

PHENOMENOLOGY AS THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BASIS OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

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Abstract

Background. The beginning of the twenty-first century has been characterized by the crisis in a lot of enterprises caused mainly by a strong technocratic paradigm (instrumental rationality) existing in the world of business. Within that model of management one absolutizes the role of mathematics in building business strategies, instead of focusing on good leadership in one's enterprise in order to increase its business potential. Hence, it seems that one should the technocratic model in education and managerial actions and introduce the personalistic-phenomenological model.

Research aims. Proposing new methods of management (organizational development) in order to establish ontologic-ontic coherence of management in an organization, which should originate in the form of the application of Martin Heidegger's ontology to management sciences, especially those that are used for diagnosis of social and ethics problems.

Method. Close analysis of research of other scholars, such as Leszek Krzyżanowski, Janina Filek, Kazimierz Rogoziński demonstrates that there is a new paradigm of management needed (different than the technocratic model). Introducing the term "phenomenological lens" based on Martin Heidegger's thoughts as a tool of analysis in business and for conducting case study research on the radical change of management styles in the Semco company – based on information from organizational documents of Semco and Ricardo Semler's autobiography. Phenomenological analysis according to the "3i" formula confirms Semler's business philosophy to be an excellent exemplification of good leadership.

Key findings. Improving the dominant management model must be preceded by philosophical reflection, hence, by personalistic phenomenology that recognizes a human being as a conscious person experiencing oneself and others. Martin Heidegger's, Max Scheler's and Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka's thoughts are the major inspiration in the creation of such a new paradigm of management. The phenomenological lens focusses on what is ontological and what is ontic, existential and existent (in Heidegger's sense) is the key concept of the phenomenology of management and, at the same time, a crucial instrument in the diagnosis and development of an organization since it allows for more accurate analysis of its structures – both from the philosophical (ontological) and scientific (ontic) perspective. For the phenomenological lens, as a method of analysis in contradiction to other tools of analysis, provides a view of an enterprise not from one, but from different perspectives. Hence, it provides information regarding a complex image of an enterprise, using it as a meta-method in business ensuring ontological-ontic coherence of an analyzed object, and, ipso facto, contributes to the development of a strategy for improvement of that object.

Keywords: instrumental rationality, phenomenological praxeology, phenomenology of management, ontological-ontic coherence, "3i" formula, moral flight, good leadership

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INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the twenty-first century is characterized, by many morally questionable phenomena in the world of turbo-capitalism. The negative phenomena in the economic sphere have prevented different types of programs from being implemented in the framework of business ethics. However, the recent serious moral crisis in the business world has testified to the fact that it is not a sufficient instrument. Reducing business ethics to a code of ethics appears to be an overly broad simplification. It appears that the issue of ethics in business is less dependent on the number of codes of ethics, and more on the perception of their role by entrepreneurs and managers. Often, business ethics is treated instrumentally and even used as a kind of screen for fraudulent practices.

At the core of the crises that plagues the contemporary world is a fascination with mathematical formula, that is – instrumental rationality. Absolutizing the role of mathematics in building business strategies has become one of the main determinants of economic crises. Managerial education is dominated by a similar pattern of thinking. It seems that we should abandon in education the “One-Dimensional Man” model and introduce the personalistic-phenomenological model. It has outstanding qualities of ethics and didactics, moreover – it allows us to create a coherent philosophy of managerial education. It should be emphasized that the key issue in management is ethical leadership. Phenomenological analysis shows that for ethical leadership – as noted by Max Scheler – “moral flight” is necessary. Personalistic phenomenology allows the construction of stable foundations of management sciences. Furthermore, it is both theory and practice. Phenomenology provides a positive answer to MacIntyre’s question: why are business ethics problems unsolvable? (MacIntyre, 1982).

The Instrumentalization of Business and Management Sciences

The events of the early twenty-first century in the American economy demand a critical look at the American model of business and corporate social responsibility (CSR). A series of bankruptcies of powerful U.S. companies led by Enron is just the tip of the iceberg – they showed that ethics had become a sublime instrument for manipulating consumers, employees and other stakeholders. Even companies which had strict ethical codes and special teams for social responsibility become embroiled in scandals. As noted by Sójka:

Enron, Worldcom, Andersen and other affairs have shown that there will apparently always be some potential ethical failures which cannot be removed by special programs,



officers or conduct codes. Often they merely provide a false sense of security, or even create a kind of curtain, behind which you can do whatever you like (Sójka, 2005, p. 8).

Therefore, it is fully justified to ask the question of whether business ethics can be treated instrumentally and whether it can be used as a kind of a screen for fraudulent practices. Many examples indicate the inefficiency of business ethics as a reflection that cannot move beyond declarations, simple recipes and high-sounding phrases. The pressure exerted on businesses means that companies accept various standards of business ethics and social responsibility, but often only declaratively. The causes of this situation are primarily (Filek, 2005, p. 109):

1. Recognition of profit as the principal aim of economic activity;
2. Hierarchical organizational structures;
3. “impersonal” decision-making;
4. The dominant position of business in society;
5. Economic activity as a game.

Profit is the most frequently cited purpose of the existence of each company. Profit itself is not wrong, on the contrary – as stated by Matsushita – it is a reward for good work, but on the condition that it participates in healthy competition (Bombała, 2000, p. 105). However, if the pursuit of profit becomes an end in itself, it leads to extreme technocratic rationalism – Technopoly (Postman, 1993). Rationalism so understood, is a threat to ethical conduct and it means that you use only the criteria of efficiency, without taking into account others, such as social or ecological criteria. This approach has been accepted in the literature, under the name of instrumental rationality. It means reaching targets at any cost and an objective treatment of all stakeholders. In the case of Enron, it was the instrumental use of ethics (especially public relations techniques) that allowed it to increase the confidence of shareholders. At the same time, it concealed the true results and cultivated the now-infamous “creative accounting”. It even resorted to intimidating its own workers who tried to expose the truth.

