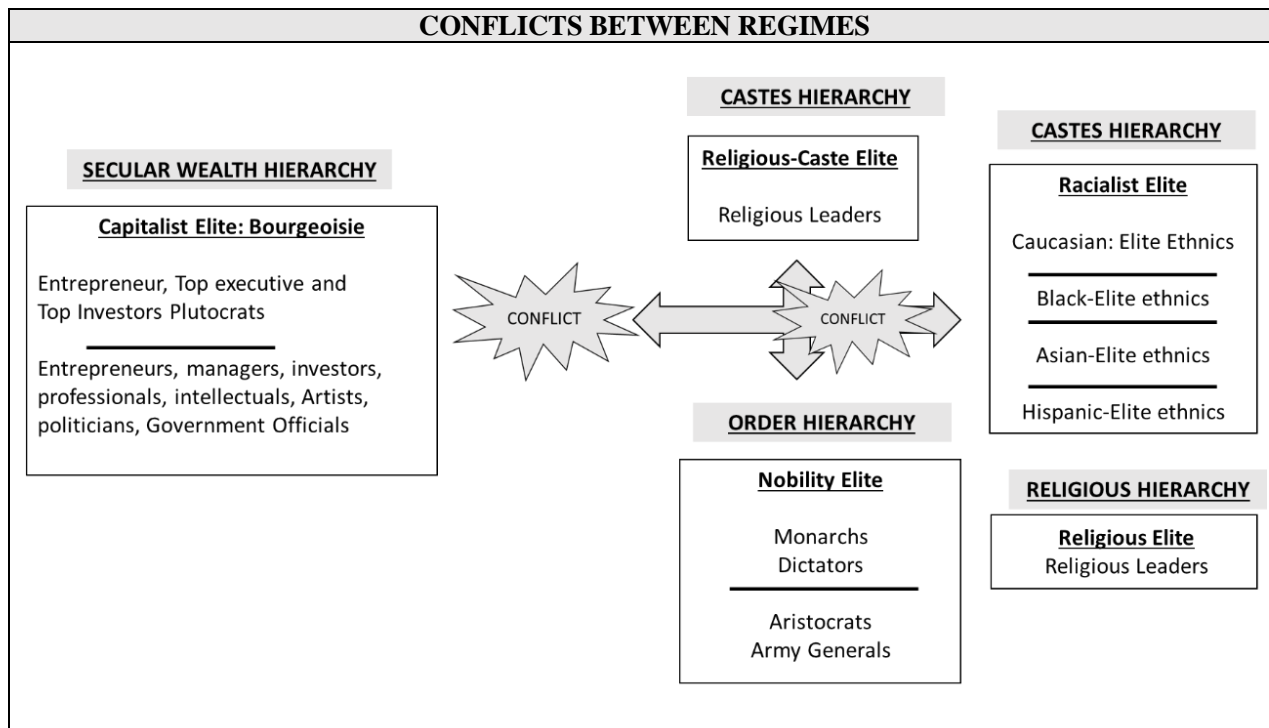


Figure 3: Social Hierarchical Regimes and their conflict dynamics

Finally, the industrial modern capitalist regime is also distinguished by its focus on social change founded in social class conflict (Marx and Engel 1846). It is known to be a changing-evolutionary regime based on the social class conflicts management to attenuate these conflicts disturbances on social order. Therefore, social conflict is at the centre of our research question.

### 1.1 Conflict Management Theory in the Social Class Theory Context

The first theory of social class system presented a hierarchical relation between the bourgeoisie and the proletarians workers (Marx 1872, Marx & Engel 1846). The conflict is based on divergent interests regarding the industrial production and its related division of labour (Gurvitch 1966, Marx 1872, Marx & Engel 1846). Since social class structuration based on the division of labour is not new, the industrial capitalists' uniqueness is to solely base the structure of labour without spiritual, mystical, religious or racist considerations like the other social regimes. The industrial modern capitalism singularity proposition is a materialist conception of history and philosophy including the idea of progress (Marx 1872, Marx & Engel 1846, Heilbroner 1970).

Not only there was two new distinctive social classes, but the industrialist capitalist system implied utilizing technical progress to intensify productivity (Watkins 1907, Marx 1872) through a quest for an increasing efficiency and effectiveness through *managerial innovations*. Evidently, technological innovation pre-existed this modern era, but the capitalist regime's uniqueness is the *managerial social practice* to apply the innovations in the economic production (Watkin 1907, Sée 1926, Schumpeter 1942), in search of efficiency to increase wealth creation and capital accumulation.

The modern materialist historical progress was expected to lead into a systemic major conflict between these two social classes (bourgeoisie and proletariat) over this economic wealth unequal distribution (Heilbroner 1979). While the superior social class continues to exploit in becoming extremely wealthy, the inferior social class continues to be exploited in becoming extremely impoverished and living in hardship (Marx 1872, Marx & Engel 1846, Sée 1926). It was believed at the time, that this materialistic increasing inequality would be perceived as social injustice and would lead to overthrow the regime toward economic wealth equal redistribution (Marx & Engel 1846).

This is how industrial capitalism is profoundly defined by conflict within the system. Not only there are conflicts between its social classes, but also conflict with the other regimes like the Order and Religious regimes because the bourgeoisie was not part of the Order elite's regimes in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> and XIX<sup>th</sup> Centuries (Braudel 1979, Braudel 1984, De Blois & Roy 1999, Arnoux 2009, Baechler 1995, Jéhanno 2015).

As early as in the European XV<sup>th</sup> Century, there were some kind of urban capitalists' industrial factories employing different craftsmen (Arnoux 2009, Mousnier 1969, Polanyi 1944). The bourgeois did not have elitist honours or dignified social status as in the Order regime. The bourgeois were outliers from both previous social classes Order regime. They were considered *nouveau-riche* from one hand and unqualified craftsmen even if they managed and supervised them. In fact, their judicial original role was to supervise the relation between craftsmen and their apprentices because they were children under their care (Favresse 1931). To facilitate such a role, the bourgeois offered factory facilities and if possible, the means of production for these craftsmen and their apprentices. Over time, the bourgeois could keep an administrative fee for their supervision, provision and supply of resources services. It is in the XIX<sup>th</sup> Century in some European nations such as England, with the landowners of the enclosure, later in France and Holland that the supervisor's legal role became a capitalist managerial role (Polanyi 1944).

These two social classes (bourgeois and proletarians) had an original similar social status in the Order regime. The historical transformation occurred when *management emerged as social practice innovation* in applying technological inventions into production as modern machineries. These technologies enabled the capitalist bourgeois to transform craftsmen labour into simplified tasks easily repeated by any unqualified worker (Taylor 1911, Déry 2010, 2009). This is the moment when highly qualified craftsmen could be replaced by unqualified workers therefore creating a new wider labour market. The capitalist's ability to create increasing wealth through mass production distinguished this *capitalist management elite* as the bourgeoisie. In other words technological innovations came with a managerial innovation capability to transform operations into executing tasks from one hand and managerial responsibilities on the other (Taylor 1911, Déry 2010).

Factory Managers would become responsible for decision making as well as supervising the workers' production performances, while workers would have to execute (simplified tasks) and perform in terms of speed (efficiency) and quality results (effectiveness) creating overall productivity (Déry 2010). Inspired by the military practices, Fayol (1918) further developed the *managerial innovative practice* by expanding the Taylorism of decision and supervision over operations by adopting a *planning* and *organizing* the overall industrial system. The Taylorism and Fayol's system together converged into the modernized management practices as **Planning** (strategically, administratively and operationally) **Organizing** (the tactical efficient operation structure and processes), **Directing** (in terms of leadership, but also in terms of supervision, motivation, and human resources management) and ultimately **Controlling** (in terms of supervising the productivity level, quality in terms of effectiveness, and efficiency to optimize resources into production and minimize wastes and errors) (PODC) (Déry 2009, 2010). Chester Barnard (1938) formalized this *managerial innovation* at the executive level of organizations to establish a formal recognition of the competency level of executive functions to maintain effective and performing sustainable complex organizations.

Weber (1922a, 1922b) analysed public administration to discover highly performing bureaucracies as rational organizations. *Managerial innovation* in the public administration included an extensive ethical rules and policies including nonbiased decisions making, standardized policies (to implement public administrative services) and over all equality in public administrative managerial practices. The State public administration had implemented a profound innovated organization into not only a hierarchy of responsibilities, but specialized professional work stations and units of services which all together sustained a rational effective administrative operation (Déry 2009, Chandler 1988). As Weber (1922a, 1922b) described, these new bureaucratic organizations had vertical and horizontal socio-professional stratification reflecting division of administrative labour similar to the industrial division of labour as described by Marx Social Class Theory. Weber distinction referred to this division of labour as set of roles and professions translated as a social stratification instead of social classes. As we demonstrate, Weber nuances are marginal theoretical precautions to characterize a wider range of social status differences.

