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Duncan's "Making management useful"

Making management useful is a process requiring vigorous development of meaningful action-oriented research. Professor Duncan has undertaken the task of exploring *researcher-manager cooperation* as it can build upon the existing theories of management and administrative behavior. Traditional academic norms, to which some management theorists still tend to adhere, are in direct conflict with the requirements of practical management, applied decision making and usefulness criteria of management theory in general. Is management theory going to evolve as an independent field of inquiry, self-sufficient and self-confident in creating and adhering to the norms of its own? Or, is it condemned to simplistic 'aping' of methodologies and norms of physics and other natural sciences?

Duncan attempts to identify those aspects of 'administrative research' which could ultimately prove conducive to establishing a relative autonomy of management research methodology.

It appears that the classical images of human rationality (economic man) or even quasi-rationality (satisficing man) are inadequate models of humans in organizations. They are deeply rooted in a simplified mathematical-mechanistic paradigm of physics. This is not to say that humans are in any sense 'irrational'; their rationality and a sense of values are of a deeper kind than the simple dicta of logical consistency would seem to suggest. Complexity of purpose, moral issues, conflicting and fuzzy value systems, continually changing circumstances and framework of their decision-making deliberations, and so on, are factors of so far unsuspected importance. So called 'value-free' inquiry can be now seen as a presupposition of remarkably limiting nature.

Duncan describes and documents how and why the interest in science in management was reinforced and legitimized during the late sixties and early seventies. However, indiscriminate and improper use of inductive logic, empiricism and statistical inference rendered administrative theory "crippled through unqualified borrowing from other disciplines": It is necessary to recognize and specify the boundaries of using scientific methods in management, Duncan insists.

The issues of holism versus reductionism are discussed next. Duncan admits the attractiveness of reductionism, due to its inherent simplicity, but cautions against its, also inherent, tendency toward oversimplification.

With respect to problems of research design, Duncan reiterates an increasingly recognized fact that studies based on extremely linear presuppositions, "have a high probability of confronting logical inconsistencies and paradoxical prescriptions when faced with the multiple criteria found in applied settings."

Despite their limitations, evidence reveals that quantitative-empirical methodologies form the base of the studies which are still most influential in organizational policy making. At the same time, Duncan concludes, the emerging humanistic view emphasizes that individuals are to be viewed as sensitive and emotional social beings who are much less subjects to strictly experimental understanding.

Similarly, the crude profit ethic is undergoing a radical revision towards a more complex reality: compromise balancing within the multiclient system composed of owners, employees, consumers and governmental agencies. Multidimensionality of a new bargaining-negotiation theory of administrative behavior is now being incorporated directly into descriptive models.

Professor Duncan observes that as the pressure for cooperative action research, emphasizing the value of manager-researcher interaction, builds, it seems that the climate is rapidly becoming supportive of such interaction. The willingness to break with the traditional methods of experimental science is increasing, and an emergence of new, self-generated academic norms within management "science" is becoming more and more probable.

Bartee's "Societal network paradigm"

In spite of the prosaic title of Professor Bartee's article, its richness, complexity, and originality of thought will take the reader by surprise. Is it possible

to even start approaching some understanding of the complexity of societal dynamics and interactions as *a whole*? What does it really mean to take a holistic view of social systems? Can a manager of human systems benefit from being exposed to such a broad and sweeping view? Undoubtedly yes — but the insights are not going to come easy. Although no formalism or mathematics are involved, the article is complex and the reader is expected to put some effort into its study, allowing ample time for reflection.

In the first part of the article (Sections 1–4), three distinct viewpoints of societal network (pairing or coupling of systems) are presented: *conceptual, existential,* and *transactive.* These three viewpoints are complementary and yet different; they are autonomous and function in contradiction to each other, yet they cannot be reduced to each other or studied in isolation. Existential network can contain the conceptual network but not vice versa. It can also contain the transactive network which in turn connects with the conceptual network. Social dynamics and activities are affected by the perpetual tension arising between these three qualitatively different networks.

On a more specific level, the reader is presented with a systemic derivation and definition of a number of important social concepts. Did you ever wish to acquire a deeper and clearer understanding of such widely used categories as *consciousness, self-awareness, subjective experience, social act, social action, social event, social episode, social norm, culture, social role, social position, social status, social drama,* etc., and their relationships and differences? Would such understanding be important in managing human systems?

