

CONCEPT OF “ORGANIZATIONAL PHILOSOPHY” TERM IN MODERN SOCIETY

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Abstract

Complex social processes pronounced in modern society determine changes in the view towards an organization, the need to describe it not just in economic terms, but to evaluate all relationships formed in it – culture, social values, hierarchy etc. Which term would be the best to describe the relationship formed and would involve this entire spectrum?

The term “organizational philosophy” is polysemous. This article analyzes how organizational philosophy, which discusses the practical problems of society, can be understood by its old conception – by way of its public manifestation, how philosophy is applied in everyday life, attempting to explain practical problems of the society’s functioning.

Keywords: organizational philosophy, society, practical philosophy, sophistry, functioning of the organization.

INTRODUCTION

Our society is complicated and full of uncertainty [10]. Economical challenges of the market and an ever-changing information and technological environment create new tasks for modern business and industrial organizations, academic institutions, politics, or even personal life. In the philosophical and ideological aspect, progress in the economy (telecommunications, internet) diminishes human belief in values, politics, economic stability. Even science loses its reliability, because steadfast facts inspired by new discoveries are rapidly changed by ever newer ones.

This determines changes in the view about the organization; a need emerges to describe it not only in economic terms, but to look wider, to evaluate all relationships formed in the organization, culture, social values, hierarchy. Which term would be the best to describe the relationships formed and would involve this entire spectrum? Can the concept of *organizational philosophy* guarantee that?

The term *Philosophy* today is used in the most unbelievable contexts. It defines the modern world, its process. Worldwide conferences are being organized, magazines with following names published; “Philosophy

of Management“, “Filosofie in Bedrijf“ (Practical Philosophy), “Philosophy of Business“ etc [6]. Economics, politics and philosophy in the Copenhagen Business School are not only combined in one study programme, but there is a separate department established (Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy) [3]. Therefore, the old meaning of the term changes and limits of its usage expand.

The term *organizational philosophy* is usually used in various meanings, therefore it has to be analysed considering this diversity of meaning. This article analyzes the **problem** of understanding the essence of the conception of *organizational philosophy*; the application of the term “philosophy“ is emphasised, which today is polysemous and usually has nothing in common with the conception of love to wisdom as in ancient Greece.

Aim of the article – to find out if the term “organizational philosophy”, which involves the practical analysis of a society’s problems, can be understood as a sophistry in its old conception. Tasks:

- to evaluate what content modern economists, managers and specialists of other fields give to the term *organizational philosophy*

- to present the conception of the classical term *philosophy*
- to reason a possibility to use the concept of *philosophy*, associating it with other fields of social life

Chosen **research method** – analysis of the literature.

EXPOSITION

In the scientific literature the management of the organization is described with a few conceptions and their content is not always clear. These are the following concepts; vision of the organization, mission of the organization, strategy of the organization, politics of the organization, philosophy of the organization, and more, usually related to market economy, competitive abilities and social environments.

We are interested in the concept of *organizational philosophy*. The application of this conception to the organization, as something that gives sense to the elements of economic process' management, became a certain fashion. In the scientific literature different content is integrated into the concept of *organizational philosophy*. This content is often not discussed as if its meaning was naturally understood. The term *philosophy* used in that way usually loses its primal *Greek* meaning. However without a doubt an academic can freely use one or the other term and to give them corresponding content of the definition.

Economists, managers, sociologists present their own perceptions of *philosophical* or *organizational* concepts. It is stated that organizations that seek the real benefits have to coherently manage reserves of the information, the ones that include components of politics, administration, and technology. The possibility of the introduction of informational systems to organizations will be finally implemented only when the ways to balance all requirements of that organization's components are found. Organizational and managerial activity is a whole of organizations, and classical organization and management functions are planning, organizing, leadership, and control, which can be understood as an *organizational philosophy* [2]. With the intention to survive in the

conditions of postmodern society each organization is forced to create its own strategy and tactics, which are named as a certain philosophy of the organization. It is the description of the competitive market, distribution of the funds, exclusion of strengths and weaknesses, and comparison with the competitors and evaluated intended extent, up to which various objects of the organization and structural elements inside of it can invoke each other [7]. *Organizational philosophy* understood in that way can be identified with the organizational strategy.