Large enterprises are still dominated by hierarchical structures. The power of top managers is disproportionately large to the power of other stakeholders. The only way of limiting the temptation of unethical activities at this level is to introduce a system of legal restrictions that prevent such a large concentration of power remaining out of control. A good example of restricting managers from seeking absolute power is the German system of co-management (*mitbestimmung*) (Bombała, 1995).

Another feature is the “impersonal” nature of decision-making. It appears that managers, as individuals, often would make decisions other than the decisions they would make in the name of the company. In practice, this means that they remove decision-making processes from ethical standards. The antidote to this phenomenon is the “triple bottom line” of



management, which seeks solutions to economic problems which are at the same time: economically profitable, ecologically friendly and socially responsible – 3E.

Some companies have achieved such a huge scale and influence that the individual has become invisible. The internal complexity of conglomerates often leads to the ignoring of the individual, regardless of the position he/she holds – people are merely resources like raw materials, financing, etc. Employees are interchangeable and reproducible resources. The best way to change the situation is to radically depart from technocracy and the introduction of servant leadership and the empowerment of employees (Bombała, 2010b).

A very dangerous phenomenon is the identification of economic activities viewed as a game. Most proponents of this approach believe that a game is not subject to moral norms, and only consists of the rules of the game itself – in this case, the rules of the market-as-a-game. With these assumptions, economic activity itself takes on an enforced autonomy. This confusion between games and markets is fraught with consequences and leads to the identification of all human life as a game. Tischner warned against such behavior:

It can be assumed that life is a game, and man is a player, but what is left for us? (Tischner, 1998, p. 64).

Treating business as a game is dangerous. Managers are important creators of social reality, regardless of whether they want to or not.

The concerns listed above should also include the negative phenomena in the sphere of marketing (Bylok, 2004, pp.61-71). Affective components – the so-called “marketing of ideas” – in advertising are increasingly being used (Maciejewski, 2003, p. 162). It uses natural human emotions and brings them to elicit a specific behavior. The marketing of an idea is the exploitation of the positive perception of altruism. Altruism is used as an additional source of profit.

Filek (2005) formulated interesting proposals to remedy this situation. She proposed to connect profit with social and ethical values, so extreme technocratic rationalism would have no chance of success (Filek, 2005, 111). But how to convince managers? After all, business ethics is just such a purpose. It should be noted that a very important point is the process of managerial education which, unfortunately is based almost entirely upon instrumental rationality (Bombała, 2008).

In Search of a New Paradigm of Management Sciences

The current methods of research in management sciences do not allow for an adequate reflection of reality. A systemic approach and structuralism, which are the basis of the analysis of an organization and a market, have



serious methodological shortcomings: the primacy of a holistic approach and a tendency to bind different items in a petrified structure. The structure is recognized (defined) as a set of components – a system. This analysis concentrates on the feedback between system elements, rather than intrinsic differences between them. Therefore, the structure tends towards petrification.

Criticism of the technocratic paradigm in management sciences leads to the conclusion that it is necessary to change the method – a "new paradigm" is needed. As stated by Rogoziński (2008), the technocratic paradigm of management has been fixed by the material production process – technological-efficiency optimization has become the norm of human behavior in organizations. A new paradigm is being created in the poetic/naturalness/service process and assumes the autonomy of behavior. Phenomenology has significantly contributed to this process. Rogoziński (2008) states that phenomenology reduces the risk of creating petrified structures because, due to interpreting meaning and inquiring as to the sense of it, it allows a deeper understanding of reality.

Phenomenology in management is a part of an ideological trend, which is rightly grasped by Krzyżanowski's eco-empathic conception of management (Krzyżanowski, 1999, p. 271). He criticizes managerism, stating that modern managerism with its untamed desire for efficiency over everything and the ideology of success is not within the vision of the world in an era of transition from modern to postmodern era, where we need to rethink the relationship of man to nature, man to man and transform the ethos of science and its relationship with this practice. Eco-empathic conception of management is associated with a sustainable and balanced development which signifies the mutual relationships and interdependence of many phenomena (Bombała, 2013b). The paradigm of sustainable development requires a comprehensive view of the previously considered segmental issues: economics, ecology and ethics. The key in the phenomenology of management – empathy – is a factor of ecology. It comprises both the activities of "hard" – the technical and "soft" – social. This idea is giving concrete form to „the triple bottom line” of management, which seeks such solutions to economic problems which are at the same time economically valuable, ecologically friendly, and socially responsible.

Moving away from the structure to the "interpretation" is a widespread phenomenon in the social sciences. Rigid structures, "hard" variables useful for the instrumental positivist vision of action (exemplified by behaviorism, exchange theory, game theory, rational choice theory) are being replaced by more subtle research instruments which correspond to a "soft" (axiological) vision, focused on meanings assigned by human activities of the self and others (such as symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, cultural studies and visual sociology).



Khalilov (2013) rightly states that phenomenology has a special place among the philosophical teachings, which try to create an integrated view of the cognitive process in the 20th century. Phenomenology appears as a new stage in the development of the history of Western thought:

There was a need to the real great philosophy. Max Scheler's phenomenological realism, Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception and such other new phenomenologies were not, in fact, a direct continuation of Husserl's teaching, but were the result of the inclinations towards becoming distant from it in different directions as well as towards approaching philosophical problematic. And finally, we encounter the phenomenology of life and with the return back to the real great philosophy. The guarantor of this return is Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka who is one of the distinguished philosophers of the present day. Poles coalesce on the top. If the West truly wants to move away from its rationalistic traditions, instead of searching the alternatives for logic and sensory experience, it should be found in the methods which could complete them and rescue mankind from the one-sided thought and from the syndrome of 'alienation', and pave the way for moral richness (Khalilov, 2013, pp. 7-8).

