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WHAT IS MANAGEMENT: A SCIENCE, A DISCIPLINE, AN APPROACH? EMMY AS AN POSTMODERN AND TRANSDISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE TO PRESENT MANAGEMENT

Summary. The paper treats a delicate problem for scholars engaged in teaching and/or research management. Is Management a distinctive and “true science” to be taught in universities or it is only a set of skills to be acquired by experience, by self education or by instruction? But, is „science” itself a clear and general accepted term/ concept? If there is not a classic „science”, how do we teach it? Passing from modern to postmodern times challenged management a lot. Since the mid of the last century disciplinary teaching was often replaced by transdisciplinary approaches. Management is a very good terrain to apply postmodern visions and approaches. One of it is called End Means Methodology (EMMY) and it offers a more simple and easy way to learn what management is about, to better understand the link with many other disciplines and approaches and to generate a common „managerial” language this discipline is lacking a lot. The author invites readers to offer feed-back and to open a permanent dialogue with the author and other interested on this issue.

Keywords: management, EMMY, transdisciplinarity, postmodernity, science

CZYM JEST ZARZĄDZANIE: NAUKĄ, DYSCYPLINĄ CZY POGLĄDEM? EMMY JAKO POSTMODERNISTYCZNA I TRANSDYSCYPLINARNA ALTERNATYWA DLA WSPÓŁCZESNEGO ZARZĄDZANIA

Streszczenie. Artykuł porusza delikatny problem znany naukowcom zaangażowanym w nauczanie i/lub badania nad zarządzaniem. Czy Zarządzanie jest wyróżniającą się i „prawdziwą nauką”, która powinna być wykładana w szkołach wyższych, czy też jest tylko zestawem umiejętności nabywanych przez doświadczenie, przez samoedukację bądź odpowiednie instrukcje? Lecz, czy też „nauka” sama w sobie jest przejrzystym i ogólnie przyjętym terminem/pojęciem? Jeśli

nie istnieje klasyczna “nauka”, jak mamy jej nauczać? Począwszy od modernizmu po czasy postmodernistyczne zarządzanie stanowiło duże wyzwanie. Od połowy zeszłego stulecia nauczanie dyscyplinarne często zastępowane było przez transdyscyplinarne podejście. Zarządzanie jest bardzo dobrym obszarem dla zastosowania postmodernistycznych wizji i poglądów. Jednym z nich jest *End Means Methodology* (EMMY), która proponuje prostszy sposób pozwalający nauczyć się tego, czego zarządzanie dotyczy, umożliwia lepsze zrozumienie powiązań zarządzania z innymi dziedzinami czy podejściami oraz generuje wspólny „zarządczy” język tej dyscypliny, który jest niezwykle potrzebny. Autor zaprasza czytelników do wyrażenia swojej opinii zwrotnej i do nieustannego otwartego dialogu wszystkich zainteresowanych kwestiami poruszonymi w niniejszym artykule.

Słowa kluczowe: zarządzanie, EMMY, transdyscyplinarność, postmodernizm, nauka

Introduction

From Scientific Management School (Taylor, 1911) known also as Taylorism (the end of 19th century and the first decades of the 20th), through the Bureaucratic Management Theory of Max Weber (spread during 1930-1950) and Human Relations Movement (from 1930), then „task management” appeared in America during the fifties, in this long track until our days a lot of discussion on the usefulness of Cartesian classical scientific research methods applied to managerial thinking took place. Even the meaning of the word management changed a lot. Taylor used (in excess I think) the word „science” and „scientific”, having in mind the high level of trust the natural sciences get after some big (scientific) discoveries. So, his two of four principles of management included „science” and its derivatives. Here they are: 1. „Develop a science for each element of an individual work” and 2. „Scientifically select, train and develop the worker”. The keywords of Taylorism were „efficiency” and „effectiveness”. During the 20th century this school used statistics, operations research and management information systems as „scientific” tools to solve managerial problems. Chaos theory and complexity theories tried to connect to the older „scientific” approaches, but nowadays these new approaches are questioned about their direct usefulness.