Organizational philosophy is often identified with the view and identity of the firm and it's claimed that the position of the firm is its mission and philosophy of its activity. Activity of the firm is defined by the categories of demand satisfaction and purposeful activity rather than a declaration of the created product. Intended economic independences of the organization, the organization of cooperation, extent of the competition expanse, are defined. What is the meaning of the *organizational philosophy* we can judge from what firm has to do seeking normal functioning? [8] The mission of the organization, as common sense, is understood as philosophy, as purpose of the organization and the meaning of its existence. The purpose defines actions, which an organization expects to realize, and what type of organization it wants to become. The functioning of the organization reflects the aims and interests of various people and groups. The main groups of people who influence activity of the organization and determine its mission are shareholders, employees, clients, partners, the local community with which the organization communicates, state institutions, and other. The mission of the organization has to reflect the interests of all the mentioned subjects. The most influential are the interests of owners, employees, and clients – they have to be harmonized in the mission of the organization. Generally, the mission of the organization has to reflect such an organizational view that would show what it is, what it seeks, which means it uses in work, what is the philosophy of its functioning, dividing it from other organizations, etc. Consequently organizational philosophy evaluated in that way becomes identified with the mission.

Organizational philosophy is also mentioned when talking about problems of precipitation and quality. It is stated that the functioning of a businessman is always public and that the businessman of a developed society understands that. His activity is based on the philosophy of enterprise, its concept, which involves general rules, viewpoint to the manufactured production and services, management of such production, business relations between employees, relationship with the society, state, nature. The limitation of the Earth's resources determines a necessity for new enterprise and *quality philosophy* to come into existence [11].

A. Lužakov [12] writes that the term of the past history *ideology* is engraved in the consciousness of the masses as a term with a negative meaning. Now the more neutral term *organizational philosophy*, which has no negative meaning, is preferable. Along with this conception others like *mission* or *politics* exist too, which are not so popular and are used chaotically. That is why it is still not clear what the relation between their content and functions is. The author presents an interesting thought about the application of the term philosophy in those cases when authors write about ideology, but don't want to use that term. The concept of philosophy gives the phenomena more intellectual respectability, but if philosophy is understood as independent from the basis of economic existence within society, or even interests of some corporations, the term philosophy shouldn't be used.

However, organizational philosophy is usually understood in the context of the culture and image of the organization. When discussing formal and informal aspects of organizational culture it is claimed that the culture of the organization has to reveal the character of relations between people in the firm, to accentuate their duties and roles, to set behaviour, norms and values.

Organizational philosophy determines exactly what the organization wants to achieve, what is real, unique to it, at the same time naming values that need to be used, wanting to implement this philosophy. The only thing it doesn't define is the role performed by separate employees. The *culture* of an organization comprise of a set of norms,

behaviour, conceptions, values, rituals and ceremonies, regulations and beliefs that are accepted by the members of the given organization [1]; the *philosophy* of an organization comprises of rules and values, the following of which can help an organization to achieve its set tasks, as above.

By raising the importance of the image of an organization, it is claimed that organizational philosophy and the spirit of initiative dominating in it has a much bigger influence on seeking results than technical or economic resources, organizational structures, or time strategies. Image comprises of the whole of the outer and inner organizational audience's opinions. Leaders of the modern company clearly see that a favourable image of the company is the biggest value. It largely determines the choice of the consumer, creates a unique environment where loyal clients become less picky about prices and spread positive information about it, and allows the organization to save money on relations with consumers management. Image is mostly influenced by public relations, because using it you can form a positive image of the company [5].

Organizational philosophy has a diverse meaning and it is given different and the same time similar content. Using the term *organizational philosophy*, common questions of enterprise, organizational mission, culture and business institutions activities and other fields of practice of the society are discussed. Practically, particular economic, business and cultural problems are being solved based on market relations. So the question arises, *how suitable a term is philosophy in solving particular practical problems?* Is it purposeful to use it for applying to specific, very practical spheres of life?

