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Family Enterprise from the Perspective of Paradigms of Organizational Theory

Abstract: The article is focused on different determinants of family business. It tries to identify paradigms appropriate for such kind of enterprises. The main aim to present the cognitive consequences of paradigms in organizational theory proposed by Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan.

Key words: family business, paradigms, organizational theory, cognitive questions.

Introduction

Family enterprises are entities joining the economical and legal logic of formal organization with social and emotional reality of a family. So, looking for a way of understanding of such a hybrid phenomenon we would encounter many definitions reflecting the different ways of understanding the Family Business. The paper tries to dig deeper and identify different paradigms on which understanding of family business is based. The consequences of the choice of a paradigm in FB analysis are significant and extend from basic definitions and fields of study, through methodology of research, to pragmatic methods of management. There are many studies using the paradigm approach to understand FB [Burrell, Morgan 1979, Wortman 1994, pp. 3–27, Uhlaner 2012, pp. 1–11, Dyer, Sanchez 1998, pp. 287–295]. The concept of a paradigm was treated by T. Kuhn like the universal pattern of scientific activity. The paradigm is looking for answer to the cognitive questions:

- 1) What is to be researched? (object),
- 2) What questions are supposed to be posed? (research problems),
- 3) How the results of scientific investigations should be interpreted? (insight),
- 4) How the research should be conducted? (methodology) [Kuhn 1996, p. 10].

The objective of this paper is to present the cognitive consequences of use of paradigms in organizational theory proposed by Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan for the understanding of FB [Burrell, Morgan 1979]. The use of several paradigms leads us in the direction of a multi-paradigm view of FB linked to paradigms of over-all organizational theory. The multi-paradigm approach could also be useful for understanding of family business and establishing epistemological foundations of FE [Gorzeń-Mitka 2015, pp. 97–109].

Burrell and Morgan Paradigms

Among several methods of distinguishing paradigms in management studies, the one that seems most popular in organizational theory and useful in the cognitive sense is the concept of G. Burrell and G. Morgan. This is mostly due to its general character that makes the theory applicable not only to organisational and management studies, but in fact to the majority of social sciences that address similar issues, such as: sociology, cultural anthropology, linguistics and, with certain restrictions, psychology and economics. Furthermore, the concept is deeply embedded in the philosophy of science and goes back to the roots of the basic cognitive dilemma: the objectivist vision of science based on the methodology of natural history and the subjectivist project indebted to the tradition of hermeneutics and aimed at the use of the “understanding” methods. Additionally, the juxtaposition of the ideal of maintaining the *status quo* and the change-oriented attitude accurately conveys one of the basic cognitive dilemmas both in social sciences and in management. In fact, depending on the idea of science they have consciously or subconsciously adopted, the majority of scholars in our discipline choose the model based either on the passive description of the existing form of organisation or on the intervention in the investigated reality stimulating its change. Apart from this, Burrell and Morgan’s classification is quite commonly and creatively used in management studies.

In order to conduct analyses in the field of management studies, I propose the use of three paradigms based on G. Burrell and G. Morgan perspective:

- 1) Functionalistic,
- 2) Interpretative,
- 3) Critical [Sułkowski 2013].

The postmodern perspective is not exploited because it cannot be perceived as a coherent paradigm. Additionally, it seems to be promising to include into the analysis a neo-evolutionary approach proposed earlier by N. Nicholson [Nicholson 2008, pp. 103–118] and L. Sulkowski [Sulkowski 2012].