Over time, the capitalist professional-managerial elite became a set of bourgeois social class in their *nouveau-riche* ostentatious materialist life style (Bourdieu 1979). With this rapid evolution, a profound industrial revolution embraced social, economic, political and cultural new social dynamics. Rivalry and social tension arise between management decision makers and executing workers despite the fact that they are working together and in the same environment. Fortunately, social mobility became possible in the organizational hierarchy, but also through educating workers and a meritocracy philosophy through a worker's performance. Nevertheless, social class consciousness emerged in terms of political interest opposition transformed as social class conflict between these two social classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat (Marx & Engel 1846).

Just like all social regime, belief systems bring meaning to the hierarchical structure. In the industrial capitalist secular regime, the superstructure of these beliefs was the capitalist and materialist ideology (Marx 1872).



Early on, the ideological superstructure embellished proletarian social class consciousness (Marx 1872) through meritocracy, social mobility, and even the human right of life, liberty and the pursuit of Happiness (as explicit in the American Constitution) which all coincide with maintaining the regime in the elite’s interest.

Marx (1872) presented a dialectical dynamic between the infrastructure (industrial) and the superstructure (Ideological). Deteriorating materialist living conditions for proletarian would eventually confront dominating ideologies from the industrial superstructure and give raise to proletarian collective consciousness about the systemic propaganda governed by the economic elite to maintain their current economic exploitative system (Marx & Engel 1846, Heilbroner 1979). Marx and Engel’s perspective portrayed this new era of emerging industrial capitalism in Europe as a new social system based on social class conflict of interest between the bourgeoisie and their factory workers, but also between the bourgeois and the Order regime.

**1.3 Hermeneutic Social Logic: Superstructure and Infrastructure**

The first obvious theorization logic adopted by sociologists, is to differentiate between the working role and activities with the social meaning of it. The hermeneutic logic implies that economic practice (Infrastructure) finds meaning (Superstructure) and legitimates social status (figure 4). The social value signification in terms of hierarchical status of privileges is founded in the meaning of that economic role in all sociologist theories of the modern capitalist regime (Marx & Engel 1846, Marx 1867, Durkheim 1897, Weber 1922, Bourdieu 1979, Lawfer 1980, Adler & Kwon 2002).

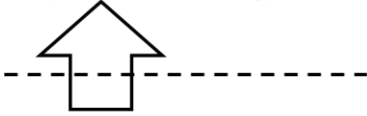
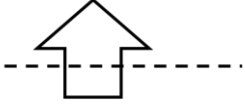
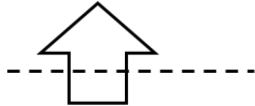
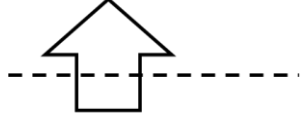
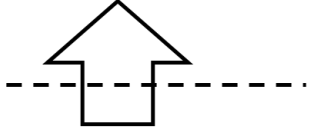
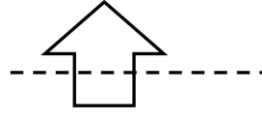
| <b>INDUSTRIAL HIERARCHICAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE</b><br><b>Literature Review (1846-2002)</b>   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>MARX AND ENGEL (1846, 1867)</b>  | <b>DURKHEIM (1897)</b>  |
| Superstructure: ideology<br><br>Infrastructure: Economic System | Common Conscience (beliefs)<br><br>Inter-Dependant Division of Labour of the Economic System   |
| <b>WEBER (1922)</b>   | <b>BOURDIEU (1979)</b>  |
| Symbolic Dimension<br><br>Socio-professional Stratification    | Symbolic Dimension<br><br>Economic Capital  |
| <b>LAUFER (1980)</b>  | <b>ADLER AND KWON (2002)</b>  |
| Public opinion<br><br>Economic System                          | Social capital*<br><br>Economic System<br><br>* Social capital: bounding foundations within each social class (including, willingness, ability, values and beliefs to socially bound) |

Figure 4: Industrial Hierarchical Social Structures: literature 1846-2002

For Durkheim (1897) and Weber (1922a, Weber 1922b), the socio-professional division of labour creates a social bound through beliefs and symbolic meaning to the economic function of the individual. Durkheim and Weber were concerned with Marx and Engel’s theoretical validity with empirical data. Therefore, by analysing demographic raw data, Durkheim and Weber have find how socio-professional roles and characteristics were distributed within the organizational hierarchy in becoming social stratification constructing and validating Marx and Engel social classes.



Adler & Kwon (2002) Bourdieu (1979) and Laufer (1981) have paid more attention to the symbolic meaningful dimension of social classes in the industrial hierarchical social structuration. This is where some settled differences occur. Adler & Kwon (2002) are somewhat closer to Durkheim and Weber's empirical validation of the theoretical explanation of the symbolic dimensions. They studied how personal social relations bond individuals to groups and network of people through shared beliefs and values. Those social relations become Social Capital because their social bonds become leverages to actionable accomplishments, including professional one (Adler & Kwon 2002). These social relations become a source of motivation and abilities for individuals to create, develop and maintain those social bonds that give meaning and purpose for their social and economic roles. For Adler and Kwon (2002) Social Capital becomes a Capital in the sense that it becomes a source of power and influence in peoples' lives and particularly in their economic lives.

Bourdieu (1979) and its followers such as Dubet (2012), Lenoir 2004 and Coulangeon (2004) focused on the heuristic interpretation of what constitutes the symbolic dimension developed by Weber (1904, 1922b). Bourdieu explore the idea of Habitus as a concept incapsulating all symbolic dimension of social lives, including values, life styles and cultural preferences (Chan 2010). Dubet (2012) and Coulangeon (2004) push further this line of interpretation in studying people's cultural consumption according to their socio-professional status. This empirical validity of the Habitus concept becomes increasingly difficult to correlate because the very wealthy elite is not identifiable in raw data, and ultimately, the only conclusion they come to is that the poorest social classes tend to have a more homogeneous cultural consumption, whereas the wealthier the social class and social stratification have a heterogeneous cultural consumption. Finally, they look at the legitimizing role the elite has over emerging cultural creations from diversified populations, including more marginalized or poorest groups of social classes (Coulangeon & al. 2004). One could find those arguments weak, and ultimately could only concern French population since their data is limited to France. It is however observable how the powerful and wealthiest along with the artistic intellectuals can transform proletarian marginal cultural creations into cultural phenomenon and social modelling through massive distribution. This social process of cultural legitimation illustrates how the elite leads and dominates cultural and ideological superstructure.

Laufer (1985) goes beyond the cultural dimension of social lives to reach back to Marx and Engel's original line of thoughts focussing on Ideology. Ideology, as a system of thoughts, beliefs, values and view of the world, becomes a more comprehensive and holistic concept to explain the heuristic value of the symbolic dimension of social lives. Laufer, however, brings a contemporary perspective to the original concept of Ideology to talk about "opinions" or doxology. For Marx and Engel, Ideology refers to this whole coherent system of believes integrated to the industrial capitalist system. The Ideology's function is to legitimate the economic system on the elite's behalf. Laufer (1985) reveals how this Ideology concept actually evolved over time in becoming an "Opinion". If the "sacred" symbolism was replaced by the "scientific expertise" explanation of the world, that expertise is a form of belief system which in term was also replaced by the Public *Opinion* (Laufer 1985). Experts, Religious and peoples' opinions, were all at the same level of legitimate explanation of the world, and give meaning to peoples' roles and actions. Legitimacy is therefore in the hands of those capable of convincing the mass. In this manner, the elite's ownership of the media and communication technology can therefore lead and dominate Public *Opinion*.

Given this evolution of the capitalist Superstructure concept, it appears that the Elite appears to be effectively more sensitive to public opinions to any other symbolic system. In fact, Public *Opinion* has the power to mobilize social movements, and organizational workforce into project goals. It is therefore unsurprising to find that the current economic elite leads and defines Public Opinions through legitimizing some arts, key cultural production, designs information and communication technology leaving no social transformational movement to chance and uncertainty.

With current media and information technologies, it becomes easier to manage and manipulate public opinions into beliefs, value systems, social models and behaviours in a very powerful way. Logic would state that if Public Opinion can be created by the Elite, it can also be created by the people. But then again, it is easy for the elite, to monitor the emerging Public Opinion to either reframe the issues, or take them into getting the population busy to manage these public issues while the elite can pursue their interests, projects and accomplish their dream for themselves and the world.

This theoretical interpretation of the Opinion and cultural production as a Superstructure in relation to the economic Infrastructure becomes a valuable concept for the research's conceptual framework in studying social class conflicts. However, the concept of Public Opinion is not an operational theoretical concept for empirical research analysis. We will broaden the concept into a Doxological Dimension of the social space symbolic human life. We will take it to analyse how expressive social issues and social class conflicts are being addressed and reframed in the social space to understand how neoliberalism and management practices redefine and even bypass social class conflict.