Tymieniecka's "phenomenology of life" lays out a further direction for investigations, not only for philosophical ones. Assumptions concerning the creative nature of man may provide a basis for new developments of classical problems of ontology, epistemology, axiology and anthropology, as well as of social science and art. She rightly states that rationality is not a privileged way of knowing. There are instinctive and intuitive signposts in the course of a life (Tymieniecka, 2011, p. 15). It is very important to distinguish the difference between "constitutive" and "creative" subjectivity. Tymieniecka considers that the "passive" nature of classical phenomenology cannot explain the creative activity of man. Therefore, it introduces the phenomenon of man, beside the constitutive function – the creative function. In contrast to the intentional object, the object of the creative act is not determined by the inner nature of the acts, but it is "the object of the search". Creative imagination plays a major role and as a real "dynamis" of the human world is based not only on knowledge but also on the world "elements" and passions. A similar parallel is between classical praxeology and phenomenological praxeology. Tymieniecka's phenomenology as an extension of Heidegger's and Bergson's philosophy is an important component of the phenomenological praxeology. Her phenomenology, centered around the creative experience, provides a good basis for the analysis of management understood as creating a "co-create space" (Bombała, 2014a).

Management Sciences in the Phenomenological Lens

Heidegger's ontology (hermeneutic phenomenology) is useful in the analysis of the modern enterprise, which is a cog in the mechanism of turbo-



capitalism. Previous thinking about reality – in his opinion – contributes to the fact that modern civilization deserves to be called "the era of fulfilled nonsense". He states that a man has a variety of ways to interpret his existence – ontological and ontic – and should make this interpretation:

Not only does an understanding of being belong to Da-sein, but this understanding also develops or decays according to the actual manner of being of Da-sein at any given time; for this reason it has a wealth of interpretations at its disposal. Philosophical psychology, anthropology, ethics, "politics", poetry, biography, and historiography are pursued in different ways and to varying extents the behavior, faculties, powers, possibilities and destinies of Da-sein. But the question remains whether these interpretations were carried out in as original an existential manner as their existentiell originality perhaps merited. The two do not necessarily go together, but they also do not exclude one another. Existentiell interpretation can require existential analysis, provided philosophical knowledge is understood in its possibility and necessity. Only when the fundamental structures of Da-sein are adequately worked out with explicit orientation toward the problem of being will the previous results of the interpretation of Da-sein receive their existential justification (Heidegger, 1996, p. 16).

Improving the dominant management model must be preceded by philosophical reflection. Personalistic phenomenology, which recognizes man as a conscious person experiencing oneself and others, has particular values of application. This is the closest approach to the truth about man and, hence, is the most useful for a philosophical and ethical analysis of contemporary organization – organization as a community of work (Bombała, 2002a). In my phenomenology of management (phenomenological praxeology), the main instruments are the "phenomenological lens" and the "phenomenological perspective" (Bombała, 2010a, p. 29). A phenomenological lens focuses on what is ontological and what is ontic, existential and existent – in Heidegger's sense. It allows for more accurate analysis of the object – both from the philosophical (ontological) and scientific (ontic) perspective. The phenomenological lens is the key concept of the phenomenology of management and, at the same time, a crucial instrument in the diagnosis and development of an organization. As a meta-method, it gives a view of the object from different perspectives and acts as a "binder", linking diverse factors affecting this object. The notion of the phenomenological perspective is wider and includes a greater time range – it is similar to the "hermeneutic circle".

In order to conceptualize the phenomenological approach of management I have created a tripartite conceptual framework: phenomenology of life – phenomenological praxeology – phenomenology of management. Phenomenology of life provides an idea, a way of perceiving the world; phenomenological praxeology provides general directives for an efficient operation, of which the most important one is the ontological-ontic coher-



ence of human action; phenomenology of management is based on the "3i" formula that combines phenomenological, hermeneutic, and heuristic methods.

From the perspective of the phenomenological lens "Phenomenology of Life" has an ontological dimension, the phenomenology of management owns an ontic dimension, while the phenomenological praxeology combines both of the mentioned dimensions creating a bond between the two phenomenologies (Figure 1). Such a tripartite conceptual framework is the basis of ontological-ontic coherence of management – both in theoretical, as well as in a practical context. The problem with the ontological-ontic coherence of management is related to the question of what kind of directives and methods of management are selected during the process of management.

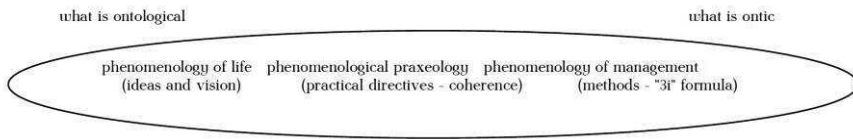


Figure 1. Ontological-Ontic Coherence of the Phenomenological Praxeology

Source: own elaboration.

The phenomenological lens has different functions. It allows, for instance, for ordering achievements of the theory of management in the continuum: paradigm-theory-conception-rule-method-technique (Figure 2). Using the phenomenological lens shows that some managerial conceptions cannot be applied only partially or cannot be connected with the elements of other conceptions. As a result, we can conduct the research of organizations more rationally and improve their functioning at the same time.

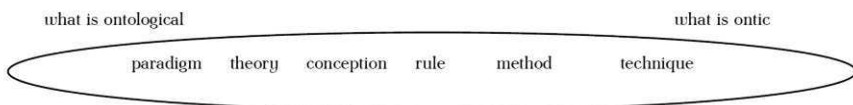


Figure 2. Ordering Function of the Phenomenological Lens

Source: own elaboration.

