PERSONALISTIC PSYCHOLOGY OF MANAGEMENT: AN OPTION FOR CRITICAL MANAGEMENT STUDIES

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Abstract

Critical management studies try to address many management issues that traditional management studies haven't been able to solve for many years. In this volume we propose personalism to be an approach that may inspire critical management studies and offer new perspectives.. We start with two philosophical papers; one addressing the problem of self-determination and the other the problem of communication. They show how philosophical and anthropological concept influences the thinking in areas close to management studies. With the third chapter we enter the world of psychology and may see how personalistic approach changes the view of human predispositions and competencies. The fourth paper leads us further in understanding of human being into the world of goal-setting and goal orientations. The last three papers show CMS in empirical studies of management practice. First it is the issue of work related personal projects, then participative management of project teams and finally research on trust with conclusions on why employees either trust or do not trust their managers. In this paper I propose explanation how the presented papers could impact the critical management studies and how to continue this approach.

Keywords: personalism, person, critical management studies, personalistic psychology

Introduction

This issue of Nowy Sącz Academic Review is one of the rare attempts to view management from a personalistic point of view. The domain of critical management studies is slowly making its way to Polish Universities and Business Schools. Leon Koźmiński Academy with its seminar on Critical Organization Theory conducted by professors Gasparski and Kieżun was the first and probably most famous attempt which ended in publishing the book edited by Kieżun and Kubin (2004). Apart from the participants of the seminar and sociologists working on critical organization theory, there are a few Polish scholars who are consistently flirting with this approach such as Kostera at the University of Warsaw, Jemielniak at Leon Koźmiński Academy, Poprawski at Adam Mickiewicz University, Sułkowski at the Jagiellonian University and finally the group of psychologists at the WSB-NLU in Nowy Sącz (Stocki, Prokopowicz & Żmuda, 2008). The fact that critical management studies are almost nonexistent in Poland may be proven by the fact that out of 30 countries represented at the 6th International Critical Management Studies Conference at The University of Warwick, UK, there was not a single representative from Poland. As this approach may not be familiar to some readers, let us start with a quote from an overview of the field (Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2007, p. 120).

Critical management studies (CMS) offers a range of alternatives to mainstream management theory with a view to radically transforming management practice. The common core is deep skepticism regarding the moral defensibility and the social and ecological sustainability of the prevailing forms of management and organization. CMS's motivating concern is neither the personal failures of individual managers nor the poor management of specific organizations, but the social injustice and environmental destructiveness of the

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broader social and economic systems that these managers and organizations serve and reproduce.

As we can see from this short introduction to the field critical management studies put practical applications and consequences of the management theory very high at stake. It does not mean, however, that it is focused on critical theory. It also reflects on organizational behaviour, industrial relations, strategy, accounting, information systems research, international business, marketing, etc. One of the main areas of criticism for CMS is the instrumentalism of organizations which fetishiizes profitability and performance targets (Adler et al., 2007). Personalism, as revealed in the Christian doctrine was one of the first social approaches that openly criticized instrumental orientations of early capitalism, let us only mention the encyclical letter of the Pope Leo XIII *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and other that followed it – Pius XI's *Quadregesimo Anno* (1931), John Paul II's *Laborem exercens* (1981), *Solicitudo rei socialis* (1987) *Centesimus Annus* (1991). It is not surprising that main overviews of CMS (Adler et al., 2007; Mills, Simmons & Mills, 2005; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, 2003) do not view this personalist critical approach as part of CMS, probably because the catholic church is criticised for its patriarchal practices (e.g. Mills et al., 2005). The situation is somewhat similar to that of co-operativism or employee ownership having bad reputation in late Soviet Bloc countries. In our quest for truth we should try to overcome such prejudices.

The present volume proposes several concrete areas both critical management studies and psychology may gain if they include personalism in their research.

The heritage of Karol Wojtyła

The pontificate of John Paul II and documents he signed as the head of the Church somehow shadowed the philosophical works of Karol Wojtyła written before he became the Pope. The publisher of the English translation of his main philosophical work - *The Acting person* has even put John Paul II in pontifical clothes on the cover of this book, although the book was first published almost 10 years before he became the Pope. Certainly this association with papacy does not make the way to personalistic thought of Wojtyła easier among critical management scholars. It is a pity, because apart from setting philosophical fundamentals for key concepts that could be applied in CMS, he devoted the last chapter to what he called "Outline of participation theory" (Wojtyła, 1985) and which has direct relevance to management studies. His main point was that participation was not a value that may or may not be applied but rather the defining feature of a human being. So it is not in the domain of ethics but ontology. Interestingly, this point of view has its sound support in cultural anthropology with hunter-gatherers as an example of highly participative and sharing humans (Erdal, 1999).

Naturally Wojtyła's approach to participation had great consequences for the teaching of the Church about women. In *Mulieris dignitatem* (1988) he reinterpreted St Paul's statement that "man is his wife's head". Although he has not equalled men and women in their access to priesthood, his many actions have certainly made the task easier in the future (Accottoli, 1997). Two of the authors in this volume directly refer to Wojtyła's revolutionary philosophical work.