## 2. Empirical research methodology

This research aims at validating whether the Social Class Theory is still valuable to understand critical global issues in today's world. We want to understand why and how social classes focus don't address major social class conflicts. The first concern is the apparent cognitive dissonance between humankind sufferings and major modern accomplishments. Modernity supports the growing human species counting more than 7 billion humans in the XXI<sup>st</sup> Century, compared to the 3 billion individuals in the early XX<sup>th</sup> Century (Piketty 2013). We wonder if this population growth, improved general living conditions and life expectancies would imply that the sustained human suffering is marginal and that the current global social regime works for the best. Our empirical research aims at analysing meta-data (based on official primary studies) to bring together a vast sample of case studies. These case studies are analysed through an inductive process revealing the current social class structure and dynamics. Once the social class validity is confirmed, we draw back on the fundamental question as to the conflict dynamics and how these social class conflicts don't seem to call for a major regime disruption despite the intensified neoliberalism, social inequality and wealth mega concentration for the super-elite.

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979) paradigms classification, the epistemological position of this research is radical structuralism. In other words, not only conflict is considered as normal, rather than disruptive as such, but the only way the social order would change is by changing its regime. So, within the regime, the conflicts are normal until it reaches a critical point of global disruption. As a contrast, the functionalist paradigm considers conflict as a dysfunction within the social order. The aim, within the functionalism, is to prevent any conflict assuming that a conflict is a problem and therefore a major risk of social irregularities. Within the radical structuralism, the global regime disruption can and should be explained. This is indeed our current objective.

Radical structuralism is not concerned with social predictabilities as such. It is in fact counterintuitive since it is assuming that conflicts are actually signs of the regime stability. Radical structuralism epistemology is therefore capable of demonstrating how social conflict regulate ongoing social change incrementally in such a way that it insures order and social stability. In this epistemic perspective, refusing conflicts to emerge, or even disregarding recurrent social conflict may very well jeopardize the very foundation of social order and stability.

The empirical object of this study is therefore conflicts. It is considered as an ontologically objective social phenomenon. Conflicts exist and impact people, social dynamics and humanity as a complex system. We are doing this research with a strong Conflict Management Theory including a reliable Conflict Management Grid (Thomas & Kilmann 1978, Thomas 1992). Studying these conflicts allows us to evaluate how our social environment meets human needs as a complex civilization. These epistemology and ontology positions do not judge whether the regime is legitimate, or ethical or morally valuable. It is only a methodological position to establish scientific validity, reliability and replicability of this research.

### 2.1 Conceptual Framework: Social Class Theory

The conceptual framework derives from the research subject which is the social classes. According to the extended critical literature review, Social Class Theory is divided into two dimensions of social space: 1) the economic-Infrastructure dimension and 2) the Doxological-Superstructure dimension. For the purpose of this research, the doxological dimension refers to the content of the public issues (table 1). In other words, we do not analyse the whole ideological system of beliefs and values. Rather, we focus on the social major issues raising concerns for the public and for the elite. The doxological dimension of the conceptual framework addresses the social space dimension of debates (the *what, who, where, how and when*) for each category of issues.

#### Doxological Dimension

| What Issues | By Who | For Who | Where | How | When |
|-------------|--------|---------|-------|-----|------|
|-------------|--------|---------|-------|-----|------|

Table 1: Doxological Dimension

The economic dimension is structured by social classes and their respective stratification (table 2). For that particular categorization, we adopted the general standard of practices in statistical distinction by economic income (including wages, revenues and patrimony). But, these Income and Gini coefficient distinguish social classes without specific economic roles. We turned to the general socio-profession census classifications in the National Statistical Bureaus to guide us to identify the correlation between the social classes' distinctions with their respective social stratifications validated categories with social class literature.

#### Economic dimension

## SOCIAL CLASSES AND RESPECTIVE STRATIFICATIONS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Superior Social Class</b><br>(Elite/Bourgeoisie)                          | <b>UPPER ELITE</b>  |
|  | Plutocrats (mega-rich)-Corporate entrepreneurs  |
|  | <b>LOWER ELITE</b>  |
|  | Bourgeoisie (super rich)-Top Executives in Corporations<br>Bourgeoisie (super rich)- Board Administrators in Corporations and Foundations |
| <b>Middle social Class</b><br>(Bureaucrats, professionals and intellectuals) | <b>UPPER MIDDLE CLASS</b>   |
|  | Politicians   |
|  | Little bourgeoisie-Top Managers   |
|  | Government Officials  |
|  | Managers  |
|  | Investors   |
|  | <b>MIDDLE CLASS</b>   |
|  | Professionals   |
|  | Entrepreneurs<br>(star-ups, small and medium firms)   |
|  | <b>LOWER MIDDLE CLASS</b>   |
|  | Intellectuals   |
|  | Academicians  |
|  | Journalists   |
|  | Artists   |
| <b>Inferior Social Class</b><br>(Workers and citizens)                       | <b>UPPER INFERIOR CLASS</b>   |
|  | Technicians   |
|  | Qualified Workers   |
|  | <b>MIDDLE INFERIOR CLASS</b>  |
|  | Unskilled Workers   |
|  | <b>LOWER INFERIOR CLASS</b>   |
|  | Citizens outside the workforce  |
| Poorest people   |   |

Table 2 Social Classes and respective stratifications

**2.2 Operational Framework: Conflict Management Theory**

The Operational Framework concerns the object of study to answer our specific and general research questions related to social class dynamic which is Conflict. The dominant functionalist theories of conflict views this social dynamic as undesirable social disorder and disruptive negative attitude, actions and behaviour. This functionalist perspective, like Durkheimian approach to social order, considers conflict dynamic as negative, even destructive expression of negatively charge emotional attitude, action and behaviour of the parties in conflict. On the contrary, the radical structuralism perspective considers conflict as the foundations of all social dynamics. Given the respective liberty of action of social parties, it is normal that the dynamics of interaction and negotiation creates confrontation in the realm of each parties' capabilities to engage freely in their own space for action.

Thomas & Kilmann's (1974) research on Conflict Management revisited Blake & Mouton's (1964) findings in management negotiation style of these hierarchical characterized social relations (Thomas 1992, Thomas & Kilmann 1978).

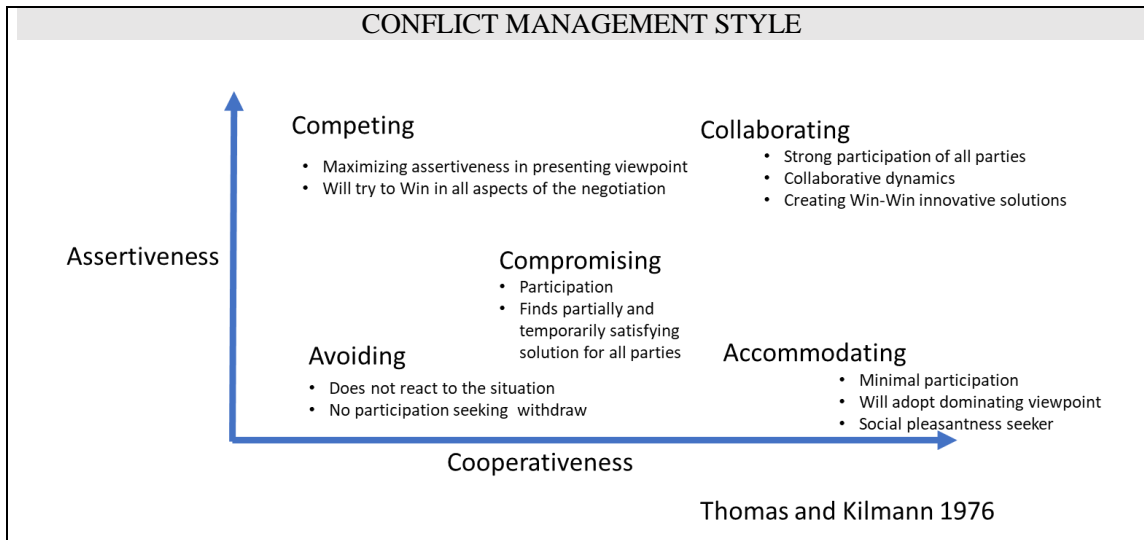


Figure 5: Conflict Management Styles (Thomas & Kilmann 1974)

This Conflict Management Style Grid (figure 5) has been confirmed many times with several empirical research. It is undoubtedly one of the most reliable Theory in social conflicts dynamics. This Conflict Theory allowed (over decades of evolutionary approaches in management techniques) for management practice to seek collaborative and therefore innovative conflict management practices. In other words, it is within a Conflict Theory that social collaboration is understood. Involving and engaging collaborative social dynamics have become the most important aim in management approaches to social relations. In management sciences, this collaborative management approach to social relations is a pre-emptive tactic to engage efficiently in positive and innovative social dynamics right from the start (Déry 2010).

For this research, we have elaborated a Conflict Classification (table 3) to include all 5 well-known Conflict Management Approaches as well as the unmanaged conflict which is found in Marx’s Social Class Theory. For each conflict category, we have developed conflict indicators and explicit set of data characteristics.