First of all we need to search for an answer in the meaning of this term and the way it is used. The word *philosophy* has no clear and defined meaning. Even philosophers define it in a different way. If we look into the history of philosophy, explaining meaning of this term, we will see many various ideas, theories, concepts and problems. Up to the 19th century, the term "philosophy" was used more or less in its first conception – the love of wisdom. From the 19th century, the correction of terms

was happening and natural philosophy became a science, moral philosophy fragmented into ethics, logic, metaphysics etc. Philosophy became an educational discipline [4]. After 1945 “philosophy has begun to be treated as a very common outlook using all the possibilities of human thinking and means of cognition; observation, deduction, calculation, computers, love, ecstasy, word, silence, suffering etc. Philosophy pretended to encyclopaedism and at the same time sought to be systematic ... it existed everywhere“ [4].

At the junction of the 20th and 21st centuries, doubts are raised as to whether philosophy as a distinctive understanding of the world has a right to survive, because its problems are successfully solved by natural and social sciences. Philosophy is often identified with special subjects or even becomes a separate science or method, as happened with the theories of hermeneutics, phenomenology, and structuralism. Talking about the content of *organizational philosophy* a question arises, *is it a scientific or a philosophical category concept?* When we generally discuss the aims of science and philosophy we realize that they are identical – TO RECOGNIZE THE ESSENCE. To reach that aim the same methods are applied – logic and theory. It looks like that when we approach the problem in a simplified way. Essentially the question is much more complicated. With reference to A. Šliogeris [9], researching a subject scientifically, it needs to be done under artificial conditions, so its new characteristics could be revealed, which cannot be achieved in a natural environment. For example, if we want to examine a tree, it is not enough just to look at it and contemplate. First of all we need to pull it out, cut it, affect it with acids, burn it etc, and in that way acknowledging its defined features. Various sciences such as physics, chemistry, biology, can be formed from experiments like that. The same can be told about a social organism, about its miscellaneous internal organizations. Characteristics of the things and parts of the structure of the society are endless, just as qualitatively understood world is. That’s why it’s obvious that science can exist as a whole of evolving branches of science. In turn,

scientists never ask a question if it can’t be answered based on empirical experience. So what questions does *organizational philosophy* have to answer? By the opinion that philosophy is a love for wisdom, different from science, because it can perceive being itself, its organization and world as a whole, you can get an idea that such term shouldn’t be used. Philosophy reflects things as they really are, without being put in artificial conditions, not depending on the human, existing in an unchanged natural environment. Even an artificial world made by a human philosopher understands as harmony and not his own made reality. A philosopher raises such questions, which can’t be answered by any methods of the science. In the meantime *organizational philosophy* raises specific, practical problems of society’s organization. Philosophically thinking, reality is theoretically understood in a certain emphasised view, subjectively, because the whole of experience is subjective and relative, and hence human. On the other hand that whole actually doesn’t exist. We only notice fragments of transcendence, that form a particular mosaic of reality, which is given a philosophical meaning. Philosophers who teach those mosaics present them in various ways, because they use various impressions and life experiences. It means each philosopher expresses his own unique viewpoint about the world but doesn’t declare it as the only one possible. Philosophy always observe reality through the particular person. However *organizational philosophy* raises and solves particular pragmatic problems dependant on certain set tasks and conditions in society. Philosophy, opening up the relativity of personal relationships, conceptions and institutions, at the same time shows that a definite basis of being and certain matters, such as the transcendence of being and its phenomena, which can’t be destroyed or ignored, exist. Philosophers analyzing transcendence and its manifestations without any practical reasons try to achieve one thing – to understand what it is.