Functionalism in theory of organization

The paradigm that dominates in social sciences is labelled as “functionalist” or sometimes “neo-positivist”, “systems” or “quantitative” [Holmwood 2005, pp. 87–109]. It sets the natural history as a cognitive model. The paradigm is a combination of the influences of neo-positivist philosophy and the systems approach together with functionalism observed in social sciences and cultural anthropology. The second source of such orientation is the functionalist approach in sociology and cultural anthropology [Layton 1997, Elster 1990, pp. 129–135]. It is characterised by a conviction that a social entity should maintain balance in the process of exchange between the elements of the social system. The majority of actions performed by the members of the organisation aim to maintain the higher order of the social system. The “function” is the contribution of the partial activity to the total activity [Davis 1959, pp. 757–772]. Functionalism in management leads to distinguishing a system of complementary organisational functions that maintain the operation of the whole (e.g. planning, organising, motivating, monitoring). A functionally unified and well-balanced social system guarantees harmonious and peaceful collaboration of its subsystems [Radcliffe-Brown 1952, pp. 192–193]. Functionalism leads to the deterministic methodology which complies with the neo-positivist spirit and enables comprehending the patterns and repetitions in the social processes within the organisation [Merton 1982]. The third area of inspiration for the trend is the systems concept which positions organisations at the level of complex social systems [Boulding 1986]. The Functionalist epistemology is thus characterised by the orientation towards creating integrated systems and the verification of truth using objective quantitative methods. What plays the key role here is the analytical approach which offers a possibility of generalising and modelling mathematically the research results. Social processes have an objective, cause-and-result character and are based on the following assumptions: the axiological neutrality of science and the non-interference of the researcher, the creation of possibly most general social theories and the mathematical modelling of the reality of social sciences. In social sciences, functionalists often apply the cognitive perspective of self-regulating social systems.

In management studies, functionalism is the dominant cognitive concept. The majority of theories aim at implementing the neo-positivist ideal of science. Knowledge should be objective and universal. The created scientific theories can be represented as casual sequences of variables which can, at least potentially, be mathematically formalised. It is also postulated that the theory of management should be highly universal and verificationist, and should have a predictive power. The tendencies that are most deeply rooted in this perspective include these directly connected with classical economics and technical sciences that formed the basis of management studies. The systemic and functional vision of the organisation is accompanied with the image of the human being who is close to the categories of *homo oeconomicus*. The quantitative methodology occupies an important position in such sub-disciplines of management as: management accounting, logistics management, or information management. However, quantitative survey methods are also useful for research of social, organizational phenomena like corporate culture and climate [Denison 1996, pp. 619–654].

Functional approach to FE stresses its dominant position in research and literature and is perceived as the canonical way of doing scientific work in the area of FB. The functional definitions of FB are concentrated on joining the perspectives of economical organization with some family influence. The main perception of FE is by the lenses of systemic approach, the consequence of which is splitting the enterprise and family into two subsystems [Pieper, Klein 2007, pp. 301–319]. Usually, in this paradigm, logic of the business is prevalent. Important topics of the research are: effectiveness and FE success factors, seen as connected to FB governance or management [Carlock, Ward 2010]. The functionalistic view of FB usually scrutinises cycles of stages of the development of FE [Gersick 1997]. The interpretation is based on the pattern of dependence of variables and usually business factors are in the group of dependent variables and family factors are more in the area of independent variables. A dominant methodology is the quantitative one, usually using statistical and standardised methods of research.

Interpretivism in organizational theory

The interpretive paradigm emerged in opposition to functionalism. Its most important sources of inspiration are social sciences and humanities such as: sociology, psychology, political sciences and cultural anthropology. The attempt to reconstruct the principles of the interpretive paradigm in management leads to several points including: social constructivism, the cognitive role of language in shaping the social

reality, and the practical aspect of cognitive activity. These epistemological assumptions are implemented in research programmes based on the qualitative methodology taken mostly from humanities [Blumer 1969]. Interpretive theories concentrate on describing interrelations in complex social and organisational structures based on the cause-and-effect model. The key to creating a scientific theory is comprehension, grasping the gist from the point of view of an involved observer or a member of the organisation [Sułkowski 2009]. Theories are not to be created in the spirit of objectivism and axiological neutrality, but they should expose the intersubjective diversity of meanings and interpretations proposed by various organisational actors.

In management studies, many theories related to organisational culture, HR management, supervision processes or management processes are based on the principles of the interpretive approach, the examples of which are: K. Weick's theory of enactment, G. Morgan and L. Smircich's management of meanings, the organisational identity as seen by S. Albert and D.A. Whetten or J. Pfeffer and G.R. Salancik's "networks of power" [Weick 1979, Smircich 1983, pp. 55–65, Pfeffer, Salancik 1978].

