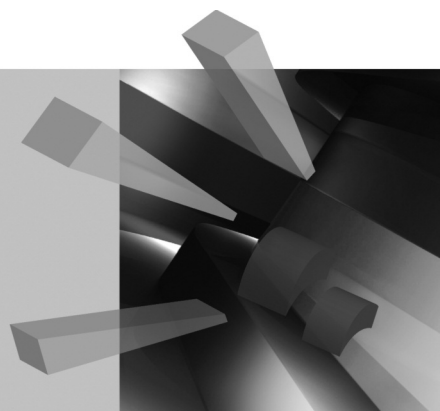


Human and work in a changing organisation. Management oriented on the employee interests



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PARADIGM OF UNITY BASED ON RELATIONAL CAPITAL IN THE MANAGEMENT OF AN ENTERPRISE

Summary: The reciprocal relationships between an employer and an employee, and also in relation to other stakeholders, are so-called relational goods that make the relational capital of a company. In the paper a possibility of the construction the paradigm of unity in the management of company on the base of this relational capital is presented. The necessity of a new paradigm in the management sciences which takes into account first of all the universal human values, ethics and spirituality is especially visible now-a-days. In the paper the main characteristic features of the economy of communion realized in the companies managed according to the paradigm of unity is also presented.

Keywords: paradigm, relational capital, relational goods, spirituality, economy of communion.

1. Introduction

Subject matter of modern scientific works in social sciences concerns for the most part phenomena and social, economic, political, or cultural processes with the negative, catastrophic vision, with predominance of disintegration over integration, pathology over sustainable development, individual ambitions over a need for the common good [Biela 2006, p. 167]. But the world and the reality that surrounds us cannot be seen only by the negative phenomena and processes. There is a need to show not only positive changes in the social sciences, but also to try to build on the basis of these changes an interdisciplinary paradigm, which is the methodological requirement to take account in research studies the broad and multi-dimensional system of social behaviors, also out of the interests up to the present in these sciences.

It is not yet an elaborated paradigm in the social sciences – as is given by T. Kuhn [1962] for the natural sciences – which could characterise a scientific breakthrough. The literature in the field of social sciences contains some attempts to develop such a paradigm [Biela 1996b; Grudzewski, Hejduk (eds.) 2008; Kostera (ed.) 2008; Kowalczewski (ed.) 2008].

A suggestion to develop a paradigm inspired by the activities of the Focolare Movement was presented with the opportunity of *honoris causa* doctorate in social sciences awarded to Chiara Lubich, founder and then president of the Movement,

at the Catholic University of Lublin [Biela 1996a, p. 195]. It was argued that Lubich and the Focolare phenomena have inspired the social sciences to build the methodological paradigm of unity to stimulate and integrate research projects to find out the social mechanism and factors that develop the human potentiality for mutual cooperation, helping each other, sharing benefits with others, and for more solidarity-oriented human behaviour in various social environments [Biela 2009, p. 79].

The spirituality of unity and the communion of goods practised for many years in the Focolare Movement warranted Chiara Lubich's proposal of an idea of economy of communion, accepted and implemented since 1991 in over 800 companies worldwide. The implementation of this idea, offering a new style of business management, has led to significant improvement in living standards of tens of thousands of families in many countries, become a subject of scientific research and the basis for creating a new social doctrine, and, above all, shown the need, sense, and efficiency of the formation of the good interpersonal relations in enterprises.

2. Paradigm in the social sciences

The major difficulty in constructing a unique, universal paradigm for the social sciences on the model introduced by Kuhn for natural sciences is the high complexity and unpredictability of human behaviour. One often says about a multiparadigmatic character of social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and science in organisation and management.

In the latter (like in economy) the particular situation of the re-evaluation of the existing views can be observed. Following Hamel [2008, p. 9] also Polish authors tend to believe that a certain final state of the previous and outdated management theories has attained and now new directions and new instruments in management are needed [Grudzewski *et al.* 2010, p. 19].

There is therefore a need to create a new paradigm of business management. In the literature on the subject, since the beginning of this century, the declining influence of the economic-pragmatic values with increasing importance of ethical and social values has been noted. The trends of these changes show a decreasing importance of technological and financial capital in aid of growing importance of social, human, motivation capital and relational goods [Grochmal 2011]. These new trends limiting the importance of material values in aid of spiritual values one determines as an attempt of creating a paradigm of spirituality in business [Kostera (ed.) 2008, p. 231; Bianchi 2009]. The present work is just such a type of an attempt to define a paradigm of unity against the background of the Focolare Movement spirituality.

