

Human Ontology & Management Epistemology: a new comprehension of human being for a new organizational theory and practice.

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Introduction

Epistemology of Management has in its theoretical construction and in its classical perspective the understanding of human being restricted to the economic bias, of *homo faber*, of an individual who only consumes and produces. According to Souza Santos (2001), it is possible to have a new understanding of science from a different understanding of human being, that is, from a new ontology of man. The purpose of this article is to investigate the influence of the main models of human being from the ontological perspective and the possible epistemological changes in the theories and practices of organizations. Unorthodox economists, along with ecological economists, seek a new definition of human being based on a more holistic view, including the meaning of human life, relationship with others, community and nature, as well as the harmony between being, feeling and acting for a reflection on a new epistemology of Management (Arendt, 2010; Murtaza, 2011; Guerreiro Ramos, 1981; Bina, Vaz, 2011).

1.

Given the intrinsic relationship between management epistemology and human ontology - in the sense of understanding man, it is considered important to explore the concept of ontology. Ontology is conceived within the concept of Metaphysics (Abbagnano, 1998), understood as the doctrine that studies the fundamental characteristics of being: what every being has and cannot fail to have.

The ontology of human being is one of the instances related to the development of organizational theories. That is, the understanding of man defines the area of management itself. Market norms have become social norms, and the understanding

of the man model of classical theories is criticized by thinkers such as Guerreiro Ramos (1989), especially on the epistemology of organizational theories, on the basis of the mechanistic and efficiency of Taylor, principles that have invaded the life of modern man, embodying material values and achieving results.

Market and production values invade human life, causing to the individual to no longer perceive the limits of market on his human condition, being blind to the bonds of capital. The model of *homo faber* is the highest among the human possibilities that makes part of this model of production, according to Arendt (2010), and typical attitudes of this model are found in the modern era such as the instrumental vision of the world, confidence in tools and productivity, confidence in the omnipresence of the half-end categories, belief that everything can be solved, and that any human motivation can be reduced to the principle of utility, to the sovereignty of what is material, and to the natural identification of manufacture with action (Arendt, 2010).

According to Bina and Vaz (2011), the notion of *homo economicus* is a reduced understanding of human being, which derives from the understanding that human welfare is linked to the increase in material consumption, whereas the mainstream of economic theory bases its model of man in this narrow view of human. For the authors, it is necessary to propose an ethics based on virtue, in order to make the self more reflective, relational and environmental.

The comprehension of human being in orthodox economics tends to disperse basic self-transcendent human values (social, altruistic and biospheric - altruism also in relation to nonhuman species), limiting individual well-being to material aspects, triggering from this view the unsustainable patterns of economic development (Bina, Vaz, 2011).

2.

In contrast to the one-dimensional human being model, Bina and Vaz (2011) suggest *homo sustinens / politicus / ecologicus*, with a broader view of self, a social entity with a more holistic and balanced view. It should be noted that the *homo sustinens* of Bina and Vaz (2011) originates from the studies of Siebenhüner's (2000), which defines a new concept of human beings for the science of sustainability, of per-

sonal, emotional and rational relation to nature and of moral responsibility to future generations.

While nature is merely instrumental to the *homo economicus*, this model of man has a relationship of sympathy, respect and emotion with nature, which even serves as inspiration and creativity. Human well-being goes beyond material and consumer aspects to intangible aspects such as beauty and spirituality. The well-being of the person and the social environment are the goal for this type of economic actor. Profit is a means to achieve an end. In this dimension, quality becomes a priority for quantity (Bina, Vaz, 2011).

In the perspective of Murtaza (2011), *homo sapiens* is the model of man with which one can reach the economy of wisdom, replacing the figure of *homo economicus*, aiming at a radical change of the values that guide capitalism. According to the author, a new economic system based on the highest dimension of human nature is needed, based on values that help to guarantee individual well-being and to solve the main existential problems. In contrast to the self-interest of the *homo economicus* of Bina and Vaz (2011), as the dominant value of the traditional approach, Murtaza suggests, "If everyone seeks self-realization, this will lead to the individual and social good. *Homo sapiens* will then justify the name of the species and extinguish the *homo economicus* "(Murtaza, 2011, page 583).

Morin (2007), instead of using the terminology of individual, *homo*, adopts the word subject as his model of man, since it is one of the most difficult to understand because, in the view of traditional deterministic science, are not considered the subject, the consciousness, the autonomy. For Morin (2007), being a subject does not mean being conscious, nor is it related to affectivity, to feelings - although these are essential for subjectivity. To be subject, according to Morin (2007, 65): "it is to put oneself at the center of one's own world, to occupy the place of the self. [...]. The fact that I can say 'I', of being a subject, means to occupy a place, a position where people put themselves at the center of their world in order to deal with themselves. "

Guerreiro Ramos (1989), when identifying the corruption of human being by the current system, will suggest a new science of organizations from the parenthetic man. This model of man focuses on the characteristics of self-realization and full de-

velopment of his abilities, being able to abstain from the influences of the instrumental rationality of the market - which today tends to predominate over human relations. The characteristics of the parenthetic man, outlined by Guerreiro Ramos, are the rationality and the updating of potentialities (Azevedo, 2006). The necessary revolution would be based on the "modification of the world" through "conversion of man to man himself"; (b) that led him to discover in himself the common measure of humanity and, finally, (c) that made him to be the person that he is" (Guerreiro Ramos, 1938b, 1939a, apud Azevedo, 2006, p.120).

This model of man also contemplates elements that could lead analysts and social systems planners to delineate a diversity of new types of organizations, more directed to the needs of human being realization. In Guerreiro Ramos's view, the social sciences, and especially the theory of organization, should be "subordinated to a theory of human development", which would have as one of its main presuppositions the notion of "healthy personality" (Azevedo, Albernaz, 2006, p.10).

It is thus found in the parenthetic man of Guerreiro Ramos (1981, 1989), in the subject of Morin (2007), in *Homo sustinens / politicus / ecologicus* of Bina and Vaz (2011), in *Homo sapiens* of Murtaza (2011), alternatives to the one-dimensional model of man and a new understanding of the ontology of man to a new epistemology of Management. These proposals complement each other in their approaches and have points in common such as the integral vision of man, of selfish behavior, in the sense of considering the self-fulfillment, and at the same time being altruistic, and of extrapolating the limits of the capitalist model of consumption, seeking new meanings for life.

It may be suggested that the new model of human being, resulting from joining the theoretical constructions of this research, would be defined as *homo sapiens-sustinens-politicus-ecologicus-parenteticus*. This model has as main differentiation of the man models that directed the predominant theory and practice of management that it connects to the deepest dimension of human being: the psyche and spiritual level.

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