Symbolic interactionism could provide the epistemological foundations for FB studies [La Rossa, Reitzes 2009, pp. 135–166]. Interpretative paradigm of FB is concentrated on: culture, meaning and language. The symbolic frame is described and recognised in literature as a possible ground also for understanding several management processes like: FE functioning [Hall, Nordqvist 2008, pp. 51–69], strategic processes [Nordqvist 2005], organizational culture and identity, organizational communications. The cognitive processes base on interpretation and could be described as inquiry rather than a research. The interpretations are embedded in social constructivism and are characterised by a particular, situational and historical approach. The methodology of interpretive paradigm in FB studies uses several qualitative methods [Nordqvist, Hall, Melin 2009, pp. 294–308] like: narrative analysis [Dawson, Hjorth 2011], case studies [De Massis, Kotlar 2014, pp. 15–29], deep interviews [Lundgren, Andrén 2014], ethnography [Hill, Wright 2000, pp. 23–46] and auto-ethnography [Boyle, Parry 2007, pp. 185–190], participative observation [Erdem, Baser 2010, pp. 47–64], grounded theory [Benavides-Velasco, Quintana-García, Guzmán-Parra 2013, pp. 41–57, Handler 1989, pp. 257–276].

Critical approach to organization

The paradigm of radical structuralism, also known as Critical Management Studies (CMS), is based on the principle of the existence of objective social reality which still needs a fundamental restructuring. Social truths are hidden in the omnipresent

micro- and macrostructures of power. The role of social sciences is to uncover the concealed mechanisms of power, domination and social inequality as well as to change the social awareness and reality. The paradigm of radical structuralism adopts a critical attitude towards the social *status quo* and the achievements of social sciences. The role of the scholar is to discover the social mechanisms and, more importantly, to change the social reality. The character of change is more oriented toward a revolutionary or punctuated equilibrium approach [Gersick 1991, pp. 10–36]. The methodology of research has a qualitative character and is based on the engaged methods.

The critical tendency in management studies originates from the philosophical doctrines which adopt a radical vision of the development of organisation and management seen as the foundations of domination and power. This idea goes back to Bentham's idea of panopticon and Karl Marx's class struggle. In the 20th century, the critique of the oppressive dimensions of organisation was expressed by: the Frankfurt School, neomarxists, poststructuralists and postmodernists [Benhabib 1986]. What also serves as an important point of reference is Jürgen Habermas's critical theory of communication [Habermas 1985]. Considered the precursor of postmodernism, Michael Foucault raised the problem of power and domination as the basic driving force of social activities and the constant surveillance and control seen as the methods of enforcing obedience and submission in organisations and society [Michel 1976]. P. Bourdieu, who introduced the term "symbolic violence" [1990], was an important theoretician describing the objectively interpreted mechanisms of inequality, domination and power. Today, the continuation of his thought can be found in the critical approach to media and social communication represented by S. Hall and S. Deetz [1995]. Another trend following this direction is neo-Marxist feminism depicting the situation of women as a group that has been culturally dominated by: false consciousness, the manipulation of identity and symbolic violence [Oakley 2000]. The theories formed on the basis of the paradigm of radical structuralism (CMS) share a few common principles. Their studies in the field focus on the same subject matter which includes the mechanisms of power, oppression, instrumentalism and domination in organisations and in management. CMS is socially involved and supports groups subjected to oppression. In organisations, we have to do with inequality and granting some groups privileges at the cost of others. Unequal social relations are concealed, rationalised and ideologised within the discourse of management studies and the managerial discourse. The aim of CMS is to uncover the oppressiveness, domination and injustice, which would lead to the emancipation of groups discriminated against in organisations and in social life. There is a clear axiological orientation of the scholar and the manager, which means that both the

understanding of the organisation and the understanding of the management are inevitably embedded in values. The language and the culture are not neutral media, but they serve as tools of domination and symbolic violence. This means a tendency towards the radical criticism of the former managerial discourse. The possibilities of changing the oppressive, unjust and frequently concealed social order are connected with the use of the involved methods of organisational cognition and change which lead to the abandonment of “false consciousness”.