3. The spirituality of unity of the Focolare Movement and economy of communion

In the history of European culture the Christian charisms have played a significant role – they often gave rise to a new culture of work and economy (Benedictine charism) or new schools and economic initiatives (Franciscan charism), created a new spirituality and a new culture. Also the charism of unity of the existing from 1943 Focolare Movement laid the foundation of new community spirituality and new culture that casts new light on all the aspects of human activity [Lubich 2004, Lubich 2007].

The words of Jesus in prayer before His Passion: “Holy Father [...] that they may all be one as we are one” [Jn, 17:21] proved to be the guiding thoughts of spirituality conformable to our times – the spirituality of unity, both personal and community [Lubich 1999]. One of the basic assumptions of the spirituality of unity (and one of its purposes) is to strive for universal brotherhood among people. It requires appropriate interpersonal relations based on Christian love, or – in case of non-Christians – benevolence. These feelings lived in a community of many persons lead to reciprocity and then the community becomes a communion. Communion is the basis of all human activities, including economic, and determines the lifestyle of the Focolare Movement members from the very beginning of its existence.

The spirituality of unity in everyday life of the Movement members is achieved through the so-called culture of giving (or sharing) of material and spiritual goods to those who live in poverty. Communion of goods practised since the beginning among the members of the Movement was not sufficient to meet the needs of all the people living in poverty. The picture of people (including members of the Movement) living in extreme poverty of the slums of Sao Paulo in comparison to the luxury skyscrapers overlooking the city center inspired Chiara Lubich during her stay in Brazil in 1991 to appeal to the businessmen to create or transform companies, whose profits would help to reduce the number of people living in poverty. This project called the economy of communion implies that the profits that have been traditionally considered to be due to owners or shareholders, are – in the freedom of their decisions – divided into parts, one of which remains in the company for its development, the other is transferred to the community (intended for people living in poverty to provide them a suitable standard of living), the third is devoted to the formation of persons pursuing this project to change the mentality of people by promoting a culture of giving.

Profit distribution is only one aspect of the economy of communion. An equally important goal of this project is to manage the company according to the spirituality of unity, placing the human person and interpersonal relations in the first place, avoiding attitudes and behaviours inconsistent with the spirit of evangelical charity.

Guidelines for the management of company in the spirituality of communion include almost every aspect of its activities – they require valuing an employee in the work process, including by incorporating him or her in business management, ethical attitude in relations with stakeholders and harmony in the work environment and respect for the natural environment. They want to ensure for employees continuous additional training and professional, social, and spiritual formation, paying attention to the forms and possibilities of interpersonal communication.

The response of the members of Movement to this appeal was swift and widespread: in the first two years more than 300 companies pursuing this way of management were created, and now, after 20 years since the idea beginning there are 800.

The experience of the economy of communion with the specific characteristics resulting from its spirituality is one of the many individual and common initiatives that have attempted to humanise economy as well as many entrepreneurs conducting economic activity, which is something more and something other than just search for material profits. Persons involved in the economy of communion project are striving to build first of all sincere and respectful relations, enlivened by the spirit of genuine service and cooperation in relation to customers, suppliers, public administration, as well as competition; guided by the principles of respect for the law. They seek to remove social injustice and inequality, poverty and social exclusion [Lubich 1999].

Economy of communion suggests to entrepreneurs the attitude of selflessness, solidarity, and respect for the weakest that are in need – the attitudes normally considered to be typical for non-profit organisations, but Lubich just in companies saw an opportunity to implement a new vision of economy.

An important element in business management of the economy of communion enterprises is to give the space for God's action. Very often we can notice the action of Divine Providence – especially when the problems seem humanly impossible to solve. Based on the author's personal experience, as well as testimonies of many entrepreneurs, the Divine Providence very often expresses itself in this evangelical "hundredfold", promised by Jesus: appears an unexpected order, offer of new cooperation, comes in overdue payment [Grochmal, Michniewicz 1996].

Economy of communion, which is a true expression of the spirituality of unity in the sphere of economic life, can be understood only when it will be included to the full vision of man and social relations proposed by this spirituality.

4. Relational capital as a base for an implementation of a new paradigm in the management

Every man beside basic needs like food or habitation has a need for positive interpersonal relations that benefit both sides of the relation. They produce intangible goods, so-called relational goods, as a result of a meeting in which the actions and motivations of these activities by another person are important elements in the generation and in the value of this good.

The concept of relational goods has been introduced into scientific discussion in the years 1986-1989, by P. Donati and M. Nussbaum [after Bruni 2005, p. 550].

Relational goods have the following features: mutuality, simultaneity (production and consumption in the same time), motivation (the relation is the goal and not a means), gratuitousness (the relation is not the exploitation of another person), value (the good has a value but it does not have a price because of the gratuitousness).