Little by little, the idea of „science” and rigorous thinking was under fire and many question marks appeared every day on how „scientific” are the nowadays „social sciences”, management included. The literature is growing up with successful management stories, but many of them are simple conjuncture happenings about how someone get more money from changing something in the structural organization, in human resources or in marketing techniques. Just an observation (without trying to check out the causal roots): in postcommunist countries, in postcommunist times, a lot of fundamental management textbooks appeared, but

not in the same measure the fundamental works of the founders or of important contributors to the managerial thinking. Not to say that critical thinking addressed to all these ideas had very little space (if any) in all these East and Central European space. As about me, since the 80s I tried to re-formulate some of the basic assumptions of economic and social theory as a direct consequence of my students (negative) reactions towards the essences of Marxian theory combined with Stalinist dogmatic thinking. Although a lot of critical literature (postmodern destructivism and constructivism) was published in this part of Europe, I do not know any other radical/ critical theory in the so called Social Science, in Management especially. I often wondered why excellent managerial staff was not able to maintain a high profit rate, while some novices did. On the other hand, I agree the idea of Joe Kelly that „A large number of business enterprises have been successful economically despite the lack of rigorous theories of organization from which the principles of executive behavior may be deduced” (Kelly, 1968:15).

That is why I tried to generate a larger framework in which management may comfortable stay and function. This is a general theory of human action/ behavior (End Means Methodology – EMMY) which may be closely compared with what is called ethics, management or political economics. All these are explained by ends and means in a very flexible and adaptive way. As a result, both (pre)modern and postmodern issues are included and mixed up in a coherent system of thinking, feeling and acting efficiently and effectively, but with a big eye opened both to past and future time, and to local and global space. As I didn't have any possibility to study Western managerial and organizational literature, late after the fall of the dictatorship in Romania I found about the so called Task Approach which was defined as a „synthesis of the two functions which Mayo calls the logic of efficiency and the logic of sentiment” (Kelly, 1968:20). In this respect I can make a parallel between this synthesis and my own EMMY that defines management by three components: thinking, feeling and acting. Thinking is about the logic of efficiency, feeling is the logic of sentiments and acting is guided by these two dimensions. These similarities may suggest again the need for a common language, even if Task Management and EMMY are structurally different.

The advantages of my proposals are: a) not only economists or organizers are permitted to entry management world of qualifications; b) a lot of info and knowledge from a lot of neighboring fields or domains are able to be used by management theories, as a new background to generate new visions and approaches; c) this needs to give up the restrictions and rigidities imposed by modernity (Cartesian science) and to openly and freely discuss about all that can improve our thinking, feeling and acting. The classical Management functions (planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating/controlling) are already enriched with at least other two (reporting and budgeting), and nothing is suggesting that the

list is closed or immutable. This proves that anything that uses thinking, feeling and acting is management (bad or good). If someone would try to offer a better name to what is (still) called Management I suggest it could be Good management, since no teacher try to teach his/her students Bad management. I do believe that Ethics is not only about good manners (bad ones are to be clearly defined), but the bad ones are the preoccupation of Ethics as well. To be clearer, as a matter of fact, the bad manners (e.g. corruption) are the real object to be studied by Ethics, in order to remove them from our daily life. See, in this respect, the corruption project coordinated by Agata Stachowicz, to be published in 2010.

1. What Science does mean?

For many of us „science” is a magic word with huge powers. It is about divine powers transferred (partially) to humans: almighty, all present, omniscient. All these are motivations to go further the present state of what we still call “science”, to ask for more and to dream to impossible new worlds. A-bomb and nuclear power is part of all these (former) dreams. Management is part of another (“scientific”) dream of regulating human action in order to maximize the owners' profits and the workers' wages. It does not necessary represent a way to obtain happiness or eternal peace. But “science” itself is a project that is quite often put under the question mark. John Horgan (Horgan, 1996) is one of the critical attitudes towards natural and social sciences. His principal motivation was that we may think about the end of many scientific and philosophical disciplines if these have no possibility to add more and more knowledge for humans. I suppose that the criticism on science is, as a matter of fact, a criticism to old modern Cartesian way of doing science. In my view, this „science” is dead and we need new approaches fitted to our postmodern times. My own vision is formulated in this slogan: „Science is dead. Long live Research for Knowledge”. For me, “science” is to be replaced with “research” (looking for something new) and with “knowledge” (the results of all this research). Not only the so called Social Sciences are supposed to be replaced by new visions, but natural sciences as physics may be questioned about their „scientificity”. There comes a time when the value of any theory needs another assessment. So it happens with „science” itself, with many disciplines (self) called „sciences” and with some methods used to prove something or to discover new facets of reality. Noam Chomsky told to Horgan the following point of view concerning science. „Chomsky divides scientific questions into problems which are at least potentially answerable, and mysteries, which are not. Before the seventeenth century, Chomsky explained to me, when science did not really exist in the modern sense, almost all questions appeared to be mysteries. Then Newton, Descartes, and others began posing questions and solving them with the methods that spawned modern

