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# Japanese and Polish Managers

Economy, Management and Education

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## **Confucian virtues and managerial virtues at the dawn of the twenty-first century: a sociological study**

### **Managerial and Confucian virtues in a sociological perspective – introduction**

For many contemporary managers, effective management more and more often entails searching for an appropriate exemplar – a model of conduct based on the most universal values that could in the long run build a solid foundation for a durable business enterprise. Several individual proposals are being envisaged in this area that refer to a set of subjectively defined systems of measure, meanings, and values. At the same time, a number of solutions that have been applied by businesses and that refer to proven practical solutions seem to be gaining momentum.

The philosophy initiated by Confucius constitutes an extraordinary inspiration for the foundations of organisational cultures built in business enterprises with Asian roots. The works of European social thinkers are also a major source of inspiration for Western entrepreneurs who refer to such concepts as justice, responsibility, or freedom. Cultural diffusion, which is a natural process from the social point of view, leads to developing original approaches to management that draw heavily from the accomplishments of the Western world and the Eastern civilisation.

The goal of this paper is to draw the reader's attention to the sources of inspiration for the set of qualities that are most appropriate for managers – ones that function in what is usually referred to as collective consciousness, and ones that stem from the tradition of the West and the East. By pointing to similar values that unite – as it seems – quite different worlds, one aims to clearly stress the fact that there are universal social values combining cultures and social realities that are generally worlds apart. Therefore, discerning these similarities may be an inspiration for developing a theoretical paradigm of action that takes account – as far as possible – of a model of action that leads to fulfilling these universal values.

The considerations put forward here will consist of three parts. The theoretical dimension of the study will be given prominence in the part that focuses on the methodological issues of contemporary social studies, which have to face up to more and more difficulties, given the contemporary pace of change, and its interdisciplinary nature. Referring to the values which managers in pursuit of perfecting their virtues are to draw from, one must not neglect the underlying meaning of the organisational culture of a business enterprise, and its close ties with the surrounding world. Reflections on this topic make up a major part of the entire structure of the paper, just like the cornerstones of Confucius's philosophy. His accomplishments, an unquestioned source of inspiration for new generations and modern managers, will be discussed by referring to his salient guidelines presented against the backdrop of the manner in which businesses operate. The subsequent subchapters look at the other sources of managerial virtues, and the relevant duties and obligations that result from them. The concluding part of the paper gives a deeper insight into an individually devised list, or register, of managerial virtues that can be implicative for prospective empirical studies.

## **Theoretical and methodological assumptions of the considerations made**

Contemporary social transformations encompass several areas of social life and have a specific nature – one that has not yet been compared with any of the previous changes. The task set for sociologists is becoming increasingly more arduous, since explaining the social processes that are taking place and explicating their origins to decision makers cannot take place without taking into account more and more novel elements. This is what makes things more complicated and brings chaos to the world of those who expect to be given a general recipe for everything and ready solutions. This forces sociologists to take a multi-dimensional approach that takes into account an interdisciplinary attitude reaching out to other disciplines – not just social sciences, or the arts and humanities, but more and more often to technical, medical, or natural sciences. These types of studies necessitate a given set of pre-elaborated assumptions and an appropriate attitude to academic collaboration, which implies a readiness to alter the previously devised hypotheses. Yet another requirement – one that is generally strenuous to carry out – is the constant acquisition and updating of one's knowledge that goes beyond social sciences by regular contacts with representatives of other academic circles. For sociologists, although this requirement is troublesome, it is also undeniably necessary and perfectly under-



standable. For representatives of other disciplines, the assumptions they make with regard to the social element – which is an intrinsic component of every scientific discipline – are usually treated as a constant parameter. In practice, however, it turns out that it is the first variable whose conditions of change still remain unveiled. The technological sophistication of those who bring into being state-of-the-art solutions does not go hand in hand with the pace at which the human being adapts to the new patterns of behaviour, resulting from the effect with which such trailblazing technical solutions impact the surrounding reality. This may probably go down to the fact that, as a rule, the human being does not want to give up on a part of the right to control the situation, which he/she has an inherent right to do, and be subject to the circumstances where technology imposes a given way of doing things. This is exactly what Jürgen Habermas pointed to when he claimed that “modern technology does not only relieve human beings from the operations that they perform, but also from control-related activities. (...) Technology, which is gaining autonomy, not only detaches itself from the human beings, but it is also the human beings themselves that can be incorporated into technical devices. (...) Human beings have had to give up on the role of those who apply technical measures in a fully controlled manner. Instead, the various segments of human behaviour have been reduced to functions performed by parts of machines that can be subjected to control” (Habermas 1983: 427). Similar considerations concern not only technological accomplishments, but also any other achievement of sciences other than social sciences. Admittedly, people are shaped in a way that makes them want to have control over the reality in which they function, at the same time ignoring their deficiencies. Having said that, the whole idea of progress rests on the fact that they need to be noticed and continuously filled. Robert Merton has also pointed to this when he argued that “noticing the vastness of one’s ignorance is the first step towards replacing it with knowledge. (...) The conviction that technological progress is a positive value – obvious in itself and one that does not require any further evidence – is so common and deeply rooted that a majority of people are in general not concerned with the analysis of the social conditions that allow for these things to happen” (Merton 1982: 990).