Organizational philosophy explains specific *realia*, ever-changing, having a practical meaning and is interested in the matters of social life. What real meaning lies in the concept of organizational philosophy? In our

opinion, the conception of organizational philosophy belongs to the scientific field, because its findings are assertive i.e. empirically verified. On the other hand, new ideas have always been created by the view of ancient philosophy, especially facing social crises, when their demand was highest. However those theories were realized by religion, politics or science. Having in mind that philosophy doesn't give any ultimate answers and tangible results, it is often considered as unnecessary. However, philosophy tried to be useful and to find relevance in everyday life. In A. Šliogeris's opinion, the form in which philosophy emerges in everyday life is sophistry. He uses this concept with no negative hue and claims that sophistry "is a way in which philosophy manifests in public, entering the everyday world of a person that way" [9, p.57]. In other words sophistry is philosophy, applied to the everyday life or applied philosophy, and a sophist "a wise man, the one who knows, or using modern language – specialist" [9, p.57]. How is sophistry understood here? The philosopher always asks about the reality without any shadow of pragmatism and the sophist tries to answer true-life questions. Transcendence, contemplation of philosophical state can't become consumer goods, but knowledge and words can be sold. And this is a field of sophistry. Thus the term *organizational philosophy* is adapted to everyday life i.e. it becomes a practical philosophy.

Does *organizational philosophy* mean a manner of thinking? Or perhaps the term "philosophy" is often used next to "organization" or "management" merely as some kind of embellishment, ornament, as those postmodern philosophers who are called designers of truth, cynics, anti-democrats, even if they were never like that? [3]. When it's talked about the philosophy of life and philosophy in life, sometimes philosophy is understood as a certain nostalgia. Maybe that is why today's managers try to become real philosophers, as we treat them in the old concept of philosophers, which came from Plato. It is not surprising anymore that in the 21st century interest in wisdom and preserving it in various ways arise [3]. Precisely the wise

activity – philosophy – as we have noticed, is applied in forming vision, mission, strategy, image, climate etc of the organization.

The concept of *organizational philosophy* in our postmodern society is usually understood as a standard of organization behaviour, as objective credo. It names the main values, expectations and principles that work in the organization, seeking its goals and pursuing its activities. In the changing market, organizations are forced to rapidly create and change their strategies. But they are meaningful and effective only when they are clearly understood. Also emotionally accepted by people of the organization and related with the higher values. It means an organization, in which people see the meaning of believing and identify themselves with it, want to belong to it, has to be created. Modern organizations seek to have employees who would have a strong emotional bond with it, because often not financial but human potential resources, their knowledge and experience determine the success of an organization.

Forming an *organizational philosophy* it's important to evaluate certain aspects, which are usually different than the ordinary practice. Organizations more and more often turn back to the person, personal experience of the employees. An organization forms such an image of the organization and its ambitions, which are based on the stronger interest and attention of the employees rather than strategic aims or results of the activity [6]. However it is not enough just to create an *organizational philosophy*, it is really important to retain it. Because an *organizational philosophy* that is composed of an organization value system, is based on feelings and emotions, it's not very distinct, but precisely because it can unify and bring people together. Organizations where people work spending the most of their active time gradually become the main self-realization and expression places. Even more, employees, especially intellectual ones don't want to "work for the organization"; they want to belong to it, to be members, identify themselves with it. If an employee identifies himself with the organization, he not only devotes his work time, but also the energy of his emotions, seeking that his organization would work the most successful [6].

The main meaning of *organizational philosophy* is to reach self-identification of the individual – employee of the company – with his organization.

CONCLUSION

- Using the term organizational philosophy, common enterprise, organizational mission, activity of business and culture institutions and other questions of social practice fields are being discussed, specific economic, business and culture problems are solved
- The concept of *organizational philosophy* can be understood as an identical category of both science and philosophy, meaning – to know the essence. In the sphere of the sophistry the term philosophy can be adapted to the explanation of everyday life, therefore organizational philosophy becomes a part of the practical philosophy
- *Organizational philosophy* is usually understood as a standard of organizational behaviour, credo. It outlines the main values, expectations and principles in which an organization works reaching for its goals and performing its activities
- The term *organizational philosophy* in postmodern society is used as a practical way of making a value system of a certain organization meaningful and doesn't object its basic meaning of love to wisdom

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