Professor Bartee attempts to provide unambiguous definitions of such concepts — not as static isolated categories, but through their relationships, through their mutual dynamic co-determination.

The article is interspersed with a large number of examples from concrete social situations (regional government, local politics and economics, hospital, medical teamwork, family). These examples appear to be quite useful and the reader is advised to consult them often and perhaps attempt to construct the additional ones from a more immediate experience.

The discussion of systemic *purpose* or *goal* is especially illuminating. A purposeful system is defined through the goals, attributes and formal positions of *objects* of the system, i.e. its constitutive components. This is directly related to, and not in contradiction with, the increasingly operational views that

social collectives do not have goals and objectives of their own, per se. Only individuals do. It is useful, in this context, to distinguish objectives *of* an organization from objectives *for* an organization. Only the latter is operationally meaningful while the former is an empty anthropomorphism. It is hoped that Human Systems Management will stimulate further discussion of the significance of such distinctions.

The second part of the article (Sections 5–8) explores their relationships and their underlying contradictions. Societal network dynamics, its phases and development, are derived from the perceived conflicts among its components.

A whole new set of social concepts is introduced and defined: *personalization, collaboration, socialization, institutionalization, societal products, social situs, social station, social standing,* and so on. The hierarchy of social development is postulated as progressing from *personalization,* through *collaboration, socialization* and *institutionalization* phases, accompanied by changes in personal, intra-group, inter-group and societal positions. The degree of potential influence of the role occupants is enhanced through this process, as is the degree of potential power in the social situation. These potentialities are a function of the way in which role occupants develop social roles, statuses, and positions through the hierarchy of social development.

A rather interesting example of the above progression is described with respect to a family situation. An unborn infant, leaving his/her amniotic world, progresses from a purely personal position into a collaboration phase of social development. We are *born* into 'social relationships' of collaboration. The quality of these relationships affects our future social roles, statuses, and positions.

In order to conform to the current fashion, Bartee, too, invokes the notion of the *dialectics* of social change. He concludes that contradictions are inevitable when a role occupant switches his/her intentions from the activities of the teleological process to the activities of the phenemenological process. But it is important to understand that the potential for experiencing conflict lies within sensory and cognitive systems of individuals. There is no conflict or trauma 'out there'. The sense of 'objective' conflict is an illusion. Social interactions and transactions exist as *neutral* social phenomena and are given meaning only as the social events are interpreted through our sensory systems (see also Zeleny, HSM Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 179–180). These views directly challenge social

theories and ideologies based on a notion of conflict 'out there'. The role of individual past sensations (stored in the sensory system) and of the memories of previous subjective social experiences (stored in the cognitive system) are of paramount importance. The intensity of experienced conflict is unique to each individual, depending upon one's history of experience. The potential for change in the particular social situation is to be derived from changes of emotions, drive levels, and programs of behavior. Bartee concludes. Potential for change in the social situation is fueled by the accompanying potential for change in individual social positions and functions.

Bartee applies his theory to his own work, "I create a *contradiction* while thinking that I have created a 'Societal Network Paradigm out there' when all I can ever do is communicate an approximation of my *self awareness* of my own *conceptual societal network.*"

Youngs's "Management: alternative realities"

Professor Young starts his paper with the observation that management, as a research discipline and praxis, is characterized by a *multiplicity of approaches.* Naturally one tends to ask: should all these approaches be synthesized and unified, should they be used all in a complementary fashion, or should one of them be identified as being the 'best'?

Instead of facing the multiplicity of approaches directly, Young concentrates on two basic underlying paradigms:

(1) *positivistic,* characterized by beliefs in the laws of nature 'out there' and exemplified by empirical quantitative analysis, and

(2) *cultural,* based on the assumption of man-made rules and social idealism, exemplified by qualitative and legal study of such 'rules'.

Young tends to emphasize that positivistic paradigm produces a number of significant anomalies; he insists that there is no empirical evidence for its underlying assumptions. He makes a conscious point in favor of the cultural paradigm and discusses possible difficulties accompanying paradigm transformation. He recommends *paradigmatic analysis* as a means of identifying a 'more correct' view and correcting possibly faulty assumptions.