The ordering function of the phenomenological lens is also important in management practices, as it provides the consistency of undertaken actions – ontological-ontic coherence. Ontological-ontic coherence is a basic practical directive of the phenomenological praxeology. There is a certain analogy to Antonovsky’s (1979) concept of “sense of coherence”, but not only in the subjective sense (for a person), but also in the objective sense (inter-subjective and cultural). “Sense of coherence” is the key term in An-



tonovsky's salutogenic theory. He states that the human being is constantly exposed to stressful events to which he or she reacts in order to maintain his or her dynamic equilibrium and health. The sense of coherence is the foundation of human health and human activity, as it allows the human being to deal with stress, withstand various hardships, and overcome possible disease more easily. The sense of coherence has three components: comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. People with a high sense of coherence undertake various tasks and are willing to work intensively to accomplish them, while in comparison with individuals of a low sense of coherence, they meet diverse requirements imposed on them better, take more active strategies while dealing with difficulties, and are more capable of using available resources.

Such coherent concepts are, e.g. servant leadership and *gemba kaizen*. At the same time these are both philosophies and management methods (Figure 3 and Figure 4). The coherence of this type of concept is preserved in its native culture, hence the difficulties in transferring it to another.

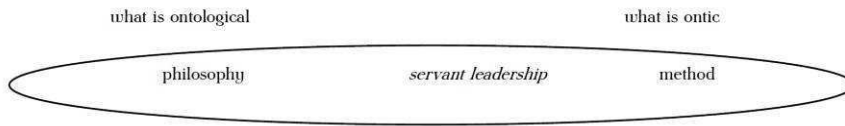


Figure 3. Ontological-Ontic Coherence of Servant Leadership

Source: own elaboration.

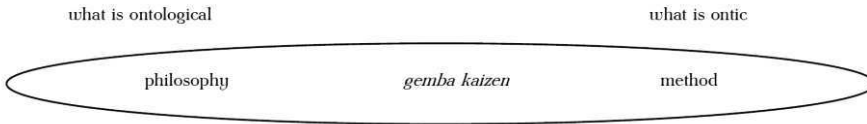


Figure 4. Ontological-Ontic Coherence of *Gemba Kaizen*

Source: own elaboration.

For successful management of change, coherence is necessary (comprehensibility, manageability, meaningfulness) between the project and the social reality (social expectations). The sense of meaningfulness in work is very important.

The main method of the phenomenology of management is the “3i” formula (Bombala, 2012b). This formula consists of three terms: interpretation, inspiration, illumination. Interpretation is a specific variant of the hermeneutic method and is used in a critical analysis of the literature to increase knowledge. Inspiration, which is a variation of the phenomenological method, through an in-depth case study, is used to define the problems (the search of their essence) and also to obtain diagnostic skills. Illumination (creativity), a variation of the heuristic method (phenomenologi-



cal deconstruction), helps in creative design, which serves to strengthen self-confidence. Specular reflection of the teaching “3i” formula is itself a “3i” formula in the diagnosis and improvement of the organization. In this case, it describes three ways to develop the organization:

1. Illumination (revelation) describes the creation and development of an autonomous vision of the organization by its founder (e.g., Ricardo Semler’s vision of company);
2. Inspiration is the process of creating businesses under the influence of ideas, beliefs, and patterns;
3. Interpretation reflects the most common pattern of the establishment and development of organization, which is based on the fashionable theories.

In practice it is important to use three simple rules: coherence between the internal states and external behaviour of the sender; an unconditionally positive attitude – acceptance of which does not depend on the behaviour of the caller; complete empathy and understanding and a temporary suspension of judgments (Rogers, 1983, pp. 105–106).

When we put the science of management in the phenomenological lens, we find that the traditional theory of organization and management is focused on the study of artefacts (Figure 5). Although Adamiecki recognized spiritual harmony as a key element of good management a 100 years ago (Bombała, 2006), a serious discourse began with the rise of business ethics. Phenomenological analysis demonstrates that the level of value is the domain of management ethics (business ethics), and the level of basic assumptions is the subject of philosophical reflection. There remains only one question to clarify: Which philosophical stream is most useful for the analysis and improvement of the organization? There is no doubt that phenomenological personalism offers the most human and pragmatic approach (Bombała, 2013a).

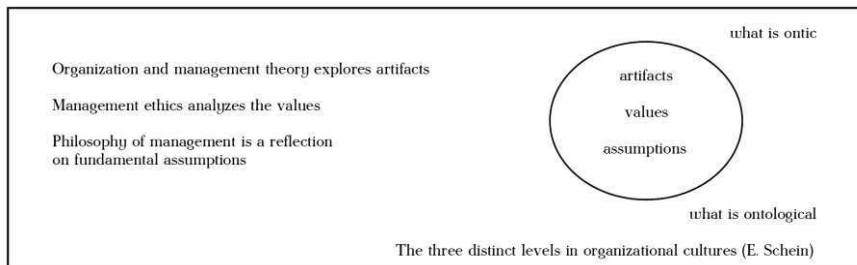


Figure 5. Management Science in the Phenomenological Lens

Source: own elaboration

A good example of integrating “what is ontological” with “what is ontic” is the subject of “Personalistic entrepreneurship”, taught in the Bogdan



Jański Academy which combines personalist anthropology and ethics with the basic principles of business (Figure 6). The syllabus “Personalistic entrepreneurship” has outlined the following educational goals:

1. To present the theory of the firm, including the personalistic concept of entrepreneurship (Economy of Communion);
2. The development of practical skills associated with establishing a company, its organization and management, including team skills;
3. Showing the pattern of personalistic business based on the example of Leon Harmel, Thomas Bata, Ricardo Semler, J. -Robert Ouimet;
4. Shaping the students’ personalities: the choice of reading material, which develops ethical and aesthetic sensitivity.