**CONFLICT CLASSIFICATION**

| <b>Conflict Categories</b> | <b>Thomas &amp; Kilmann and Marx</b> | <b>Indicators</b>  | <b>Data characteristics</b>  |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>COLLABORATING</b>       | Collaborating                        | 1. Technological innovation<br>2. Technological human adoption and utilization<br>3. Win-Win accomplishments   | People of diversified social origins and profile work together toward<br>a) a common goal<br>b) innovate<br>c) achieve remarkable accomplishments  |
| <b>PERFORMING</b>          | Assertiveness & Accommodating        | 1. Collective performance<br>2. Organizational performance<br>3. National performance<br>4. International performance<br>5. Win-Lose accomplishments | 1. Their cooperation exists<br>2. But it is accompanied of human symptoms of distress such as<br>a) mental health,<br>b) difficult living conditions,<br>c) general apathy of the unfortunate. |
| <b>COMPROMISING</b>        | Compromising                         | 1. Formal agreements<br>2. Formal Policies<br>3. Regular renegotiation of agreements<br>4. No-Winner/No-Loser accomplishments                        | 1) Cooperation imply explicit tensions that lead to cooperation dissolution<br>2) Regular negotiations between divergent parties.<br>3) Each renegotiation implies the                         |

|                   |                          |  |  |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
|                   |                          |  | risk of disengagements of one or the other parties, creating a risk of maintaining the issue unresolved and creating a bigger problem  |
| <b>AVOIDANCE</b>  | Avoiding                 | 1. Lack of compliance<br>2. Human suffering<br>3. Human injustices<br>4. Human self-exclusion<br>5. Disabled<br>6. Low to no accomplishments | 1) Regular claims that do not get official attention or that are denied legitimacy<br>2) Human expression of distress<br>3) Unseen or ignored major human disaster<br>4) Unexplained major human disaster<br>5) General discomfort about a social situation without explicit acknowledgement |
| <b>DISRUPTIVE</b> | Social rebellions (Marx) | 1. Disobedience<br>2. Staff turnover<br>3. Sabotage<br>4. Debating,<br>5. Scandals<br>6. Public demonstration                                | 1) Resisting with or without assertiveness to authority and authoritarian decisions and actions<br>2) Denunciating a situation<br>3) Refusing to settle, to avoid and yet lack the resources and power to change the situation of human suffering  |

Table 3: Conflict Classification

In management sciences, it is known that the best Conflict Management Style is collaborating. In fact, collaboration was developed as a management philosophy to address any social situation, with all stakeholder parties. It embraces a whole new paradigm where management role has no behavioural explicit assertiveness. Rather, management embraces a humble egalitarian attitude presenting a hidden supportive leadership in coordinating participating parties to create Win-Win innovative solutions to the situation.

Despite all best practices, management doesn't meet all social conflict resolutions. There are still unresolved social conflicts expressed that are structurally maintained. The conflict literature presents them as structural and sometimes paradoxical as necessary evils imbedded in the capitalist system. Those conflicts are therefore observable in two opposite set of expressions: avoidances (Thomas & Kilmann 1976) and disruptions (Marx & Engel 1846).

### 2.3 Meta-data conflict case study sampling

The case studies we focus on are general and recurrent issues that immerge publicly. They are found in:

- 1) Traditional medias (newspapers, news channels and news broadcasts)
- 2) Official Business and Public Organization Reports (such as Social Responsibility Policies, Financial Reports, Investigation Reports etc.)
- 3) Academic literature (essays, theories)
- 4) Scientific researches (from peered journals, official international or national publications on empirical data such as OECD, IMF, World Bank).

The empirical field is therefore based on secondary data and in primary data in printed form of information accessible through online research. The case studies focus on people's lives, concerns, accomplishments and achievements, through social, collective and organizational practices. We have identified 30 types of social conflict case studies for the sampling, based on the ability to acknowledge these social conflicts. In other words, we assume that there is a lot of more social conflicts, but we took the ones that we could be aware of, and we made sure we could meet the theoretical saturation as a scientific criterion in qualitative studies to establish that the sample was a sufficient representation of the social conflict phenomenon.

The sample meets the theoretical saturation in tow folds. First, we find meta-data of case studies for each of the conceptual framework. Secondly, the case studies for each of the conceptual classification meet the general indicators of each categories to achieve its general empirical characteristics.

### 2.4 Analysis process

The Thomas and Kilmann Conflict Management Conceptual framework allows to differentiate between tacit and explicit social conflict relations through the way the conflict is expressed and the way it is managed. We have therefore structured these differences into three categories. For each category, we have established indicators corresponding to these conflict expressiveness and management approaches.

Once we have accomplished this empirical analysis of multiple global conflict management case studies, and concluded on the elite’s profile, we can answer our research question which is: *How neoliberalism bypasses social class conflict?* Answering this question implies to seek a correlation between globally expended neoliberalism and the elites’ view of the world and its regime to implement that worldview.

**3. Results**

This paper presents the compounded classification of the 1<sup>st</sup> level of analysis with some example for each category to illustrate each category and demonstrate the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of analysis. The 3<sup>rd</sup> level of analysis elaborate on the intelligibilities of the second level of analysis of all 30 case studies sample to extract the overall discoveries about the social class dynamics and overall regime.

**3.1 First level of analysis: Empirical classification of conflicts**

The first level of analysis categorizes the conflicts according to the operational framework. We have regrouped the collaborative and the performing sets of conflicts together since the general consideration for these two categories is the performing organizations sustaining the capitalists’ growth and expansion. The compromise set of case studies concern organizations in support to the performing system. The avoidance set of case studies are just that, avoided in the Public Opinion, and therefore is given a minimalist political attention. And finally, the disruptive set of conflict case studies concern any high focus of Public Opinion sensitive issues.

**3.1.1 Performing set of social class conflicts**

The Performing set of social class conflict exhibit no apparent assertive disordering attitudes and behaviours. This is because, the Performing social class conflict is embedded in an Assertive-Accommodating conflict management integrating the *directive-obedient* dominant social dynamic. Both the *Collaborating* and the *Assertive-Accommodating* conflict management approaches is characterised as settling divergent interests into a *converging common goal* by *reframing* the issues into wider frame of references (table 4).

**Economic Dimension**

**COLLABORATING AND PERFORMING SET OF CASE STUDIES**

| SOCIAL CONFLICTS | CASE STUDIES  | CONFLICT PARTIES   |
|------------------|---|--|
| COLLABORATIONS   | <b>1. High technological businesses</b><br>(Ex: Space X; Alphabet; AI Labs; NASA; Etc.)                             | <b>Superior social class</b><br><i>Visionary-entrepreneurial Elite</i><br>Top executive elite<br>Financial elite                           |
|                  | <b>2. Public Private Partnership</b><br>(Ex: Any PPP Consortiums)   | <b>Middle social class</b><br>Organizational Management<br>Project management<br>Researchers<br>Professionals                              |
|                  | <b>3. Crisis Management</b><br>(Ex: Any natural catastrophic crises.)   | <b>Inferior social class</b><br>Technicians<br>Qualified workers<br>Unskilled workers  |
|                  | <b>4. Funding Organizations</b>   |  |
|                  | <b>5. Mass Productive Businesses</b><br>(Ex: Automobile industry, whole sale industry, agricultural industry; Etc.) | <b>Superior social class</b><br>Top executive elite<br>Financial elite<br><i>Government Officials</i>                                      |
|                  | <b>6. Small and medium businesses</b><br>(Ex: any business serving a niche market and any innovative start-ups.)    | <b>Middle social class</b><br>Organizational Management<br>Project management<br>Incremental innovators<br>Professionals<br><i>Artists</i> |



|                     |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| <b>PERFORMANCES</b> | <p><b>7. All types of Public administrations</b></p> <p><b>8. Community services</b></p> <p><b>9. International organizations:</b><br/>ex: OXFAM, OECD, UN, NATO</p> <p><b>10. Education system</b></p> | <p><i>Intellectuals/Journalists</i></p> <p><b>Inferior social class</b><br/>Technicians<br/>Qualified workers<br/>Unskilled workers</p> |
|---------------------|---|---|

Table 4: Collaborating and Performing set of Case Studies

As noted, all normal businesses, governmental and international governing organizations are managed in such a way that all involved parties and stakeholders find Win-Win converging motivation to collaborate and perform through collaboration. Even Funding Organizations find multiple Win-Win interests to collaborate in terms of improving some general public issues while the elite ensures an improved qualified citizens and workforce (from education Oprah Winfrey Charitable Foundation for example) and improved living condition for the poorest populations (with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for example). This is obvious from these two sets of case studies that the collaborative and performing set of conflict don't eradicate poverty and illiteracy. But it sets in perspective the *Collaborative Ongoing Effort* to address the issue. This embraces the *Ongoing Improvement Management* practice and philosophy.

In the doxological Dimension, we can see how the superior social class publicly known implication and involvement in social issues (such as education, humanitarian aid and community support) present a positive public image with their human empathy and compassion (table 5). In other words, the elite may focus the most on the capitalist economic growth, but it is done with a human image of sensitivity which is widely mediatized. This is appealing to the Public Opinion and therefore presents the elite with honour and human dignity alike the nobility of the Order Regime.

In these two categories, all working social classes are involved. Organisations, businesses, public and private funds, international coalitions through organizations are all active participants as major stakeholders. The collectively achieved goals meet all of the superior social class objectives, interests and dreams in terms of technological, economic, and social progress according to their view of the world.