Critical Management Study is quite rarely used as a conceptual frame for FB analysis [Fletcher 2013]. The existing research and publications mainly concentrate on the oppressive part of family-owned firm activity. For example S. Ainsworth and J.W. Cox describe organizational culture of two FE on the basis of deep interviews. The interpretation “incorporates employee perspectives and explores how forms of control and resistance need to be understood in relation to their local contexts” [2003, pp. 1463–1485]. There is a limited quantity of research of FE using radical feminism lenses [Larty, Hamilton 2011, pp. 220–237]. We could find there studies focusing on unequal position of women in FB, but also some reflections about epistemological foundations of feminism in FE analysis [Campbell 2010, Zobudovskyl 2011]. The other aspect of CMS concerning FB to be found in the literature is ideological and oppressive function of leadership that could lead to exclusion [Collinson 2005, pp. 1419–1442]. The methods used from critical inspirations are: critical discourse analysis [Alakavuklar 2009], critical ethnography [Elliot, Kim 2002, pp. 377–388], critical narrative methods [A Foucauldian framework for discourse analysis... 2007], action research [Poza, Johnson, Alfred 1998, pp. 311–323].

Neo-evolutionary paradigm

The presented paradigms are only a small fraction of possible ways of dividing the family enterprise discourse. But going with the logic of looking for more general frames of understanding FB connected to organizational theory as a whole we could propose a neo-evolutionary approach routed in evolutionary psychology.

Evolutionism can serve as a basis for the explanation of many human collective behaviours which constitute the foundation of organisation and management processes. It is therefore worthwhile to look closely at potential uses of the paradigm and define further directions for research in the management sciences. These include a broad spectrum of social issues that are based on the evolutionary fundament, such as for example:

- 1) Biological roots of family and organisation in general,

- 2) Natural sources of the power structure,
- 3) Competition between individuals,
- 4) Organisation leadership,
- 5) Group and organisational bonds.

Organisational processes are rooted in human nature – most of our actions are of a social and organised character. As a social being, people are constituted by bonds and interactions with other people, which means that in the evolutionary process there evolves an organisational function that facilitates and optimises collective actions. Its creation requires acquisition by certain individuals of motivations and abilities that enable group work. These are passed on to an individual in the process of primary socialisation, by the family or a small social group. The assimilation of values, attitudes and models of behaviour is natural and happens through imitation or conditioning. To solve basic life problems related to food acquisition (hunting or gathering), protection and care for offspring, a primary group needs to cooperate.

Power and social hierarchy are not exclusive to the human world but are also popular in the animal kingdom. If by power one means the possibility to enforce one's will onto other individuals, then it is used by all primates and many other animal species. Hierarchy, reflected by the biological 'pecking order', is a statistical reflection of the accepted structure of power. Power and hierarchy play a special role in social species, since they put the leader not only in the dominant position, but also make her/him the decision-maker who no longer enforces his will onto isolated individuals but onto the whole social group. The consequences of such decisions are far more significant because they apply to all community members [Sułkowski 2009, pp. 59–69]. Competition, conflict and the fight for domination are inseparable attributes of exercising power, which in social species can have very sophisticated forms. Competition is related to limited access to resources and unlimited needs for individual survival and reproduction. Fights and conflict can therefore be observed both between individuals and coalitions in a social group [Campbell 2004].

Leadership, i.e. the emergence of an individual who makes decisions and enforces them in a group, is not exclusive to *Homo sapiens*. It is a functional solution which enables efficient performance of the organisational function. It is crucial, however, to develop criteria for the emergence and maintenance of leadership, which are usually based on authority. In terms of indicating social respect and the readiness of group members to abide by the will of an individual, authority in the case of a human being is not a measure based solely on physical strength. Although domination in its physical or social sense could have existed in the species' past, and in its present might unconsciously be a condition that favours authority, more important are the ability

to cooperate with a social group, which is based on communication, and the influence of a social model (an ideal leader, image, reputation and respect). Evolutionary research on leadership and power is in its preliminary stage and mainly covers the search for mental modules that interfere in these social processes.