Ouimet’s concept of management is a good example of personalistic entrepreneurship (Bombała, 2014b). His concepts – “Our Project” – is an original document specifying that the main goal of every person working in a company is to ensure safety and happiness to his or her family. The second goal is to ensure economic profitability of the company, which allows every employee to keep the job and, ipso facto, to guarantee the financial security of each employee’s family. In addition, it is emphasized in the document that if everyone feels like they are being treated fairly, then, through the increase of silence, reflection and prayer, “a good atmosphere, the spirit of love and forgiveness” will be created in the enterprise.

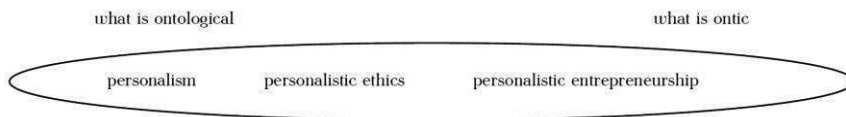


Figure 6. Personalistic Entrepreneurship in the Phenomenological Lens

Source: own elaboration

The key element in Ouimet’s concept is “feedback loop of value”, which allows for the modeling of dynamics of values and anti-values in working environment. Most importantly are the values obtained from parents, such as faith, hope and tenderness given by the mother, and courage, determination, wisdom received from the father. Among anti-values one can name inclinations to pride, greed, envy, anger, sloth, etc. “Our Project” consists of two “Integrated Systems of Management Activities” – ISMA. The first system – Economic ISMA(E) – is well known. Its main elements are planning, organization, coordination, motivation and control. In this system a person is treated like an object, people are perceived in the same way as material resources. Ouimet recognizes this way of perception as the main cause of market economy imbalance.



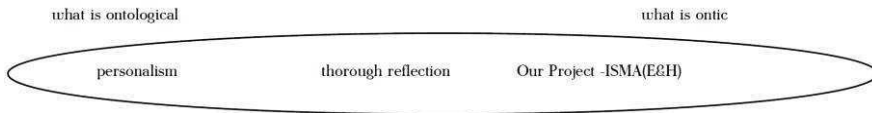


Figure 7. Ontological-Ontic Coherence of Our Project

Source: own elaboration

Our Project stabilizes the economic system by introducing Human IS-MA(H), which supports the personal development of a man at work (Figure 10). ISMA(H) contains values grouped in 12 categories: (a) dignity and freedom, (b) peace and serenity, (c) fraternity and solidarity, (d) humility, (e) truth and authenticity, (f) prudence and discernment, (g) the ability to listen and wisdom, (h) justice and love, (i) faith and hope, (j) responsibility and courage, (k) forgiveness and reconciliation, (l) performance and productivity. These represent three types of values: spiritual, humanistic and mixed values. While the first ones contribute to the personal development of a human being, and the second ones to the development of his or her social relations, the third ones allow an individual for both – personal development and development of his or her social relations.

Leadership in the Phenomenological Lens

The phenomenon of leadership was analyzed already in the ancient era (Plato, 1987); however, it was Weber who conducted a thorough analysis of this issue. The main concept in Weber's theory is the "dominion". In order to conceptualize this term Weber created a tripartite conceptual framework: authorities – domination – discipline. The authority is the ability to implement one's will in the context of specific social relations. Domination means human obedience to the command of a certain content. Discipline, however, is an automatic and schematic obedience to orders. Weber (1978) distinguished three types of legitimate rule:

1. Legal authority, which is based on the belief in the legality of legislation and the governments of those in power;
2. Traditional authority, which is based on faith in the existing tradition;
3. Charismatic authority, which is based on a commitment to the person recognized as a saint or a hero.

Ideal leadership is based on authority which is, firstly, legitimized by formal status, secondly, validated by being deeply rooted in tradition, and, thirdly, legitimized by a charismatic personality (Weber, 1978, pp. 212–297).

Initially, the issue of leadership was reduced to a description of the desired characteristics of a leader. This approach resulted in the so-called theory of classification of leadership styles that emerged as a result of research conducted by scholars Lewin, Lipitt, and White who identified



three different styles of leadership: (a) authoritarian, (b) democratic and (c) *laissez-faire* (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939, pp. 271-301). Researchers such as Blake and Mouton (1964) and Reddin (1983) developed further theories on the efficiency of various leadership styles.

A crucial meaning for the research on leadership was McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y which have been used in human resource management, organizational behavior, organizational communication and organizational development. These theories describe two contrasting models of workforce motivation (McGregor, 1960). In Theory X, management assumes that employees are inherently lazy and would avoid working if they could for they inherently dislike work. Thus, management believes that workers need to be closely supervised which results in the development of comprehensive systems of control. A hierarchical structure with a narrow span of control is needed at each and every level of the organization. According to Theory Y, employees may be ambitious and self-motivated, at the same time exercising self-control, for work is as natural to them as play. Employees possess the ability for creative problem solving. Given the proper conditions, employees will learn to seek out and accept responsibility, and exercise self-control and self-direction in accomplishing objectives to which they are committed.

In the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century researchers conducted the study in the framework of a contingency approach taking into account the different contexts of leadership. It was found that the drawback to the traditional approach to leadership was to treat the role of a leader as a relatively homogenous, uncorrelated to changes in the relationship between the leader and subordinates, or changes in the organization (Hollander & Julian, 1969). The most famous models of the situational leadership are: Fiedler's contingency model (Fiedler, 1971) and the modified Cognitive Resource Theory - CRT (Fiedler & Garcia, 1987), the Path-Goal Theory by Evans and House (Evans, 1996), and the Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Model (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

A breakthrough in leadership theory was Burns' concept of leadership. He introduced two types of leadership: transactional leadership where leaders focus on accomplishing the process of exchanging values with their followers, and transformational leadership where leaders focus on establishing a stimulating relationship with their followers (Burns, 2003). While it is true that the first style of leadership is a form of transaction from which both sides, the leader and the subordinates, benefit since they share common interests in frames of this exchange, it is also true that at the end of such a transaction no deeper emotional connection exists between those two sides - compared to the second style of leadership in which the crucial role played by not the economic, but moral aspect of the



cooperation between the leader, and his or her followers, together with their mutual commitment for the common cause.