Self-determination

Self-determination, the key concept for Wojtyła, should also be one of the key concepts in critical management studies if we want to enrich them with personalist perspective. The first author Rostworowski (2009), who knew Wojtyła personally before he

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5

became the Pope is one of the scholars who tries to develop and explain Wojtyła's thought. This mainstream management studies are based on utilitarian perception of the human being as homo oeconomicus. Homo oeconomicus is determined by economic laws. But even in many approaches to management people are determined historically, biologically, socially. Self-determination assumes that human beings in their very essence (noumenal) are free to determine themselves. This has enormous consequences for management theory and practice. The author develops and explains the concept of the act. In mainstream management studies we often talk of behaviour (which may be determined) and human resources (human determined and perceived as an element of business process). Act is specific for humans but first of all it is based on will. It is the elementary unit of self-determination. When behaviour is substitute with act, nothing is the same again in organizational theory and practice.

One of the things which are never the same is the purpose of the organisation. Instrumentalism of the organizations is reflected in seeking and leading to goals outside, while personalism would also see the goals of self-fulfilment. This is another theme of Rostworowski' s paper.

Homo communicans

In the second paper of the volume Drożdż (2009) develops Wojtyła's thought into the area which has the greatest impact on people's everyday life – media communication. Existence of many organizations is based on the image they create in the media though both corporate and product advertising. Communication is also one of fundamental internal aspects of management. By referring to Wojtyła's concepts Drożdż defines communication as an act. The situation with communication is analogous to that of personalism. We are communicating by our nature. If communication is an act we can speak about integration of the person in communication and transcendence of the person in communication. What is important here, the main condition of successful communication is truth. If we take this reflection on communication into the field of management studies we end up with practices like open book management (Stack & Burlingham, 2003 ;Case, 1998) to be the form of organizational communication that best fulfils the personalistic assumptions of homo communicans. This is why in CMS we may take advantage of person based theory of communication.

Personalistic psychology

Mainstream psychology is similar to mainstream management studies in restricting the reflection only to limited scope of phenomena, mainly to those which are empirically verifiable. The problem with empirical, and particularly experimental verification is related to determinism. It is much easier to verify empirically deterministic phenomena than those that are self-determined. This is why contemporary mainstream psychology is closer and closer to neurobiology. This is why management practitioners and theoreticians are prone to rely on mainstream psychologists. In this way one mainstream theory supports another. In the search of personalistic approach to management studies, we propose several papers of psychologists who find inspirations in person oriented psychology.

"Back to the future"

The third paper by Uchnast (2009) starts with an overview of personalistic or person oriented psychology. This overview itself may be an inspiring input for questioning many management studies propositions. But the author decides to come back to the works of William Stern to 1938 to be able to develop future prospect for personalistic psychology. Stern hoped to develop "a science about the person who is able to *have experience*". In this

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6

sense his approach is closer to Wojtyła's anthropology than his later followers Uchnast overviews in the introduction. Drawing on Sterns concept as well as Goldstein's human predispositions in abstract behaviour, Allport's personal knowing subject and Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, Uchnast presents his own model of the dimensions of the structure of natural dispositions of the human person as a proactive agency subject. The model grasps much more than the author enumerates. It grasps the fundamental way of building character. It reflects the main dichotomy between "to be" and "to have". It finally helps us to overcome the controversy between determinism and self-determinism. As on one extreme we will have persons who are more self-determined and on the other less self-determined. On one extreme we have personal life in a convergent world of values leading to introceptive, proactive, and cooperative personality on the other extreme vital life in the biosphere leading to general personal orientations toward self-protection and self-defence. This distinction based on personalistic psychology may have many consequences for understanding phenomena of organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological ownership, psychological participation in what the organization is doing etc.

Subjectivity in goal orientations and self-determination

The paper of Trzebińska (2009) views a topic more elementary than self-determination – mainly the subjectivity. Before self-determination is possible, there must be the subject. Drawing from motivational research on goal orientation the author proposes four goal orientations: learning orientation, avoidance orientation, self-enhancing ego orientation and self-defeating ego orientation. Although the author does not state this these would be more elementary processes that are responsible for later self-determination and character development. Goal orientations are different manifestations of subjectivity. What is important for critical management studies is the process of making one's identity through cognizing oneself and developing self-knowledge and self-awareness. The personalistically oriented management theory should also include those processes in management. Mainstream management theory and practice would either ignore such issues as self-knowledge and self-awareness or place it in private life domain.

Empirical verifications

We started with philosophical foundations, then were trying to show implications for the theory, finally, in the last part of the volume we presented three papers which were attempts to verify empirically the concepts of personalism in organizational context. We should be aware that this is still *terra incognita*, as any act which is not totally determined is not easy to study. Each of the papers present one different approach to studying persons acting in organizational context.