science. Some of those investigations have led to „spectacular progress”, but many others have proved fruitless. Scientists have made absolutely no progress, for example, investigating such issues as consciousness and free will.” (Horgan, 1996:152).

2. What Social Science is for?

From the theory of the two cultures (one technical and one artistic) the distinction is also done between natural sciences (also called “exact sciences”) and “social sciences”. The scientificity of the so called “social sciences” is often questioned and many thinkers consider it is only about opinions or beliefs, without having laws, rules and principles that could be applied in order to obtain desired social or individual results. The name of this corpus of knowledge is also ambiguous: some speak about a Social Science; others do believe that there are more Social Sciences. The ambiguity is proved just in a book called *Social Science*, where the author, Gerard Delanty, wrote in 1996: „This is a book about the self-understanding of social science from the perspective of the end of the twentieth century. It offers both undergraduate students in the social sciences an overview of the principal philosophical debates on the methodology of the social sciences, beginning with the positivist dispute, and at the same time tries to say something about social science as an institution in modern society” (Delanty, 1996:ix). It is difficult from here to see what the difference between “social science” and “social sciences” (plural) is. Gunther Stent expressed his view that „social sciences may long remain the ambiguous, impressionistic disciplines that they are at present” (Stent, 1969:121). Interesting to note that some scholars include psychology in the realm of the social sciences, although this is a quite individual discipline. Some put an equal between sociology and social science; others see social sciences as a set of quite distinctive disciplines, without common features. It is almost incredible to hear, from authoritative mouths, that the economic laws have nothing to do with political laws, or that ethics is a quite different space of discourse from politics and economics. This lack of unity made “social sciences” vulnerable to a lot of critique: „I continue to believe that the historic categorizations of the disciplines of the social sciences make no intellectual sense any more. But if we continue to protest, it is because we remain a minority. And if we cannot solve the „key” theoretical conundrum, perhaps we deserve to be. For without solving it, it is hard to convince others of the irrelevance of our consecrated disciplinary categories”. (Wallerstein, 2004:108). New and new proposals to „repair” the image and status of social science appear, in parallel with proposals to demolish this incoherent corpus of knowledge. A Romanian philosopher says that „The unrelieved state of dissatisfaction about the right method of inquiry seems to have become a characteristic of the philosophy of social science” (Cojanu, 2009:588).

The proud of making a “science” from any new opinion or belief, destroyed the classical modern concept of science. It is better, I think, to speak about research and knowledge and to put things and ideas in good and useful relations.

3. What Management Science is for?

What about scientific management (taylorism), or about management viewed as a science (as may be found in almost huge Management textbooks?). My point of view is that there is no „science” in any managerial project; it is only about concentrated experience that could be useful or not to directors and executives. I think that management is as „scientific” as socialism/communism was. In Romania there were (in dictatorship) courses on Scientific socialism together with courses on Scientific organization (Management). Applying their truths, socialist society is already down and the capitalist society is experiencing a new crisis. Can we give up all these sacrosanct scientific truths and try to find out another humanistic way of solving the problems of our life? I think we can! As a result, I suggest changing the teaching of management as a technical /scientific/ mechanical discipline. Instead a holistic and transdisciplinary humanistic vision may be used.