**Doxological Dimension**

| What Issues                       | By Who                                      | For Who                      | Where          | How   | When     |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|----------------|---|----------|
| Economic Growth                   | 1. Upper Superior Social Class (Plutocrats) | 1. Middle Social Class       | 1. Globally    | Through organizations: Corporations, Businesses Foundations International Organizations | On going |
| Technological innovation          |   | 2. Inferior Working Class    | 2. Nationally  |   |          |
| Educational access to opportunity |   | 3. Inferior citizens in need | 3. Communities |   |          |
| Community services                | 2. Superior Social Class                    |                              |                | Networks: Communities   |          |
| Humanitarian aid                  | 3. Upper Middle Class                       |                              |                |   |          |

Table 5: Doxological Dimension for Collaborating and Performing Social Class Conflicts

The Compromising set of social class conflicts, as presented (tables 6 and 7), covers all sets of social issues that are not quite performing, but that are essential issues to consider to manage and maintain the regime and its social peace. All middle and inferior working social classes are involved in these more humanitarian issues. Some, although meet capitalist objectives like we can find in the health and military industries. Others, meet alternative solutions to address social and workers issues that the capitalist elite doesn't address in its upper goals within the regime, such as worker's unions and cooperatives. The end result is a *Compromise* to deal with unmissable social and workers' issues.



**Economic Dimension**

COMPROMIZING SET OF CASE STUDIES

| SOCIAL CONFLICTS   | CASE STUDIES                        | CONFLICT PARTIES   |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>COMPROMISES</b> | <b>11. Non-Profit organizations</b> | <b>MIDDLE SOCIAL CLASS</b><br>Upper Middle class<br>Government Officials |
|                    | <b>12. Health systems</b>           | <b>Middle class</b><br>Organizational Management<br>Professionals        |
|                    | <b>13. Workers’ Unions</b>          | <b>INFERIOR SOCIAL CLASS</b>   |
|                    | <b>14. Cooperatives</b>             | <b>Inferior social class</b><br>Technicians                              |
|                    | <b>15. Military Industry</b>        | Qualified workers<br>Unskilled workers                                   |

Table 6: Compromising set of Case Studies

**Doxological Dimension**

| What Issues  | By Who   | For Who   | Where  | How  | When     |
|--|--|---|--|--|----------|
| Healthy workforce<br><br>Answer to some of the workers’ demands<br><br>Allow alternative organisations for unprofitable businesses<br><br>Insuring social peace and respect of national borders and social order | 1. Upper Middle Social Class<br><br>2. Inferior Social Class | 1. Middle Social Class<br><br>2. Inferior working Social Class: (preferably the workers and their families)<br><br>3. Inferior citizens in need | 1. Nationally<br><br>2. Regionally<br><br>3. Communities | Through organizations:<br><br>Corporations (health and military industries)<br><br>International Organizations<br><br>Non-Profit Organizations<br><br>Alternative profit organizations like cooperatives | On going |

Table 7: Doxological Dimension of the Compromising Social Class Conflicts

**3.1.2 Avoidance set of social class conflicts**

The Avoidance social class conflicts concern all citizens forgotten by the capitalist regime, or the one that are not yet included in the economic system to sustain the regime (table 8 and 9). They are categorized Avoidance set of social class conflict because they are not at the center of the superior social class concerns. Since these conflicts are structural issues as externalities to the capitalist system, they do not interest the elite in place. Their social and humanitarian issues are not in the public outrage because they are not solvable through the regime and are mediatized as eccentricities. The capitalist elite responds that the system can only redistribute some minimal wealth to these low and unprofitable population of the productive society. The avoided social issues, are the excluding consequences of the capitalist regime. Because the “victims” of the capitalist system are taken care massively by the inferior social class, the overall population concerned in this type of social conflict is dealt with mainly within the inferior social class. The general apathy of this conflict resolution within the inferior social class which has little to no means, doesn’t bring Public Opinion attention. The people in this category of social class conflict become statistical anomalies even if they concern billions of individuals. They sometime appear in the medias, but they are portrayed as *victims of some faith* and therefore reintegrated in the public system treating marginalized collateral social consequences.

**Economic Dimension**

## AVOIDANCE SET OF CASE STUDIES

| SOCIAL CONFLICTS | CASE STUDIES  | CONFLICT PARTIES  |
|------------------|---|---|
| AVOIDANCE        | <p><b>16. Refugee Camps</b></p> <p><b>17. Aboriginal Reserves</b></p> <p><b>18. Long term unemployed</b></p> <p><b>19. Long term disabled/sick workers</b></p> <p><b>20. Learners (children)</b></p> <p><b>21. Socially Excluded (Beggars, homeless, addicts, tribes, reclusive communities, survivalists, autonomists, illegal immigrants)</b></p> <p><b>22. Retirees</b></p> <p><b>23. Housewives and Househusbands</b></p> <p><b>24. Natural home caregivers</b></p> | <p><b>MIDDLE SOCIAL CLASS</b><br/>Professionals</p> <p><b>INFERIOR SOCIAL CLASS</b><br/>Technicians<br/>Qualified workers<br/>Unskilled workers, including children<br/><i>Citizen outside the workforce</i><br/><i>Children</i><br/><i>Marginals</i></p> |

Table 8 : Avoidance set of Case Studies

**Doxological Dimension**

| What Issues   | By Who                           | For Who                                 | Where                           | How   | When     |
|---|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|----------|
| Humanitarian issues notwithstanding the capitalist regime | 1. Inferior working Social Class | 1. Considered Inferior citizens in need | 1. Regionally<br>2. Communities | Through organizations:<br>(Non-Profit Organizations And Public services)<br><br>Social personal relations | On going |

Table 9: Doxological Dimension of the Avoidance Set of Social Class Conflicts

**3.1.3 Disruptive set of social class conflicts**

The Disruptive set of social class conflicts are all episodic public outrage about any citizen's concerns (table 10 and 11). These concerns will be brought up in the media and Public Opinion by the lower well-educated middle class who has the competencies to mobilize Public Opinion and engage episodic social movements. However, it is noticeable that the social issues raised by these episodic disruptions in the Public Opinion don't necessarily aim at solving the issue. This is because, as long as the superior elite doesn't find a systemic interest toward the regime's growth and performance, there will not be any real collaborative conflict resolution. For instance, the gender equality and minority positive policies become Public Policies and management philosophy for as long as the economic system require as many workers and innovators as possible, including women and minorities.

A good set of scientific studies show that, Social Responsibility Policies, will be elaborated in the capitalist organizations’ in such a way that it doesn’t constraint the capitalist performance, but it would reset corporate positive image in the Public Opinion (Shabaz & al. 2020, Clarkson 2005, Oeyono & al. 2011). The same goes for environmental sustainability policies, racialized minority policies for equal opportunities, generational equality and so on. Any new disruptive public outrage concerning social injustices, ethical or moral concerns, or even new major events such as climate disasters, wars and massive people migration, will be addressed in the Public Opinion, until a new event takes on the public outrage of social space.

As exposed in the economic dimension, the only difference with the Avoidance set of social class conflicts is the mobilized lower middle social class. Some of these social issues fallen in the externalities of the capitalist system are recuperated by the elite to better manage their public image, or to attenuate social tensions with the middle social class. Since the middle social class is the regime mediatized success story, it is important to ease their social class relations with the inferior social class. Ultimately, the elite delegates (to the middleclass managers and lower bourgeoisie top executives and politicians) the mandate to reframe and mitigate these publicly disruptive issues to keep the middle and inferior social classes busy in managing general population order and peace.

**Economic Dimension**

**DISRUPTING SET OF CASE STUDIES**

| <b>SOCIAL CONFLICTS</b> | <b>CASE STUDIES</b>  | <b>CONFLICT PARTIES</b>   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| <b>DISRUPTIONS</b>      | <p><b>25. Any civic demonstration</b></p> <p><b>26. Any voluntary counterproductive actors</b></p> <p><b>27. Any voluntary boycotting consumers</b></p> <p><b>28. Any organized social movement</b></p> <p><b>29. Any organized massive civic disobedience</b></p> <p><b>30. Any artistic and intellectual critical creation:</b><br/>(Ex: documentary, articles, books, film production, art exhibitions and public artistic creations)</p> | <p><b>Middle social class</b><br/>Professionals/<i>Academics</i><br/><i>Artists</i><br/><i>Intellectuals/Journalists</i></p> <p><b>Inferior social class</b><br/>Technicians<br/>Qualified workers<br/>Unskilled workers<br/><i>Economic criminals</i><br/><i>Gamblers</i><br/><i>Financial speculators</i></p> |

Table 10: Disrupting set of Social Class Conflicts

**Doxological Dimension**

| <b>What Issues</b>                                 | <b>By Who</b>                    | <b>For Who</b>                         | <b>Where</b>  | <b>How</b>  | <b>When</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|--|---|---|-------------|
| 1. Humanitarian issues episodic situation          | 1. Lower Middle Social Class     | 1. Any group or individual human being | 1. Regionally<br>2. Nationally<br>3. Internationally<br>4. Social Media | Through Media<br><br>(Traditional or digital and social medias) | Episodic    |
| 2. Natural, or climate change events               | 2. Inferior working Social Class |  |   |   |             |
| 3. Social injustices or social episodic distresses |                                  |  |   |   |             |

Table 11: Doxological Dimension of Disruptive Social Class Conflicts

This first level of analysis of compounded categorised social class case studies demonstrate where the superior social class, and particularly the wealthiest and the most powerful upper mega and super rich elite focusses on: *Performing and Collaborating on common goal issues*. It allows us to understand how the institution of management innovation and social practices serves the modern neoliberalist capitalist system and keeps the superior class away from the mass population concerns and issues through delegation.