Relational goods in an important way affect the sense of satisfaction, security, and happiness. Consumerist model of *homo oeconomicus* encouraged to maximise the enrichment and possession. The increase in income and wealth implies an increase in consumption of positional¹ goods, acting destructively on relational goods (jealousy, selfishness, loneliness). Thus, there is a peculiar paradox – the economy which promised man to be happy through the richness (possession), *de facto* made him or her unhappy.

There are many differences between richness and happiness, but one is especially: man can be rich also alone or against others, but cannot be happy alone. It is a truism to say that wealth and happiness cannot be identified. The logical consequence of the transient, ephemeral material values should be getting rich by creating good interpersonal relations, through investment in relational goods such as solidarity, friendship, love.

Similarly, poverty concerns more human relations than material goods. One is poor when he or she does not have friends, lives in lonely selfishness. Specific relational goods are goods arising from the relations between employers (management, owners, shareholders) and employees as well as between other stakeholders in a company (customers, suppliers, local community, public administration, competition); they form the so-called relational capital of the company.

Freeman's stakeholder theory [1984] assumes taking into account in the management the stakeholders' demands; however, the criterion of considering the interests of parties is a simple logical sum (alternative), which means that the failure of expectations of one or more groups of stakeholders (e.g., with little influence) does not disqualify the admitted procedure.

Interpersonal relations based on the spirituality of unity require taking into account the expectations of all stakeholders (the analogy to the concept of common good) – the criterion is the logical product (conjunction) of the expectations of all stakeholders, in which the failure of one of them sets to zero the entire product. It is obvious that in the case of conflicting interests, the solution is difficult – negotiations with the parties in a spirit of communion give the chance to understand each other and develop a common position, subject to good will of all concerned parts and a genuine understanding, which constitutes the basis of spiritual unity.

Although stakeholder theory covers all the needs and expectations of various stakeholders of an enterprise, it is worth paying attention to some specific aspects of relational capital based on the spirituality of unity.

¹ Positional goods are the goods purchased and used because of social position of purchaser.

In the anthropological aspect, the spirituality of unity values any person in the enterprise, regardless of its function and role. This follows from the moral attitude to building sincere and respectful relations between employees, customers, suppliers, government representatives, as well as competitors. The attitude of openness, kindness, friendship, and love towards others transfers from the climate of an enterprise to its environment and changes social relations. It should be noted that the practice of the Focolare Movement demonstrates the implementation of these attitudes in concrete, everyday, and natural cases and not in pursuit to an abstract good in an emergency or extraordinary situations. Biela [2011] called such an attitude the natural personalism.

Spirituality of unity brings new references to the work process and the relation between employees and new references to the receivers of the work effect. Work is seen in all its dignity, regardless of the technological or organisational level with striving for professionalism. Shaping the culture of work “with others” and work “for others” and paying attention to the environment in which work is performed and a respect for nature are also the concrete expressions of spirituality of unity in terms of work.

In the cultural aspect, the spirituality of unity realises promotion and dissemination of the culture of giving as opposed to the culture of having. This requires the development of a new mentality among both businesses and consumers, according to the principle of economy of communion: the good which is not shared with others, or the good that I bought without the necessary needs, ceases to be good.

An expression of unity in the economic aspect of enterprise is a care not only for the profits and development of one’s own business, but also the creation of goods, services, and jobs in the wider interest of the common good. An example of economic activity based on the spirituality of unity are the communion economy enterprises, not only to help people who live in poverty, but to promote a new style of management and the evaluation criteria based on values. Such actions can be deemed as an implementation of new elements of organisational culture and building in company proper organisational climate, which implies specific mental changes among employers (including the appreciation of human capital in the firm) and employees (including responsibility of employees for the company and its management in the social responsibility aspect).

Analogously to interpersonal relations, the spirituality of unity requires honest and open relations between companies, also, and perhaps particularly with the competition, suggesting the relation of mutual cooperation instead fighting each other.

It is important to examine first the functioning of human relations in the family or community, because very often the difficult economic situation is the result of pathological interpersonal relations that need to be repaired first.

The lack of proper relations in the communities leads to divisions. Each division is against human nature and the effects of economic activities are often the most painful of these divisions – rich and poor, excluded and enjoying in excess of

the civilisation benefits. Quoted analysis of selected relational goods can arrive at a conclusion that paradigm of unity built on the relational capital of a firm may be a breakthrough both in theory and practice of management.

5. The paradigm of unity in the sciences of management

The charism of unity is able to express a new paradigm in various fields of knowledge. The scientific reasons for the paradigm of unity were presented the first time by Biela in laudation on the occasion of an honorary doctorate for Chiara Lubich [Biela 1996a]. He has compared the contribution and importance of the idea of unity for the social sciences with the Copernican revolution in natural sciences. In later publications, Biela [2006, 2009] developed the idea of a paradigm of unity in economy and psychology. The conception of paradigm in management based on the idea of economy of communion was presented by Burckart [1999], who called it the paradigm of sustainable management. Grudzewski, Hejduk (eds.) [2008] presented an analysis of the search for new paradigms in management, paying particular attention to the aspects of corporate governance, such as spirituality, workplace democratisation, good civic behaviour, and care for the needs of all stakeholders.