Young assumes that a 'valid' paradigm should lead to non-contraversial, non-problematic research and action. Paradigmatic conflict is indicative of paradig-

matic error. Such view could be self-limiting: what if there is *no* paradigm capable of providing a conflict-free framework of inquiry? Can paradigmatic analysis replace *paradigmatic synthesis*? Or is there a point to be made about a multi-faceted, multi-paradigmal approach; Young, at this point, believes in the possibility of 'correct' interpretation of social environment, in dividing paradigms into 'correct' and 'false' ones. But the possibility of complementary, synergistic interaction of multiple paradigms should also be addressed and explored

Negoita's comments on Young's article (this issue) and the forthcoming paper by Huff on multilectic approach are starting to move the discussions in the above mentioned direction. At this point, stressing the cultural paradigm at the expense of the obviously failing positivistic one, can be seen as a useful effort to achieve a more balanced view of complex reality.

One more note. Professor Young invokes the notion of man-made or invented set of 'rules' guiding and streamlining human behavior. The reader should perhaps be invited to interpret 'man-made' in a broader sense: although the 'rules' are the result of human action and interaction, they are not necessarily consciously designed or invented; many such rules are spontaneous emergents of individually independent and autonomous behavior. There are certain powerful rules of conduct, habits, customs, etc., which no single individual (or a group of individuals) would claim to have purposefully invented. (The appearance of a 'joke', often simultaneously in many different cultures, is a typical example of such emergent phenomenon). It is important to be able to interpret the notion of 'man-made' in such a broader sense.

Gorelik's "Bogdanov's tektology"

Do you also believe that General Systems Theory takes its roots in the work of Ludwig von Bertalanffy? Or that the approach proposed by him is the only one in existence? Or that it is perhaps the best one or the one most suitable for analyzing complex systems? You could be wrong on all counts.

Professor Gorelik undertook a tremendous effort in translating Bogdanov's *Essays in Tektology,* first published in 1912, and appearing only now in English (Intersystems, Inc., Seaside, California, 1980). In this article, he provides an informed summary and assessment of Bogdanov's thought and presents an excel-

lent introduction into the study of Bogdanov's monumental work.

A.A. Bogdanov has done nothing less than created a beautiful and powerful paradigm of *general science of organization* within natural, social and man-made systems. The inexplicable neglect of *tektology* by general systems researchers of the past and present is likely to haunt General Systems history for many years to come. Tektology is not only modern in its conception, it is dynamic and non-mechanistic, it does not assume away human beings, and it introduces theories of feedback, catastrophes, equilibrium—disequilibrium interaction, and autopoiesis at its very core.

Gorelik reviews basic concepts of tektology in a clear and concise manner. The reader becomes acquainted with notions of conjunction, ingression, egression, degression, disingression, conjunctive and disjunctive crises, positive and negative selection, convergence and divergence of forms, dynamic equilibrium, etc., and his appetite to go and consult the wealth of empirical examples and experience directly at the source should be sufficiently stimulated.

It is the second part of the article, "Relevance of Tektology to Modern Generalizing Sciences", where Gorelik lies the foundations for many comparative analyses of Bogdanov yet to come. Bogdanov concluded that the existence of social classes was not due to the distribution of ownership rights but arose because of the possession of different levels of orga-

nizational experience and skills by individuals in a given society. This is a thoroughly modern view, being echoed also in the underlying theories of *humanomics* and *human systems management*. Obviously, disappropriation of the means of production would not lead to a classless society, and it never did. Lenin's misinterpretation of Hegel, that is upgrading of opposition and conflict, rather than synthesis and harmony, as more permanent and productive forces of social transformations, was not acceptable to Bogdanov. Bogdanov was not acceptable to Lenin; nor to Stalin; nor to any other 'in' of any other 'ism'.

But why should Bogdanov's tektology remain neglected by western science as well? Why should von Bertalanffy—Wiener—Ashby mechanistic paradigm take hold at the expense of Bogdanov's humanistic and holistic thinking? There will be as many explanations as there will be writers on this topic. Perhaps, ultimately, it will all boil down to human ignorance, egotism, scientific envy and excessive competitiveness. But this remains to be proven.

Proponents of General Systems Theory will have respond to the 'discovery' of Bogdanov and identify the proper place of tektology in the history of generalizing sciences. But the task has only begun. Other names are lurking in the darkness of deficient memories and unexcusable ignorance: Have you heard about the systems theories of Bronislaw Trentowski, Stéphane Leduc, Jan Christiaan Smuts, Tadeusz Kotarbiński, and Paul A. Weiss, to name just a few?