### **3.2 Second level of analysis: The nature of social class and their conflict dynamics**

The globalized neoliberalism allowed the elite to distance themselves from nationalistic public policies and concerns by complexifying the system. More so, the national governance of public dis-satisfaction becomes a form of externalities to the capitalist systems recuperated by public management innovations in terms of complexified governance.

Within the realm of the upper elites, at their corporate level, they still can keep to their own business since they have top executives and top management in all organizations to deal with social demands and deal with any form of social disturbances from the workers and their consuming behaviours. Management innovations, through technocratic and socialistic management practices, the upper middle-class management and professionals maintain a cultural change into intrapreneurship, excellence seeking, competing innovations and self-responsibility of the self-determination philosophy (Déry 2010). All of these liberalists cultural implementation of a meritocracy come into sustaining the capitalist infrastructure.

#### **3.2.1 The nature of social class conflict: doxological dimension in social spaces**

The nature of social class structure has two dimensions: economic and doxological. By analogy to the original Social Class Theory, the economic dimension entails the social cooperation for survival and living condition while the doxological dimension refers to the belief system legitimising the cooperative organization to ensure humankind best chance of survival as a species. Both economical and doxological dimensions crisscross each other to create a sense of group bonding allowing each individual to position themselves in this realm of social space and social order. This social positioning of the individuals and their corresponding groups gives rise to a sense of belonging and personal identity. This social identity and social belonging become a reference guide to contribute and find meaning to the individual lives and involvement. The reference guide will frame people's motivation and active involvement into social projects embedded in social progress and human history, which is within the modernity era. It is the road for individuals to achieve humanhood, in terms ingenuity, creativity, spirituality, and overall expression of individuation and uniqueness into the world.

Our empirical research reveals how individual identity and purposefulness folds into group activism and accomplishments which in turn contribute to a large social system which organizes social space insuring an integrative human place in the world (Boltanski & Thévenot 1991). This structuration from the individual to this overall inclusiveness is integrated into a hierarchical structure of cooperation of individual contributions. In this materialist modernistic era, the cooperative contribution is economic to produce the best living condition possible. This is why, the modern Social Class Theory since the XIX<sup>th</sup> Century considered the economical dimension of social organization as the best predictor to social hierarchy integration. Other hierarchical social order exists (such as value systems, or even ethnical and spiritual systems, find in other regime) to establish social integration of the individual. But they all imply a social and cultural bias. In comparison, economical social hierarchy, is objective, secular and therefore impartial to hereditary embodiment of social integration (Weber 1904). This economically based social class hierarchy validates talent, accomplishment, self-determination, and ultimately the meritocracy instead of an aristocratic or racist purity regime and even sacred belief systems based on religious hierarchical regimes founded on essentialism view of the individual value. The capitalist social class regime is based on individual actions and accomplishments and it is therefore based on an existentialist view of the individual merit. It is the modernist characterisation of the Enlightenments' heritage of self-determination. In other words, the capitalist social structure came after the self-determined individual was born into the modernist philosophy, it is not its predecessor, which is contrary to Marx and Engel's belief that human condition precedes its life philosophy. Rather, it is life philosophies that gives rise to existentialist philosophies. Modernity therefore came with a sense of individual responsibilities of the self to overcome obstacles and seek opportunities to contribute with the best abilities and talent. This is the foundation for the Superstructures' ideology of equal opportunities, and a collective effort to regulate and minimize the inequality.

#### **Doxological Dimension**

Aligned with this economical hierarchical social structure, there is the doxological superstructure to give meaning to individual contribution and rewards. This is the dimension where social class conflict find meaning. The doxological dimension is full of arbitrary, partial and injustices to acknowledge rewards and recognitions. It is in the world of

meaning and beliefs that social class conflict become assertive and leads to compromises and avoidances. It is the meaning and belief systems where religion, social origins, social differences, and even the order regime value systems of honour, dignity and respects, give social classes ranking a social status.

The elite in place has to regulate this doxological dimension by correlating achievements and social status within the doxological dimension. This is the social space where the modern capitalist elite comes into conflict with doxological elites embedded into parallel social hierarchical regimes such as religious, aristocratic or racialist regimes. The only common regime to all of these social hierarchical regimes is the gender hierarchical stratification. Ironically, the only regime capable of attenuating the gender status gap is the modern capitalist social class regime. Nevertheless, it is still embedded in naturalist and religious beliefs systems to justify a gender power struggle.

Within the Capitalist hierarchical regime, there are some conflicts, both positive resolution for the elite, and negative resolution as well. The positive resolution for the elite, is the collaborated and compromised resolutions to conflicts. They are positive conflicts because they maintain the regime's performance in the interest of the capitalist elite. Ultimately, the inferior social classes most find a collaborative interest since they actively participate to this regime.

There are some considered "negative" conflict with a disruptive and avoidance reactivity from the inferior and superior social classes. However, these issues, particularly climate change and social inequalities are being differed through some official international agreements and cooperation to monitor eventual innovative solutions. This is a disruptive conflict management approach to take on advisement the concern to attenuate social disorderly expressiveness. This allows to delay possible positive solution to complex problems through future innovations that will address some of these major issues. That way, there is not only a promise, but actual programs that monitor the problem's degradation while prioritizing innovation programs and complex projects to respond to these complex problems.

Because of the nature of the most upfront issue is climate change, social inequality appears to be a more decentralized concern for the population (Harper 2005). In fact, most of the global studies about the impact of wealth concentration and national social inequality illustrate that it does not correlate to a degradation of the situation. It is commonly considered that it is not the wealth concentration as such. It is reframed as the global population's increase which contributes to human kind improvement despite overall living condition improvement. In other words, the delegation to professional researchers and global organizations (such as the World Bank, UNESCO, International Monetary Funds) deflect the social inequality issue from the mega-rich social class. It leaves this capitalist elite to maintain the drive for the economic system and their capitalist social regime. This only remaining global vertical inter-social classes conflicts (figure 6) is the division of labour as the most disruptive conflict for the regime according to Marx and Engel's Theory. According to the theory, this is the type of conflict that should get the modern capitalist regime to meet its own limits. However, Management innovations have completely reframed the *Disruptive* conflict into *Collaboration and Performing partnership*.