Bearing in mind the significance of scientific and technological progress as part of social development, its numerous interpretations and backgrounds, it is worth noticing the special role of individuals – masterminds of this progress. Yet, before attention is mundanely drawn to the managers responsible for this, it is worth noticing that there is a fairly untypical understanding of social progress, closest to the ideals of humanism, which Jan Szczepański has pointed to. He has noticed a different face of progress that lies in the inner world of the human being, especially one that has experienced suffering, disability and helplessness. He argues that “maybe the era will come. Maybe this dimension of helplessness

lies at the bottom of a civilisation of some sort that can be subdivided not “beyond the good and the evil”, when the human being looks for and verifies him/herself not by transforming things and shaping others, but rather by creating his/her own inner worlds, shaping a reality for which our civilisation has nothing but words of contempt. As a result of various illnesses, injuries and inborn defects, millions of people across our globe create this civilisation in absolute silence, hiding it for themselves, since they do not have the courage to present a stock of abilities (...). It is a philosophy of a humanity that exists beyond action, and beyond an agora” (Szczepański 1984: 128–131). Every human being will long for such values and ideals anyway, because they are most universal and edifying. They arouse most positive feelings and trust, which are the sort of values that stabilize any social organization with a formal and informal face. One can even risk the claim that any attempt made at searching for stability concerns the spiritual worlds, which consequently leads to an inner harmony, and a certain way of looking at the future.

### **In search of harmony: the culture of an organisation and the role of the individual**

The ones who are first and foremost responsible for the culture of an organisation that plays a pivotal role in any business enterprise are managers. It is they who shape the atmosphere and keep an eye on the conditions found in a business. Already in the 1970s, Henry Mincberg pointed to the roles of primary importance: interpersonal roles resulting from the professional status, and information and decision roles (Penc 1998). A manager is responsible for the different ways in which an organisation achieves its objectives, and what it should actually look like to make its dreams come true. A lot in this respect depends on the organisational structure, which is one of the basic concepts for those in charge. Yet, being fully aware of where the core of many management problems lies, David A. Nadler and Michael L. Tushman argue that it is not the individual elements of a given organizational structure that are pivotal, but rather the organisational culture, and the nature of interactions that occur among them (Nadler and Tushman 1980: 45).

Since the 1980s, organisational culture has become a key concept for the Japanese economy. Emphasis began to be placed on group cooperation, as opposed to US businesses, which were still dominated by individualism and rivalry. An important concept was also quality – an achievement of the entire group. The term ‘quality circles’ was coined, and their major role was to continually solve problems. Looking at the Japanese approach, focused on top quality, William G.