With so many analyses of leadership, the question evolved from “what is the definition of leadership?” into “what is good leadership?” (Ciulla, 2004, p. 13). Ciulla defines good leadership as morally good and technically good or effective. She considers ethics the heart of leadership, and believes that the qualities of being ethical and effective are the essentials of being a good leader (Ciulla, 2004, p. 13). An example of such good leadership is Blanchard’s concept of servant leadership (Blanchard & Hodges, 2003). Blanchard introduced a theory of leadership in which the terms “heart”, “servant” and “soul” play the key role. In his opinion, in order to fathom the essence of leadership one should ask him- or herself the following question: am I a self-serving leader who satisfies self-interest, or a servant leader who serves others?. An honest answer to this question reveals the true intentions of a leader. Any potential leader must make some choices as soon as he or she gains the opportunity to influence the thinking and behavior of others. The first choice is to realize which is higher in the hierarchy of values, her or his own advantage versus benefit to those whom he or she is in charge of.

Even though in the mainstream analysis of leadership the transactional type of leadership is promoted, there is more and more studies on the subject of transformational leadership appearing. Phenomenology in management emerges as a form of continuation and development of the ideas of transformational and servant types of leadership, giving both of these concepts a solid epistemological basis (Bombała, 2002). Increasing the level of knowledge and skills of the staff in an enterprise diminishes the differences in qualifications between superiors and subordinates. Subordinates due to their increased knowledge become much more independent as employees than hitherto commonly assumed, and for this reason they request more empowerment from their superiors which leads to the establishment of their self-leadership. Thus they are more interested in finding partners for cooperation rather than “providential leaders” (Sikorski, 2006).

The phenomenology of management assumes that good leadership is based on recognition of dignity of the person of each stakeholder in an organization, which means that each and every single member of an organization should be treated not as an object, but as a subject while on the way to achieving the organization’s economic success. The phenomenological vision of managerial work goes beyond the “purely” economic interpretation of leadership in an enterprise, and makes the idea of “to be somebody – to make something” the guiding principle of management (Bombała, 2011).

In seeking to answer the question about the essence of management, we find the answer by “empathy” in being a manager. This response is personalistic leadership and servant leadership – and the associated em-



powerment of employees (Bombała, 2010b). Servant leadership is the American conception, very similar to the personalistic one. They differ in the way of justifying – servant leadership has the religious inspiration (biblical), personalistic leadership at the ontological-axiological layer is based on a personalism and at the epistemological-methodological layer – on the phenomenological method. Moreover, servant leadership has empirical character: the servant leader is a manager who in practice applies this conception to managements, it is a leader who serves (Figure 8). The basis of phenomenological leadership is communication, understood as the experience of self and others through dialogue. Full development of phenomenology in the sphere of praxis can be found today in Greenleaf's concept of servant leadership, in its basic principles: Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to the Growth of People and Community (Greenleaf, 2003, pp. 15-19).

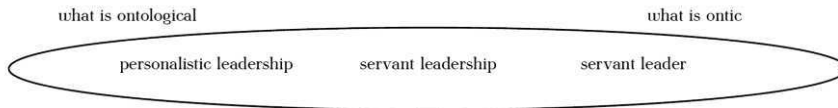


Figure 8. Leadership in the phenomenological lens

Source: own elaboration

Phenomenology also allows for the conclusion that the economism of modern civilization threatens human dignity (Szulczewski, 2010, pp. 11-37). The influence of an excessive positivistic treatment of economics has a negative phenomenon in business – the depersonalization of man. Depersonalization is primarily a result of the excessive display of “capital” of the economy and underestimation of other growth factors. In addition, the dominant technocratic paradigm of management has also played a role (Bombała, 2001). It is necessary to abandon destructive technocracy and develop new approaches to management theory and practice.

Management practices should take into account the development of human subjectivity, which involves the formation of the person through free and responsible deeds – one’s “own” actions. The search for meaning and identity and exploring the mystery of human life is of the highest value. It is this aspect of humanity and the human being emphasized by Ingarden (1987), rising to the concept of human self-realization through values. Although it is not a self-centered operation focused on itself, it is also not a narrowly conceived self-fulfillment in a key objective person, but the pursuit of the ideal of humanity itself, consisting of universal values: goodness, truth and beauty in relationships with others:

It is also true that his conscious activity is expressed mainly in three basic forms: as knowing what is true, as doing Good, and as a shaping Beauty. But it still remains, to



clarify what constitutes the essence of his creative activity, and what is the relationship between the world created by man and Nature, in which he is located at the beginning of his activities (Ingarden, 1987, 13).

This latter question remains, despite many attempts, still open. It should be emphasized that Ingarden's vision requires for its realization – as stated Scheler (1987) – a “moral flight”, and this is found today in the realm of servant leadership.

Scheler's phenomenological anthropology with the idea of “moral flight”, is precisely one of the most important inspirations in building ethical leadership in organizations. Scheler (as with Ingarden) recognizes a person in the aspect of ethical values. Scheler makes a hierarchy of values, placing utilitarian value (to make life easier) on the bottom, then the hedonic (fun and use), higher – vitality (health), even higher – spiritual (culture, knowledge, morality), and the highest – the absolute values (religious). He sees man as both a vital dilettante (unlike animals) and decadent, who also transcends all, even his own life, because he is “the intention and gesture of transcendence” (Scheler, 1987, 25). A person rises above life, thanks to factors such as the spirit manifested in a variety of intentional acts, which are the continuous striving towards a goal. The basis of a person is dynamism and action, especially the act of “moral flight”. Access to what is understood as entity can be achieved through an act of “moral flight”. This act involves the whole person, not just the psychophysical, but also the spiritual core of a person. The cognitive result depends on the degree of purity and strength of “moral flight”. Phenomenology of management establishes the basic principle of “moral flight”, i.e., it assumes that the development of the organization begins with yourself.