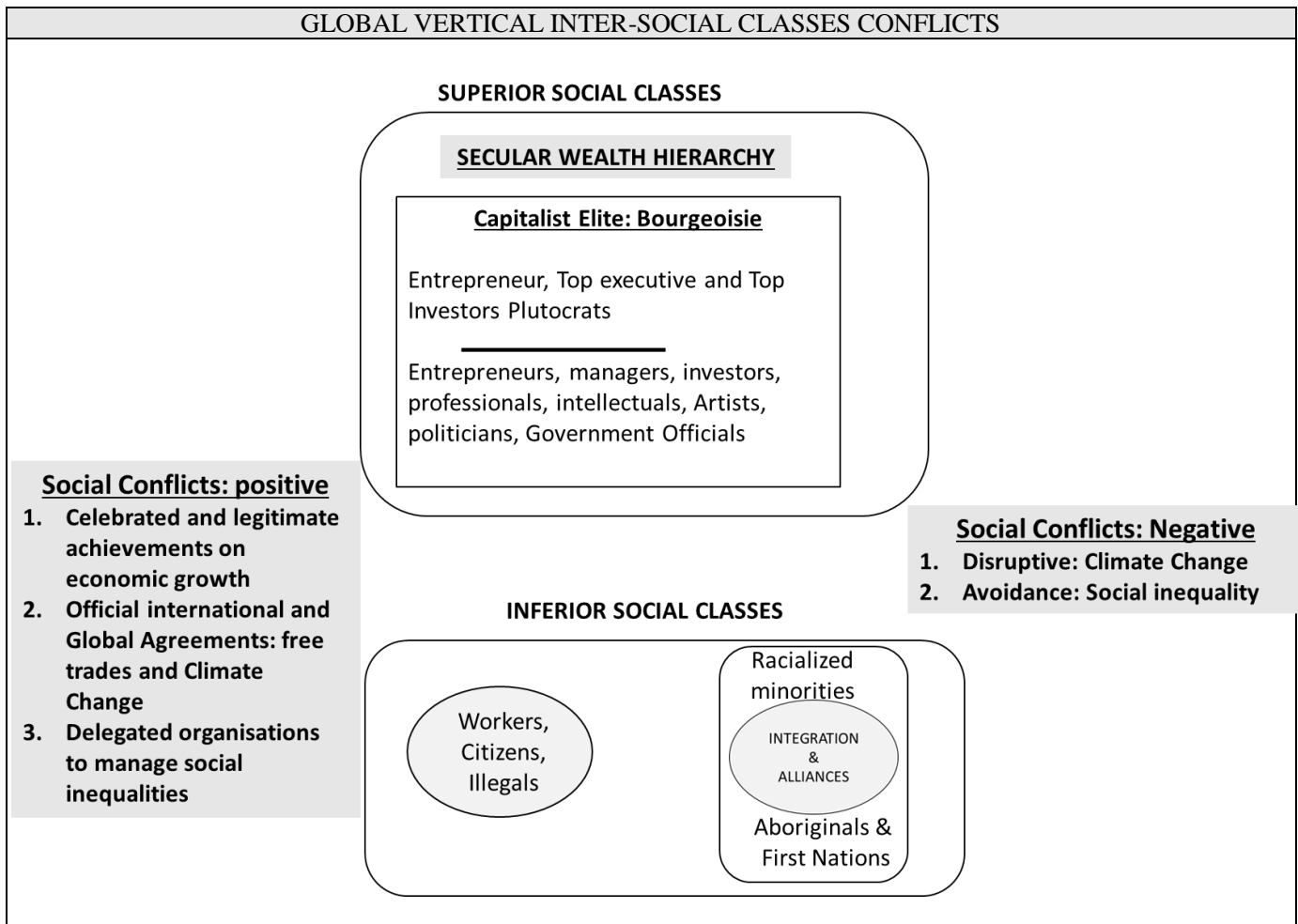


Figure 6: Capitalist Regime Intra-Conflicts

However, the doxological dimension of the content of this vertical inter-social class conflict reveals very little, even no major disturbances to the regime’s stability. In fact, the content of these conflicts is recovered into the collaborative partnership of all social classes to create innovative long-term solutions. In the meantime, the middle and inferior social classes embrace habitus transformation in the cultural values and life styles to prepare a social context to adopt major technological life style changes over the next social generations. Management innovations even developed a civic-management approach to engage in these long term social and cultural transformation (de Verlaine 2020). This civic-management philosophy and practices create extended stakeholder parties to the point of including representatives on the non-human stakeholders such as the ecosystem, the climate and future generations.

Even though, these two remaining vertical conflicts (climate change and social inequality) between the elite and the population could lead to an apparent traditional social class conflict as foreseen by the social class theorists, financial, organizational and managerial innovations come into mitigating the social class tension attenuating social class conflict. This strong historical ability to deflect such an apparent sense of injustice from the mass population point of view, the elite and its regime present the issues as somewhat non-specific to the capitalist system as such. And if this perspective doesn’t convince Public Opinion, the capitalist’s capabilities are presented as the only system to bring out concrete solutions. While alternative regimes, such as the ancestry economic life style with the Order regime or even the religious regime to enable a marginal life style to the capitalist system offer alternatives, they never seem to convince a critical mass Public Opinion to engage in a capitalist abolishment.

### 3.2.2 Social Class Conflict Dynamics: Global intertwined complexity

Given the overall 2<sup>nd</sup> level of analysis, we can conclude that the social class conflict as foreseen by the social class theorist is not obvious because the global neoliberalist expansion has complexified the social class system, both horizontally and vertically.

At the vertical social class disruptive conflict expressiveness, it is diffused through a global scale hard to reach in terms of social movement from one hand. But most importantly, the capitalist regime was able to integrate competitiveness

with Collaboration and Performing partnership into social class consciousness including the inferior classes on the other hand.

This complexification and geographic expansion of social space reframes social class conflict. This is a well-known conflict management tactic to disempower the conflict adversary. In other words, the elites globally expanded the capitalist system to disempower the middle and inferior class in their nationalistic social space demands (figure 7). The elite becomes politically, legally and fiscally untouchable at the global level. They bypass national engagement in social issues concerning the middle and inferior social classes. By doing so, the elite keeps its wealth and power over the resources and capabilities to implement their vision of human civilization and the worlds' future. The only return, the capitalist elite gives back to the worlds' population is materialist progress. Extreme poverty, relative impoverishment of the middle and upper inferior classes, human ill-being, hardship and life dissatisfaction increases are not part of the elites' concern. The capitalist secular regime doesn't answer to human life experience which leaves the Superstructure permeable to other traditional social regimes. So far, these Superstructure conflict stimulate the infrastructure intensive expansion which goes in complete contradiction to Social Class Conflict Theory focused on disruptive conflicts.

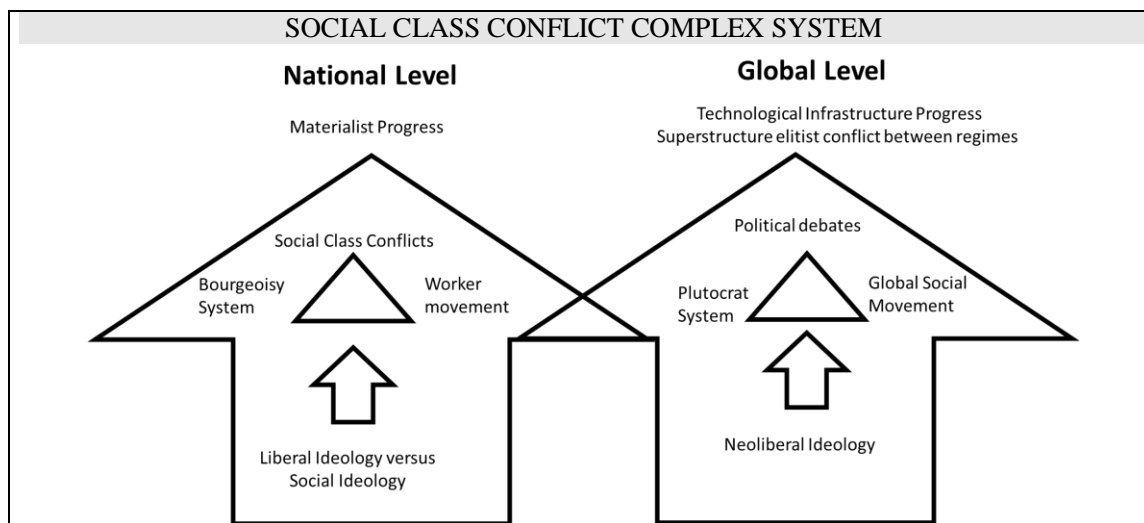


Figure 7: Social Class Conflict Complex System

To answer our specific question: “**How does the elite transform social representation of social classes and social conflicts?**”, we answer by reframing the problems, complexifying the system and avoiding some sensitive social issues. The approach to reframe a conflict is a strategic managerial approach to conflict. The tactical reframing of the structural inequality and sustaining human sufferings, hardship and ill-being, is by complexifying the situation to a point that it becomes cognitively counterintuitive to realize that the problems are embedded in the regime and the gigantic global system. While the inferior dominated social classes try to figure out how to minimize or solve human sufferings, the elite can pursue technological innovations to develop a digital world and artificial intelligence capable of replacing humans and leveraging vision and accomplishments in achieving some dreams. Ultimately, a cynical view of these findings would state that middle-class and inferior-class sufferings keep the people distracted from seeing what the elite is implementing in terms of a world's future.