I simply do not agree with one of the many definitions of management as this one: „Management is the process of getting activities completely efficiently and effectively with and through other people”. See the link: (<http://choo.fis.utoronto.ca/Courses/LIS1230sharma/history4.htm>). This definition does not include the manager as the key person in the managerial process, putting an accent on „the others”. Also, no accent is put on information and communication, on contexts and future. No categories of means are suggested or underlined by the abovementioned definition. In my opinion, both administrative theories, governance theories of the firm, systems approach, contingency approach or management science approach, psychological and sociological visions on the decision process etc. are possible to be integrated in any management thinking in order to improve its performances and expectations. Management classical theories repeat the same mistake Economics is doing by speaking only about resources (means) and putting aside the possible consequences of any resources combination and consumption (ends).

The journal of Management published at Zabrze may be a good beginning for a large world dialog on management teaching.

4. What can replace management and its prophetic pretentions?

End Means Methodology (EMMY) could be one of the alternatives to “scientific” management. EMMY – launched initially as an End Means Binomial – meant to replace the Political Economy taught in Romania in the 80s. Then, in 1990, in Paris, at the First Conference of the International Society of Intercommunication of New Ideas (ISINI), EMMY was presented as a triadic function: ends, means and, mostly important! the adequation between ends and means. Nowadays, after looking more for similar ideas of EMMY, I think it looks very similar with „task management”, a vision quite familiar to the new radical wave of the 60s. In this radical vision on organizations „effective organization is a function of the work to be done (task) and the resources available to do it, personnel, technical and economic” (Kelly, 1968:22), but I have no info about its development. My own formulae to human behavior/ life is $H = f(E;M;E/M)$, i.e. any human action may be defined as function of the proposed ends, the means allocated for achieving that end and the permanent adequation of ends and means in order to obtain homeostasis or an improved status of the individual/ organization. But, all this discussion on ends and means is not all (as was thought by many of those who read EMMY). This permanent (continuous and simultaneous) process of adequation is made in certain triadic contexts: temporal (past-present-future), spatial (micro-macro-mondo), existential (substance-energy-information), actional (end-means-end/means ratio), a.s.o. The triadic structure of a lot of other contexts underlies that we are living in a tridimensional world. Interesting to find out that in many religious thinking God itself is conceived as a tridimensional being (Holy Trinity = Tres Unum Sunt). Every of the triadic structures we are describing as contexts for our actions is another color in the great tableau of our human life. There is possible to establish computational programs to test what kind of influences and consequences we may expect in different triadic structures. In this way, we’ll realize that our present thinking is too much influenced by past, substance, micro, means etc., and less connected with future, information, mondo, ends, etc. My experience proved that using triadic and equilibrated thinking helped me to improve my own decisions. Is this management? I think it is and it is more adapted to the postindustrial and postmodern realities than “scientific” management and its management “scientists” that are trying to force reality to enter in their old models, rules and mechanical principles. My own definition of management is a triadic one: thinking, feeling and acting. There are as many management “schools” as human beings on the Planet. Some common features may be suggested, but no “managerial” rules are to be taught to students. Logics, psychology and human action theories may well improve our managerial thinking and working.

5. Conclusion

Many “deaf” criticisms to the scientific management are produced more and more, since the 50s. Even “Economic Science” (Economics) in its neoclassical dimension is little by little replaced or at least attacked by institutionalism and neo behaviorism. New pragmatism is also a good terrain to improve our actions and to introduce human being in all places where machines and raw materials prevailed. It is interesting to read relatively fresh views on economic theory. See Mintzberg Henry (1994), Ben-Ner Avner (1998), Hammond John et al. (2002), Ericson Richard (2004), Ritto Antonio (2005), Coyle Diane (2007), etc. Management is better served from the transdisciplinary point of view (Somerville, 2000). To conclude: management is a day by day practice of human action coordinated from different places of an organization or even from the outer space of an organization. Also management is the day by day actions of individuals in any social context (family, firm, town, country, and planet). Some may understand that I am against any rules to be applied in this process. This is not true. I am against dogmatic and repetitive thinking, against the false pretensions of some experts for solving any economic or social problems by using (not useful) mathematical and econometrical methods, against magic formulas to be rigidly applied to any human desire to enrich immediately and indefinitely. My sincere hope is to begin a true and useful dialog between authors and readers, teachers and students, managers and workers, owners and employees. Thinking and communicating is the beginning of any managerial process.

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