The basis of the analyzed issue is Scheler's approach to love and hate as the original acts in relation to the knowledge of an object. A man reacts emotionally, bestowing an object of knowledge with the primary emotion such as love or hatred (Scheler, 1986, pp. 228–318). Only on this basis is true knowledge possible. Thus, statement that the aficionado is always the forerunner of the researcher (Scheler, 1987, p. 272), is worthy of attention. This statement contains a deeper meaning, because it is not a purely sensual feeling, but rather the emotional spiritual experience that needs and creates value. For Scheler, love is a basic axiological experience, which is focused on values, and the object of love can only be that which is the bearer of values.

CASE STUDY – MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL CHANGE IN SEMCO

Semler's (1995) “business philosophy” is a particularly valuable application. A comprehensive analysis of cultural change in the Semco company –



according to the “3i” formula – suggests that he developed not only a practical, but also an ethical concept of doing business. Initially, his company did not differ from any other: it had a traditional organizational chart in the shape of a pyramid, regulations, instructions, etc. The majority of Semco managers were in favor of classic, autocratic solutions, such as strict control and exhausting, long hours of work. “Work hard, or you go” – was the general rule in the technocratic Semco (stage of interpretation). Semler, however, came to the conclusion that a radical change of management was necessary. He was inspired by a tale of three masonry masters (stage of inspiration). When they were asked what their work consisted of, the first one answered that he dealt with processing stones. The second one replied he used a special technique to form stones in a unique way. The third one smiled and answered, “I build cathedrals”. Semler wished his staff to consist of cathedral builders and Semler’s statement became a guideline for changes in corporate culture: “I’m going to be guided by intuition and to listen to experts less”. Semler began the process of changes from himself. He started with the problems of “lack of time” – the illnesses a lot of bosses suffer from. He analyzed its causes:

1. The belief that effort and result are directly proportional. It is widely recognized that a long-hour slog is essential. However, this belief is not true. Hard work alone is not enough: recognizing the right moment, the ability to seize an opportunity and a stroke of luck are also important factors of success.
2. The belief that the amount of work is more important than its quality. Reasoning like this draws the conclusion that a heart attack from overworking leads to a greater glory and it is even better to faint in an office – it means, as a Calvinist could say, that you are among the chosen ones.
3. The fear of delegating authority and a belief in irreplaceable people. This way of thinking results from the belief that tasks would be conducted badly if they are not handled by the proper person – naturally, by me. This, in turn, leads to a belief in irreplaceable people.

Identifying the causes of the illness he suffered from led Semler to an assumption that time should be measured by years and decades and not by minutes and hours. It is impossible to understand life in its enormity and complexity looking at a watch all the time. In this way, Semler discovered himself as an existence (*Dasein*) and recovered himself again.

One of his first moves in his new strategy of management was the liquidation of any kind of regulation and the implementation of common sense. It stemmed from the conviction that regulations make development more difficult. Semler stated that a longing for regulations and the need for innovation cannot reconcile (either order or progress). Regulations freeze



companies in a glacier; innovations allow them to conquer it by sledges. There are no absolute truths in Semco (Semler, 1995, p. 123). As a result of the introduced changes, Semco's corporate culture radically changed – it became a community (culture oriented to person). Nowadays, employees themselves decide about the amount of production and marketing plans, they participate in designing new products, they decide about their own salary, they have access to all the firm's documents, they take part in allocating decisions.

Semco's binding rule is the lack of rules: skepticism towards so-called proven recipes and openness towards new ideas (creative thinking). Such an approach relies on a total trust in employees, on treating them as equal partners. Semler came to the conclusion that everybody should be capitalists in capitalism. Hence, a share in the profits and management is a natural element of a capitalist company.

Decentralization, self-reliance and the responsibility of working teams allowed reduction of hierarchical ranks from twelve to three and to introduce, instead of the pyramid, a concentric structure. The key point is the hierarchical pyramid, which is a basic organizational rule of contemporary companies. Semler experienced illumination suddenly when he was resting on a beach (stage of illumination):

I was observing the gentle waves of the Caribbean and suddenly it seemed to me so obvious. Why not to replace the pyramid by something more fluid? For example, a circle. The pyramid is rigid and creates limitations. A circle is full of possibilities. Why not to try to round the pyramid off? (Semler, 1995, p. 226).

In this way, the principles of the concentric structure model were founded. The model consists of three circles and several triangles. The smallest middle circle – The Council – is formed by several of Semler's closest co-workers. They are called "the counselors". The council coordinates Semco's general policy and strategy and stimulates decisions and activities in the second circle. In the second circle, there are from 7 to 10 bosses of production companies, who in the new structure are called "partners". The last, and biggest, circle embraces all the remaining employees, so-called "co-workers". Triangles are scattered around the third circle and they indicate coordinators who conduct basic managerial functions. Circles allowed the liberation of people from the tyranny of the hierarchy. They could act as leaders, if they wanted, and to have such respect, which they earned, due to their efforts and skills.

This reflection on the economic activity of man, which Semler included in his autobiography, allows for in-depth analysis of the empathy in his existence and also in our own. It is something more than a case study, although it embraces an analysis of one company and it is something more than a textbook. Therefore, his autobiography can be regarded as a kind



of an introductory guide to the world of entrepreneurship – the entrepreneur's existence.

When we put Semler's autobiography in the phenomenological lens, we see that he managed to overcome the technocratic attitude and make the "moral flight" – in Scheler's sense (Figure 9).