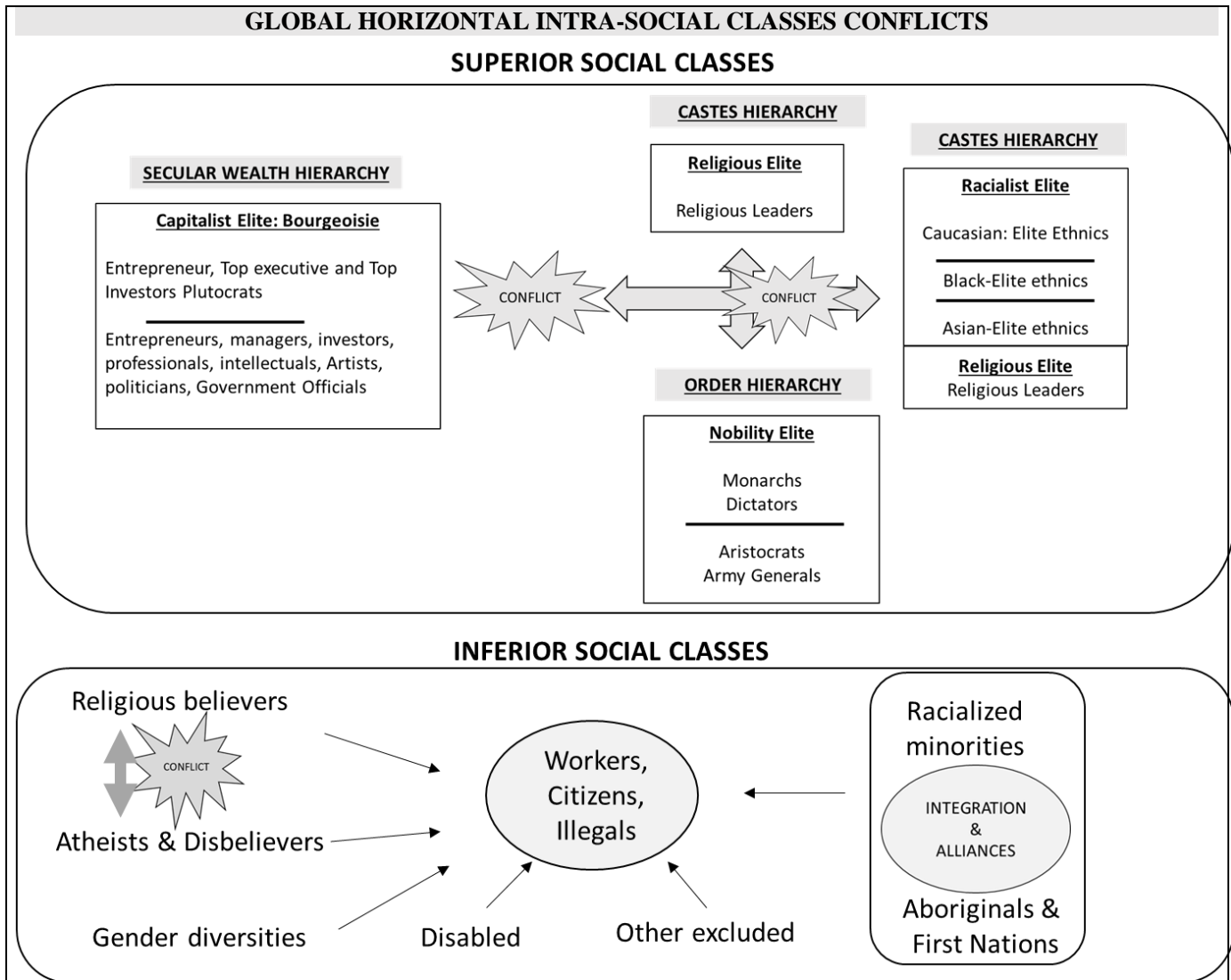


Figure 8: Global Horizontal Intra-Social Classes Conflict

The avoidance conflict management technique is a complementary approach to the complexifying and reframing conflict management approaches (figure 8). In this perspective, publicly ignoring human suffering, hardship and ill-being is an elite’s manoeuvre to delegitimize the issues. In other words, an engaged elite to openly address these issues would legitimize the problems and would underline that the elite has the ability and the capability in solving it. But, this would mobilize even more collective demands and jeopardize wealth and power concentration for the elite. It is therefore in the elite’s interest to avoid the issues and leave the people believing it is a question of luck and individual efforts to get out of poverty, hardship and ill-being. Consequently, this belief system would profit the elite’s meritocracy ideology and maintain the capitalist regime as is.

**3.3 Third level of analysis: The elite’s view of the world and related regime**

Based on the findings, we can establish a set of 5 major characteristics about the global elite’s view of the world. This third level of analysis allows us to understand how the Upper Elite avoids social class major conflict over their wealth and power concentration for one hand. In the other hand, we can better understand how they can develop blind spots about humanity, and pluralistic view of the world, even from alternate ancient regimes which are still in conflict with the Capitalist Elites.

**The first** one identified, is that the economical dimension of social class creates a disruption to integrate or cooperate with ancient hierarchical regimes (such as the Order and Castes Regimes). The emergent bourgeoisie regime not only disrupted with the established social hierarchical regimes, but it did not replace them as Marx presented. Quite the contrary, those regimes still coexist, and they redefined their peaceful co-existence. Their own conflicts create a tacit

alliance to get in conflict with the capitalist bourgeoisie secular regime, which in turn nourishes the capitalist regime as the ultimate best answer for social integration.

**The second** characteristic is the avoidance of the vertical social classes conflicts as such. This is what the most important characteristic the social class stratification dynamics unforeseeable in the XIX<sup>th</sup> Century. This is even more surprising that the Order hierarchical regime did face popular rebellion, the elites had to give away some of their political and legal powers to newly created democratic regime with their respective Republic Governing State. Since the Order regimes were close to the religious regimes, the emerging Republics had to be secular regime to distance themselves from the previous regime to maintain their legitimacy. In other words, whether it is in Europe or America or Asia, and Oceania, the ancient regimes were politically and legislatively weakened when their mass population rebelled.

It is interesting to notice that the capitalist elite may be in conflict with other social hierarchical regime, its economical wealth production model allows to stand tall against all other regime in dispute for societal supremacy. And this goes way beyond military capabilities because the capitalist regime engages in more settle major wars such as:

1. Economic capitalism development imperialism;
2. Technological supremacy in all spheres such as artificial intelligence, digital world and industrial capabilities;
3. Financial technologies and innovations to leverage financial wealth concentration;
4. Organizational innovations to integrate all communities into the global web of capitalist mass production and mass consumption system;
5. Managerial innovation to expand the meritocratic culture and expand the ability to attenuate social tensions based on envy, jealousy and entitlement attitudes.

Consequently, to the second characteristic is **the third** one where the capitalist elite is primarily focusing on technological, organizational, financial and managerial innovations. This particular very wealthy elite, doesn't seem to care about their materialistic living conditions as expected by the social class theorists. In fact, several researches confirmed they do not particularly exhibit materialistic consumption or ostentatious life style as such. They tend to lean towards settled materialistic life styles. It is therefore difficult to see them as different people from a crowd.

The **fourth** characteristics is the Global Vertical Inter-social classes conflict deflects from the concentration of global power over humanity. Their only visible-disruptive conflict is the environment with its climate change issue. Even social inequality is forgotten in the social class conflict representation. The regime therefore applies its conflict managerial approaches be complexifying its resolution and bringing mitigating concerns into complexity. This managerial approach delays solutions while some long-term green innovations may occur, while maintaining the wealth creation and concentration.

The **fifth** characteristic of the capitalist elite's view of the world is their profound commitment in achieving their dreams. Their primary focus is to create mega structures and new leverages in achieving new dreams for humanity. Just to name a few plutocrats, we are aware that Elon Musk aims at colonializing the planet Mars with Space X (Vance 2015), Larry Page and Sergueï Brin aim at creating the largest open information web with Google Alphabet (2020), Jeff Besos aims at redefine the worlds consumers' market (Amazon inc. 2020), and so on. In other words, their wealth is not the end to their objectives, it is rather the means to achieve their dreams and their vision. While the world is astonished to point out how their wealth concentration is unimaginable, the capitalist elite is concerned with their next project achievement. Isn't it obvious that we should pay more attention to the way they see the world and human history to understand the elite priorities and the way they will engage the worlds' wealth and resources to achieve their dreams and their goals.

### **Conclusion: Answers to the Research Question**

The initial general research question is *How neoliberalism bypasses social class conflict?* The empirical inductive research results answer is that social class conflicts do remain, but have been reframed and management in such a way, that the capitalist elite is kept away from popular rebellion. Therefore, there are social class conflict, but within the same social hierarchical rank. Those social class conflicts are therefore based on the doxological dimension, such as value and belief systems. Moreover, the neoliberalist elite, which happens to be the mega-rich and super-rich capitalist elite (the plutocrats of the bourgeoisie) delegate conflict management. Therefore, conflicts with other regime elites or inferior social class few insurrections are dealt with long term negotiating tactics to attenuate disturbances. These rich elite members find allies with to middle class representatives, in different business and community organizations, Government officials and political parties, to implement wide public policy programs along with public projects and services to channel inferior social class tensions to managed peace in civil society.

## Discussion

Given the research conclusions, we can see that the level of world's increased complexity is not an accident. It is a deliberate approach to maintain the regime, just like any imperialist conquest in the ancient regimes. The modern secular capitalist elite is functioning like any other regimes, except that religious beliefs have been replaced by the sacred technological innovations for materialistic improvement of living condition for the vast majority of humanity. Any other considerations are irrelevant for this modern regime. Even science can be sacrificed within this capitalist regime for as long as religious beliefs do not constraint technological innovations. Because ancient regime did have technological innovation, there is no need to maintain scientific supremacy.

This is an important concern since the religious regimes are in conflict with the scientific secular view of the world. This is the reason why the Order regime could ally with the religious regime and allow technological innovations to occur. This observation allows to understand how plutocrats around the world, including the religious ones, are bringing back a creationist view of humanity and the world. Implementing religious beliefs and religious regime, doesn't constraint technological innovations, and is even integrating humanities and social sciences research and literature. With this religious regime resurrection, we can also see a racist revision of the worlds' history to discredit the western world's singularity and exceptionalism. This historical reframing technique allows to question an apparent racist global hierarchy between the Western World over the Eastern and African view of the World.

This racist revision of history would legitimate to decentralize view of the developed civilization from the Western to the Eastern or Middle-Eastern World, including their respective religious and castes regimes while maintaining the current capitalist regime.

Our research findings demonstrate how the global modern capitalist neoliberal regime is well implemented around the world as a Social Infrastructure and that the regime is permeable to any compatible Social Superstructure including religious, castes and racialisms regimes. Its historical origin may be secular and democratic, but it is not the only frame of social hierarchical Infrastructure capable of maintaining its economic and elitist political power. We believe that it is crucial to further understand the worldwide elite's social class conflicts to understand what is at stake in terms of future human civilizations.

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