The paradigm built on the spirituality of unity not only describes the models of society and social life based on positive and constructive social relations, but it gives scientists in different disciplines a key to understand phenomena and relations, a new light which allows seeing processes through the prism of new values, in perspective of the ideal of unity. A significant feature of this paradigm from the methodological point of view is a possibility to develop scientific methods to reach integration between different social sciences (multidimensional approach). Inspirational thoughts for applications of this paradigm in various areas of knowledge are included in the Lubich's lectures presented by her on the occasion of successive awards of the titles of doctor *honoris causa* – social sciences, psychology, pedagogy, theology, philosophy, economy and trade, social communication, art and culture [Lubich 2002]. Interdisciplinary team of specialists at the Center of the Focolare Movement (called *Scuola Abbà*) and scientists in many countries around the world work on this new paradigm to find a possibility of its generalisation in the various disciplines.

To illustrate an adequacy of the paradigm of unity from the different perspectives of business management process, the operating principles for the economy of communion enterprises in selected aspects will be presented further.

In relation employer – employee, the priority of human person over capital and labour led to valorise and make good use of talents and capabilities of employees, supporting creativity, an attitude of responsibility, participation and involvement in the life of a company. Decisions are made by managers taking into account the opinions of employees, with a care on a sustainable development of an enterprise, including economic, professional, cultural, and spiritual development of workers.

The companies of economy of communion base their internal and external interpersonal relations on the spirituality of unity, implementing thus the paradigm of unity with respect to the identity of a company, its features and image, building and developing relational capital of a firm. These companies not only act in accordance with the law but also try to work to modify the law in such a manner that it does not harm the common good. A care for health and life quality of employees, genuine respect for safety standards and the suitable conditions is also an expression of unity in the line of employer – employee.

Entrepreneurs promote team work as well as worker's individual initiative and development. The aim is to create a friendly climate of mutual respect and trust. Businessmen manage firms as if they were a common social good and not their private property. This implies a maximum concern for the environment, expressed through the generation products and services safe, not damaging the environment, saving energy and natural resources.

Entrepreneurs promote among its employees an atmosphere of mutual help, support, and respect. Employees share their knowledge, skills, experience, competence, rising in their professional development and contribute to the development of others. A businessman is responsible for the professional development of each employee, ensuring regular updating of skills and training forms.

The paradigm of unity in a natural way requires creating in a company a climate of open and honest communication inside and outside a firm, promoting the exchange of information and experiences at all the levels of responsibility. Entrepreneurs use the means of communication between them at the local and global level, maintain reciprocal contact and mutual support, assistance and solidarity.

6. Conclusions

The paradigm of unity built on the logic of interpersonal relations fits into the new trends in economy and management science. However, it has a universal character, because it is based on spirituality which may be the basis for building unity among all people, showing the possibility of studies of interpersonal relations in all social sciences. One can express the hope that this paradigm will stimulate social sciences towards the positive views of human being in social environment and will contribute to the development of social sciences, showing the beauty and positive aspects of human relations, seeking to develop treatment and prevention against social pathologies in many areas of life [cf. Biela 2011]. This requires an accurate knowledge of the spirituality of unity and life with the culture of giving, hence there is a need for broader formation to these values.

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KAPITAŁ RELACYJNY JAKO BAZA WPROWADZENIA PARADYGMATU JEDNOŚCI W ZARZĄDZANIU PRZEDSIĘBIORSTWEM

Streszczenie: Wzajemne relacje pomiędzy pracodawcą a pracobiorcą, a także pomiędzy innymi interesariuszami firmy stanowią tzw. dobra relacyjne, które tworzą kapitał relacyjny przedsiębiorstwa. W artykule pokazano, że kapitał relacyjny może stanowić bazę wprowadzenia paradygmatu jedności w zarządzaniu przedsiębiorstwem. Pokazano też możliwości rozszerzenia tego paradygmatu dla nauk społecznych. Potrzeba nowego paradygmatu w naukach o zarządzaniu, który uwzględni przede wszystkim wartości ogólnoludzkie, etyczne i duchowe jest widoczna szczególnie w dzisiejszych czasach. W artykule zaprezentowano także istotne cechy ekonomii komunii realizowane w przedsiębiorstwach zarządzanych według paradygmatu jedności.

Słowa kluczowe: paradygmat, kapitał relacyjny, dobra relacyjne, duchowość, ekonomia komunii.