Ouchi, one of the scholars, concentrated on the set of major aspects, such as: consensus-based decision making, long-term staff employment, individual responsibility for carrying out a task, no clear guidelines concerning promotion prospects, the company's interest in its employee's family, and creating a family spirit (Ouchi 1988). From the early 1980s on, the Japanese economy began to have an increasingly more powerful impact on the global economy, and experts in management began to look at it attentively and follow the sources of its successes. The analyses that were conducted led to the conclusion that in order to achieve a good degree of coherence of action of a business enterprise, one has to integrate the basic links that operate within it. This can be attained by means of an appropriate "level of adjustment in which the values of an organisation reinforce the execution of a strategy and shape the desired attitudes and behaviour patterns of the staff, thanks to the purposefully selected practices of human resources management" (Gadomska-Lila 2014: 973). In this process, the manager receives a number of strictly assigned tasks, such as maintaining the basic values and strategic objectives of a business, determining the procedures that underlie an optimal level of human resources management, their effective implementation, and adequate control. All these elements are combined to form an appropriate organisational culture whose constituent elements or rules of functioning have become on the common research areas. In Poland, one of the most interesting and vastest elaborations on this topic is the work by Lidia Zbiegień-Macig, in which the author has illustrated the salient concepts. Amidst the key culture profiles, she has singled out a few based on the criterion of conspicuous opposites: positive culture and negative culture, introvert and extrovert, conservative and innovative, male and female, bureaucratic and pragmatic, elitist and egalitarian, strong and weak (Zbiegień-Macig 2002: 52–63). Knowing at least approximately the characteristics of a given organisational culture, one can devise a plan of proposed changes in a more detailed manner, since the obvious and visible culture is a potent tool that shapes human behaviour. This explains why sociologists keep asking themselves questions and build research tools that take into consideration all the issues concerning the positive and/or negative motivational stimuli, attitude to change, openness to change, tolerance to other values and mindsets, degree of suspiciousness and restraint, and employee integration. It is also important to mention the issues of the declared and observed values, norms and symbols, orientation to the future or to the past, growth-related ambition, motivation, taking the initiative and risk, meeting employees' needs, degree of loyalty towards the company's management, and more or less energetic actions against the competitors. Undoubtedly, the major issues include the degree of submissiveness towards the rules and regulations, and the arbitrariness of their interpretation, attitude to power – distance and the attitude to power, the significance of symbolism, hierarchical rigidity or staff equality, the level of

attachment to motivational assumptions and values, symbols, and formalisation of rules.

Determining the essence of organisational culture and the number of studies that were carried out from the early 1980s on has allowed one to discern not only the differences between the specific way in which various businesses function, but also a set of other external factors that influence the functioning of economic organisations across the world. The increasing intensification of globalisation was enhanced by the flow of information and knowledge that also covers effective methods of human capital management. Applying specific methods of human resources management, effective for a given business, was a potential opportunity for rival companies, assuming some degree of imitation, albeit in part. Managers began to gradually discern the significance of potential actions resulting from the fundamental values adopted on the basis of a philosophy steeped in a particular cultural area. Interestingly, the values that surface in these cultures are global and are usually universal human values, irrespective of the geographical area. Drawing from the global scientific achievements is characteristic of modern managers, inspired by Confucius, Cicero, Drucker and Jobs. The best ones are able to draw from the works of both antique philosophers of the civilisation of the East or West, and from practical accomplishments of contemporary successful people. This fact seems to be of major interest in building an efficient organisational culture, as it means that one cannot reject any verified concepts pointing to the deeply humanistic universal values.

## **Confucius and his doctrine: its essence and relations with culture and the economy**

One of the most inspiring theories is the one launched by Confucius and later developed by his disciples. It constitutes a major determinant of the culture of the Far East, in its broadest sense, including the recent economic boom. Western experts have begun to look at the sources of these successes more and more eagerly. However, in order to understand them, one needs to go back to the underlying assumptions developed by Confucius.

Confucius (551–479 BC), probably due to his protruding nose, was called *Qiu*, which means ‘hill’. He was born in Lu Kingdom in the present province of Shandong. Despite his kinship with the Yin dynasty, following his father’s death, being just three years old, he was left alone with his mother and was raised in poverty. He started working pretty early to earn a living for himself and his mother – first as a caretaker of sheep and oxen. When he was fifteen, he would already pay tuition by himself. He was also a superintendent of granaries, a

supervisor of ducal fields and people who kept an eye on sacrificial animals. He got married at the age of nineteen, and being already well educated, he started his career as a clerk. He founded a school where emphasis was placed on learning to write, acquiring the rules of social conduct, and basic knowledge. He was an advisor to the ruler of Lu Kingdom, endeavouring to implement his ideals of a centralised state where the key role would be played by morality. Legend has it that the officials conspired against Confucius for fear of the postulated virtue of sincerity, and at 56, he lost his job. As a wandering teacher and instructor, he would travel across many kingdoms and towns, turning to the education of students, apparently, managing to attract as many as three thousand. He never wrote down his own teachings – his disciples did it for him.