From the point of view of the management sciences, the processes of learning and cognition of reality are crucial, and are related to the creation of a cognitive model that would enable problem solving. As shown by a rather advanced research in evolutionary psychology on the processes of learning, people as a species have a cognitive system which evolved to solve specific, open problems regarding survival and reproduction; the theoretical mind is merely a side-effect of functioning in an environment that requires creativity. This turbulent environment is mainly one's own social group, which provides individuals with great possibilities, but also the challenges of changeability, unpredictability, and creativity. In the research on human cognitive processes that are determined by evolution, one can point to syndromes of fast learning based on aversive experience and biological bases for conditioning, and the specific character of learning in the processes of primary and secondary socialisation [Seligman, Hager 2004].

Explaining the creation of group bonds, especially kin bonds, became one of the first problems in the modern application of evolutionism to the social sciences. According to research by W.D. Hamilton, O. Williams and R.L. Trivers, the reason for the development of kin bonds is genetic community. This also means that the strength of a kin bond is directly proportional to genetic proximity. In the social sciences, this is an important explanation, not only from the point of view of the sociology of the family, but also for the question of nepotism in society. More problematic is the interpretation of non-kin altruism [Axelrod 1984]. Nepotism is a culturally universal mechanism, which can manifest itself in the development of family businesses [Nicholson 2008, pp. 103–118] but also in creation of family cliques in companies and public organisations.

Conclusion - Comparison of paradigms

Comparison of Burrell and Morgan paradigms for FB it is not an easy task. The three Burrell and Morgan perspectives are very diverse and if we add the neo-evolutionary approach it makes the collation even more complicated. There are more similarities between functional and neo-evolutionary paradigms because of an objectivistic, qualitative and axiologically neutral orientation. However, functionalism is opting for a conscious control on organization, while neo-evolutionism describes organization

and human behaviour more as based on intuition and group dynamics. On the other hand, the interpretativism and critical paradigms are more subjectivist, qualitative and value oriented. The comparison is in the table below (). Such a tension between varied cognitive approaches could be the source of multi-paradigm comparison for FE showing different faces of such complex organizations.

Table. Comparison of Burrell and Morgan paradigms for FB

Criteria/Paradigms	Functional	Interpretative	Critical	Neo-evolutionary
The elements of theory	1. Statements and definitions 2. Hypotheses 3. Opinions about facts 4. Variables 5. Cause-and-effect relations	1. Theoretical constructs 2. Interpretations 3. Interrelations 4. Descriptions and studies	1. Theoretical constructs 2. Opinions about facts	1. Definitions 2. Hypotheses 3. Variables 5. Cause-and-effect relations
Definitions of FB	Enterprise, organizational system joining economic logic with family influence	Intersubjective, sensegiving group of social actor organizing around familistic projections	Oppressive organizations for benefit of dominant, familistic group of influence	Economic organization founded on kinship relations
The objectivism of theory	Objectivism, FB as real existence	Intersubjectivism, FB as group projections	Intersubjectivism, FB as power projections	Objectivism, FB as a social group
The role of the given paradigm in management	Dominating	Increasing	Increasing	Peripheral
The key theoretical threads	1. System connections (family and organization) 2. FB effectiveness and success 3. Family ownership and governance	1. Family identification, image and interpretation 2. Familistic culture and identity 3. Family sensemaking	1. Family as a group of interests 2. Power, oppressiveness, manipulation 3. Pathology of power in FB	1. Models of FB functioning 2. Predictions of people behaviour in FB
The dominating methodology	Quantitative	Qualitative	Qualitative	Quantitative (initial stage for FB)
The attitude to valuation	Axiological neutrality	Moderate axiological neutrality	Involvement in valuation	Axiological neutrality

Source: own work.

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