Personal projects

Work related personal projects are the first obvious reflection of self-determination. They may reflect real participation that is fulfilment of our personal nature. The study conducted by Żmuda (2009) and presented in his paper is a presentation of new methodology that maybe useful for the studies of person in an organization. It is not unimportant that the method is intuitively understandable for anyone who has experience in project management. Unlike many primitive methods of analysing and managing time allocation so popular in many software, this method starts with values and as such allows much deeper analysis of self-determined acts. The method yields huge amount of data that maybe used in critical management studies. The results presented by Żmuda are encouraging future research they

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7

confirm the truth about human nature we postulate in personalistic approach. Participative projects lead to self-realization more often than non-participative projects as well as they are more controllable and perceived as more likely to end with success.

Project teams – defining effectiveness

Pyrkosz in cooperation with Żmuda (2009), propose another interesting approach to studying effectiveness of person-oriented, participative management. They first gathered declarations of what is the team members' preferred management style – autocratic or participative, and then observed the group in action to find out that the declarations do not overlap with the behaviors. It is symptomatic how mainstream management theory influenced the thinking of the researchers. Although the results confirm the superiority of participative management because, as predicted, members of participative project groups were more satisfied with the task they performed, and reported a more positive mood after the experiment while members of autocratic groups were less satisfied and reported a more negative mood after the experiment. In spite of this the researchers seem a bit disappointed as contrary to the hypothesis, no significant effects on effectiveness were observed. Mood and emotions influence our life in the long run. They may end up with differences in many areas including health and well-being of the participants as was found by Erdal (1999). Yet short term effectiveness measures, the mainstream measures reflecting the instrumental approach to organization are still prevailing in our mindset. One of the tasks of Critical Management Studies should be finding holistic measures of management in the long term perspective and in the wide perspective. Something started by Erdal and reflected in multiple bottom lines approach.

Truth and its substitute

The acting person can act only in the context and as a response to values. One of the values is truth. The importance of truth was found to be essential in communication and Drożdż's (2010) paper shows how important it is. We added here that what Drożdż finds crucial in media communication is also true in internal organizational communication. What happens if there are no data available in organizational context, or the information, if provided, is not understandable. The truth is substituted by trust. Prokopowicz's (2009) paper in this volume is devoted to trust. Trust is becoming more and more important as long as the management systems become more and more complex and as long as there is no direct contact of subordinates with their bosses. No wonder then that the phenomenon of trust finds it way as the key, if not the most important, aspect of management. Trust Index is the main measure of so called "Great Place to Work" a ranking of companies which care for their employees. Prokopowicz deepens our knowledge of this aspect of management and what is more, proposes further development of trust theories.

Conclusions

In the present volume we have made an intersection of what has to be done to introduce personalism to Critical Management Studies. First we need deepening of anthropological and philosophical thought in the area of management. As we have Acton Institute in economic and political thought, we need a similar institution to develop personalism in management. Two papers by Rostworowski (2009) and Drożdż (2009) are good examples of what kind of writing is required there. Then we need good disciplinary research based on personalistic thought. Papers of Uchnast (2009) and Trzebińska's (2009)

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8

papers are good examples of how it should be done in psychology. The same should be done in other domains related to management – systems theory, sociology, macro- and microeconomics, etc. Finally we need empirical verification of what personalism means in practice. Żmuda (2009), Pyrkosz and Żmuda (2009) and Prokopowicz (2009) show how it may be done. There is a long way ahead. We hope, however, that with the readers of this volume, who are convinced by our arguments, we may show critical management scholars a new, interesting and promising research area.

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9

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Abstrakt

Krytyczne badania w zakresie zarządzania starają się odnieść do wielu zagadnień z zakresu zarządzania, z którymi tradycyjne badania i teorie zarządzania nie mogą sobie poradzić od wielu lat. W tomie tym proponujemy aby personalizm stał się podejściem, które może zainspirować wielu i dać nowe perspektywy wielu krytycznym badaczom zarządzania. Zaczynamy od dwóch tekstów filozoficznych. Jeden dotyczy samostanowienia (Rostworowski 2010) drugi problemu komunikacji (Drożdż, 2010). Pokazują one jak pojęcia antropologii filozoficznej mogą wpływać na myślenie w dziedzinach bliskich studiom krytycznym. Wraz z artykułem Uchnasta (2010) wkraczamy w zakres psychologii i możemy zobaczyć jak podejście personalistyczne zmienia sposób patrzenia na predyspozycje i kompetencje. Artykuł Trzebińskiej (2010) prowadzi nas dalej do rozumienia świata stawiania celów i orientacji na cele. Trzy ostatnie teksty pokazują CMS w badaniach empirycznych praltyki menedżerskiej. Pierwsze jest to partycypacja w zarządzaniu projektami osobistymi związanymi z pracą (Żmuda, 2010), następnie zarządzanie zespołami projektowymi z różnym mniej lub bardziej partycypacyjnym podejściem, w końcu jest to problematyka zaufania i rola zaufania w zarządzaniu. W tym wstępnym artykule proponuję co przedstawione artykuły mogłyby wnieść do krytycznych studiów zarządzania.