The key tenets of Confucius's philosophy have been set out in "The Analects of Confucius" – a work featuring twenty chapters and 497 verses. It is primarily a collection of sayings and ideas attributed to the Chinese philosopher and his contemporaries, traditionally believed to have been compiled and written by his followers, or probably by their second generation. Despite the apparent chaos of the statements made therein – often messy and at times even contradictory – it is possible to discern the concentration of all the wisdoms conveyed on five major obligations around which the entire human and social life ought to be built. They are virtues that manifest themselves through a particular deed, a given action, or a specific objective that is achieved. *Ren*, the first one, which stands for morality, is a practical feeling developed through education whose core is love. *Ren* is sometimes translated as 'humaneness' and is linked to the assumption that humankind is by nature good, and the human being administers his or her free will (Lee 2004: 21). *Ren* is subdivided into the love of children towards their parents (*Xiao*), respect for peers (*Di*), loyalty towards the ruler (*Zhong*), and norms of conduct (*Li*), which are at the same time listed as one of the basic duties. *Yi*, another virtue, which stands for righteousness, is what is invariable in *Li* – the manifestation of common sense or moral reason, and it determines the core of all the moral duties that the human beings take upon themselves of their own free will. It acts as a special signpost, an in-born human conscience which guides their actions until they acquire real knowledge. Not less important are the previously mentioned *Li* (proper conduct) and *Zhi* (knowledge). The former is connected to the ritual of performing social relations that differs depending on the social status of a given person, situation, or era. This virtue sets out the way in which rituals ought to be performed in order to fulfil the Five Obligations. *Li* is a code of "formal behaviours that stabilise and discipline the endlessly changing circumstances" (Wójcik 2001: 349). It has a regulatory function, assuming that there are people who want the same, rather than opposite things, so their emotions should be governed by the ritual. *Zhi*, in turn, refers to the events that take place in the present, and it evolves out of a virtue called righteousness (*Yi*), which is the

human inborn individual inclination to act instinctively according to the ritual (*Li*). *Zhi*, however, is associated above all with gaining knowledge. “When the noble man eats, he does not try to stuff himself; at rest he does not seek perfect comfort; he is diligent in his work and careful in speech. He avails himself to people of the Way and thereby corrects himself. This is the kind of person of whom you can say ‘he loves learning’” (The Analects of Confucius, 1976: verse 14, chapter 1). The fifth major virtue is *Xin*, which stands for faithfulness, translated literally as “a person who keeps their promise”, and manifesting itself in humility and sincerity in one’s relations with the superior. One of the conditions for practising such virtues of conduct is unconditional performance of the orders given by one’s superior even if his or her orders seem unjust. In order to perfect *Xin* within oneself, one has to first master the previously discussed virtues.

Confucius deplored the moral decline of the people of his time. Consequently, he suggested the *zhengming* method, which put forward the principle whereby each person would have to behave and would be treated depending on his or her social status. “Let the ruler be a ruler, minister be a minister, father be a father, son be a son” (The Analects of Confucius, 1976: chapter 12, verse 11). It is indeed at this point where one can clearly see the difference between the typical Western individualism, and the understanding of the role of an individual as an element of a larger community.

Confucian values have laid the foundations for building the economic success and prosperity of a number of Asian countries. They are an interesting topic of meticulous analyses conducted by sociologists, economists, and philosophers. Researchers stress the fact that they cannot be simply interpreted and compared with the conditions of development typical for Western countries. Some of the values, albeit common at first glance, upon a deeper analysis turn out to have other interpretations. A case in point is the understanding of harmony – significantly different in the Western and pluralistic society from that of the Eastern agricultural society. The same regards the sense of time, the impact on one’s surroundings, other ways of thinking, such as the principles of logic, or rationalism. Despite the undeniable differences and the recommended interpretational prudence, Confucian ethics and the ethics of industrialised countries share a number of common values: respect for others, trust, and justice. Researchers point to the fact that “[t]here is a convergence of views in the East and West that regards the methods of creating an appropriate environment that would facilitate the growth of entrepreneurship. Amidst the commonalities there are trust, respect, and a justice in human relations. One must not neglect the quality of character of the people who work together. Confucianism puts a big emphasis on creating, maintaining and developing harmony around people, not just within the closest group, but it is also reflected in customer relations. One needs to notice the huge potential to make durable intercultural contacts and foster co-

operation among people from different countries. The ethnic and religious origins of business partners is not a problem for the managers who abide by the principles of Confucian ethics, as they indeed strive for a partner-like approach, rather than a transaction-oriented attitude to others. This has major practical implications for entrepreneurs from outside this cultural circle.” (Meyer 2012: 103). The research conducted so far leads to similar conclusions that bring to the fore the fact that underlying the Japanese management system is acting within a group, as well as a strong sense of loyalty and responsibility. This means that an individual can grow and act only as part of a group, being fully subordinated to the superior, who are, in turn, morally responsible for their direct reports. This approach was clearly favoured by the feudal system, which has a long tradition in Japan’s history.

