

Conclusion

The goal of this work was threefold: to explore and systematize the theoretical foundations of practical ensembles in Sartre's philosophy; to outline a theoretical framework for practical ensembles; and to apply that framework for an understanding of societal constellations. Part I laid down the theoretical context and development of Sartre's ideas (Chapter 1), the totalizing character of human action and the processual character of human existence as a material endeavor (Chapter 2), and the significance of technology and body techniques for human action (Chapter 3). Part II then reconstructed how these dialectical foundations interplay in historical contexts and between individuals, which interactions result in a dialectic of practical ensembles. Within this dialectic, forms of societal constellation emerge and reinforce, transform, persist, and potentially collapse (Chapter 4). These principles were then applied to urban mobility systems to scrutinize some of the contemporary challenges of the human condition (Chapter 5).

This work has foregrounded the inherent needfulness—in the full meaning of the term—of both human existence and the structures produced in space through time to tackle it. This needfulness can be engaged in two ways: through human requirements, wants, wishes, and material demands, and through the socialization of *besoins* into *désir*—including their long-lasting concretization by material manifestation in the form of material inertia.

Practical ensembles are permeated by needs and desires, as well as by material demands and requirements, at every level. Human beings exteriorize themselves by relating to and engaging with their surroundings based on those needs and desires. By looking for food, water, shelter, or other things they require, want, or wish for themselves, human beings totalize themselves and their material surroundings against the background of their needfulness as material beings in a scarce environment. Their concrete form of subjectivity and the concrete objectivity of their world arise within and throughout this totalizing interrelation. As these humans then construct tools and structures, and as they adapt to using these tools and structures to secure access to their needs, they socialize and concretize their needfulness in material inertia. They form a practical ensemble and relate to it as the necessary foundation for how their specific form of societal organization is structured.

In doing so, their need, in an understanding of *besoin* as an abstract and initially undirected mode of relating to their requirements, wants, and wishes is manifested in practico-inert things and incarnated in practico-inert *hexeis*. In this way, their need becomes a concretized, directed, socioculturally shaped, and mediated desire, understood as *désir*, for the continued operation of their practical ensemble. Basic and more complex human requirements, wants, and wishes, together with the various strategies these humans employ to tackle them, arise in the continued existence of these ensembles.

Through the conceptual lens of practical ensembles, any larger constellation in which human beings unite with other humans, things, and structures is revealed to be permeated by actions and action schemes. These tackle needs and desires and attempt to meet material demands and requirements. The processes of formation and transformation in practical ensembles already reflect this in remarkable ways. According to Sartre, the formation and transformation of any forms of organization throughout human history can be traced back to the fact that certain practico-inert things, structures, and *hexeis* enable individuals to satisfy their requirements, wants, and wishes—or to the fact that they, for one reason or another, do not.

When individuals satisfy their needs and desires through modes of serial structuring, and when they continue to rely on the instrumental means they are structured with, these individuals reinforce the structures binding them. In this way, they continuously enact certain strategies to tackle their needs and desires and thus associate their possibility for self-reproduction with the means they use in this process. The fundamental needfulness of these serial structures becomes apparent in the various attempts to provide continuous access to certain resources or services through which needs and desires can be satisfied in the long run. Furthermore, inasmuch as individuals become reliant on instrumental means to transform their exigencies—especially owing to the various positions these individuals may adopt in practical ensembles—the structural integrity and continued functioning of these means are disclosed, along with their susceptibility to damage and disruption. Furthermore, this susceptibility may be equated with the impossibility of continued existence.

When individuals are not enabled to attain their ends with the means at hand, or when they become aware that some but not all of their exigencies might be taken care of by the larger form of organization they are embedded in, these individuals have the chance to transform their structures. They may employ different means or use established means differently. In doing so, their whole undertaking is defined as a partial totality by their very needfulness and their lack of real-life satisfaction. These communal structures become institutionalized and serialized, which not only allows people to tackle some requirements, wants, and wishes more efficiently and effectively—it also generates rigid structures that again entail other exigencies. Thus the cycle continues.

In agreement with Hegel, Sartre is convinced that human existence is inherently an *unhappy consciousness* without the chance to surpass this unhappy state. This means that, according to Sartre, it is difficult to analyze history with categories like progress or development. Needs and desires are fundamental, and will always render physicochemical reality a scarce milieu in which only needful structures may emerge. The whole of material culture bears witness to this constant struggle at the heart of the human condition. However, although these structures are inherently pervaded by needfulness, they are not determined by it. They merely provide possibilities to transform and satisfy what humans need to live in specific ways.

The reasons for individuals to perpetuate these structures or to initiate structural transformations are manifold, but all can be fundamentally traced back to the ability or inability to attain their ends in the long run. This becomes apparent in the role of *hexis* in the persistence of practical ensembles. In Sartre's understanding of human existence and history, *hexeis* represent organic counterparts to the material cultures of societies. They store the dynamic forces of societies and perpetuate structured interrelations. The reason for their cultivation is, again, past repeated success in tackling the needfulness of human existence. Whether in the structural foundations of human society or in the structure of human existence itself, needfulness, as the motor of human reality and history, remains a constant of the human condition.