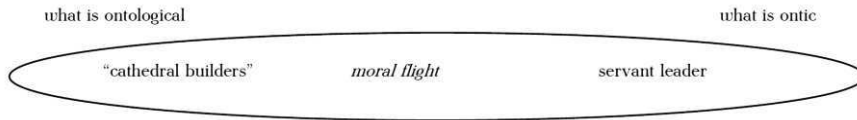


Figure 9. Semler's autobiography in the phenomenological lens

Source: own elaboration.

The idea-value, towards which he strove, was the metaphor of "the builder of cathedrals". As a result of internal transformation, he has become "the builder of cathedrals", i.e. a leader who serves – it was a condition for the transformation of others into "cathedral builders". As a result of Semler's moral growth, the company evolved into a kind of "cathedral builders guild" – a community of work. The result is an integrated system of co-management, in which human dignity and the value of his work are respected. This is the essence of the ethical business. Semler has formulated a kind of manifesto, an affable essence of human activity:

In Semco we treat them as adults. We trust them. [...] We get out of their way and allow them to work.

Phenomenological analysis confirms the Semler business philosophy to be an excellent exemplification of good leadership.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the proposed approach – the use of the phenomenological method in management sciences – is not a new idea. Already in 1982 Sanders (1982) stated that phenomenology was a new star on the organizational research horizon. The phenomenological method, as the study characterized by applying the "human perspective" while researching, allows searching for answers to the question about the meaning of the manager's activity as a leader in an enterprise. To answer this question is of crucial meaning for managers to play an important role in the contemporary civilization. Through "empathy" with manager's actions, phenomenology helps to get to know deeper layers of a manager's motivation through the process of his or her management. Phenomenological *Einführung* allows the manager to discover his or her "being" from the point of view of oneself as *Dasein*. Phenomenological analysis justifies the thesis that managers

who recognize a deep sense in their activity as business leaders in their organizations, are able to combine high management efficiency with social sensibility and empowerment of employees.

Introducing phenomenology to management sciences allows for the enrichment of their methodology and, above all, consolidates them epistemologically. The advantage of phenomenology are its epistemological and methodological research instruments that can be used to formulate the philosophical assumptions of both the management sciences, as well as effective and ethical leadership. Phenomenology becomes a serious alternative to the economic and technocratic concept of the “one-dimensional man”.

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FENOMENOLOGIA JAKO EPISTEMOLOGICZNA I METODOLOGICZNA PODSTAWA NAUK O ZARZĄDZANIU

Abstrakt

Tło badań. Początek XXI wieku charakteryzuje kryzys wielu przedsiębiorstw spowodowany przede wszystkim przez silny technokratyczny paradygmat (racjonalność instrumentalna) istniejący w świecie biznesu. W ramach tego modelu zarządzania absolutyzuje się rolę matematyki w budowaniu strategii biznesowych, zamiast skupić się na etycznym przywództwie jako czynnikiem zwiększającym potencjał rynkowy organizacji. W związku z tym wydaje się, że należy zrezygnować z technokratycznego modelu w edukacji oraz aktywności menedżerskiej, i wprowadzić model personalistyczno-fenomenologiczny.

Cele badań. Zaproponowanie nowej metody doskonalenia organizacji, pozwalającej na zapewnienie spójności ontologiczno-ontycznej zarządzania, a wywodzącej się z ontologii Martina Heideggera i będącej formą zastosowania tejże do nauk o zarządzaniu, zwłaszcza tych, które służą do diagnozowania problemów społecznych i etycznych.

Metodyka. Krytyczna analiza badań uczonych, takich jak Leszek Krzyżanowski, Janina Filek, Kazimierz Rogoziński, które uświadomiły, że potrzebny jest nowy paradygmat zarządzania (inny niż technokratyczny). Wprowadzenie terminu „soczewka fenomenologiczna”, który opiera się na myśli Martina Heideggera, jako narzędzia analizy w biznesie, oraz przeprowadzenie studium przypadku dotyczącego radykalnej zmiany zarządzania w przedsiębiorstwie Semco na podstawie jego dokumentów organizacyjnych i autobiografii Ricardo Semlera. W świetle fenomenologicznej analizy, według formuły „3i”, filozofia biznesu Semlera jawi się jako doskonała egzemplifikacja dobrego przywództwa.

Kluczowe wnioski. Poprawa dominującego modelu zarządzania powinna być poprzedzona refleksją filozoficzną, przede wszystkim opartą na personalizmie fenomenologicznym, który uznaje człowieka jako świadomą osobę doświadczającą siebie i innych. Myśli Martina Heideggera, Maxa Schelera i Anny Teresy Tymienieckiej są główną inspiracją do stworzenia takiego paradygmatu zarządzania. Soczewka fenomenologiczna koncentrująca się na tym, co jest ontologiczne i na tym, co jest ontyczne, egzystencjalne i egzystencyjne (w sensie Heideggerowskim) jest kluczowym pojęciem fenomenologii zarządzania i jednocześnie głównym instrumentem w diagnostyce i rozwoju organizacji, ponieważ umożliwia dokładną analizę jej kultury – zarówno z perspektywy filozoficznej (ontologicznej), jak i z perspektywy nauk szczegółowych (ontycznej). Soczewka fenomenologiczna, w przeciwieństwie do innych narzędzi analizy, zapewnia ujęcie organizacji nie z jednej, ale z różnych perspektyw, a tym samym dostarcza informacje dotyczące kompleksowego obrazu organizacji. Soczewka jako metamedia zapewnia utrzymanie spójności ontologiczno-ontycznej analizowanego obiektu, a tym samym przyczynia się do rozwoju strategii na rzecz jego doskonalenia.

Słowa kluczowe: instrumentalna racjonalność, prakseologia fenomenologiczna, fenomenologia zarządzania, spójność ontologiczno-ontyczna, formuła „3i”, moralny wzlot, dobre przywództwo