Moving on to the dimension of the organisational culture discussed above, Geert Hofstede has stressed the fact that Confucius had created a sort of foundation on which businesses build the values of their enterprises in search of the best solutions. Its core is made up of four basic assumptions:

1. “The stability of a society is based on unequal social relations. (...) These relations ought to be based on mutual, complementary obligations. The depending party needs to show respect and obedience, and the superior has to protect and care about his/her subordinate.
2. The prototype of all social organisations is the family. Each person is above all a member of a family, and only then an individual. (...)
3. Suitable and righteous conduct implies not treating others in a way in which one would not like to be treated himself. (...) It is all about basic charity and benevolence towards others. (...)
4. Proper and righteous life objectives are those that entail gaining knowledge and skills, hard work, restraint in spending money, and perseverance. Ostentatious consumption and outbursts of anger are unacceptable. Everything needs moderation. (...)” (Hofstede 2000: 248).

In his cogitations on organisational culture, Hofstede has made it clear that the phenomenal economic performance of the so-called “Asian tigers” still remains a mystery for many economists. Numerous attempts were made to solve the mystery; for example Herman Kahn, a culture expert, who suggested the existence of a connection between the teachings of Confucius and economic growth. This US futurologist has formulated the so-called “Neo-Confucian Hypothesis”, which he failed to prove eventually. For him, the sources of economic success lie in the common cultural roots that reach deep into history. His studies were broadly treated as pure speculation, not worth paying further attention to until the studies designed and conducted under the supervision of Michael Bond in 1987. Cooperating with scientists from Taiwan and Hongkong, he built a tool –

a survey in which he deliberately avoided Western influences and replaced them with the values that the Chinese have a very high esteem of. This new tool was called CVS (Chinese Value Survey) in short. “It needs to be noted that only by applying the East-Asian tool – the CVS – was it possible to point to the role of culture in the growth of East Asia, and to find the underlying causes that could shed light on the economic success achieved by the “Asian tigers”. Based on the CVS survey, it is clear to see how powerful is the impact on the way of thinking typical for a given culture, and how significant role culture plays on the whole. It impacts not just our daily practices: our lifestyle, education, management style, or the way we die, but also the theories we apply striving to explain these practices (...)” (Hofstede 2000: 255). A deeper analysis of the studies carried out to find a possible link between the economy and Confucianism, which was done by Michael Bond, pointed to the new dimension of culture which he labelled “Confucian dynamism”. This notion stands for the ability to differentiate between the long-term and the short-term attitude in life. On the pole of long-term orientation are obstinacy, shaping human relations according to status, frugality and prudence and the sense of shame. On the other end of the extreme one can place stability and balance, care to keep one’s face, respect for tradition; returning greetings, and reciprocating gifts (Hofstede 2000: 249–250).

Different analyses of the teachings of Confucius have set the ground for a large number of inspirations for further in-depth studies. One of the several interesting aspects here is the way in which a family is organized, as imposed by Confucianism. It has its clear reflection in *kaisha*, the way in which a Japanese business operates. The European standard is steeped in individualism, individual entrepreneurship, and the pursuit of profit. In a Japanese business, the value that takes the lead is collectivism, as the group is seen as an entity that acts also against the backdrop of its social surroundings. In a Japanese business, *kaisha* makes sure that its driving force rests on mutual trust and respect, as well as making an employee aware of the fact that once inside a company, an individual becomes part of a family and works for the common good. Hence the conviction that an employment contract is not the key element that binds an employee and an employer. The Japanese work ethic is based on the assumption that it is indeed an incredibly fragile element, just like social structure, which they refer to as *shigarami*. The social awareness of the fact that everything rests on a subtle network of relations leads to obvious agreement, and a sense of responsibility for taking a given position, and proper fulfilment of a given role. There is no room for individualism; there is, though, time to go through all the levels of a career ladder, regardless of one’s formal education. In her book that popularises work experiences in a Japanese multinational, Amelie Nothomb notes that an employee is above all a member of a group that has been assigned a specific range of duties. Nowadays, businesses are becoming what actually determines an individual’s



identity. A new type of mentality is even being shaped – the “*kaisha* mentality”, which puts the company ahead of the family (Nothomb 2005). This leads to there being virtually no chances to start a family, and, therefore, may give rise to several pathological consequences, such as psychological conditions, nervous breakdowns, addictions, and even death.

To sum up the reflections on the impact on the teachings of Confucius on economic growth, one has to stress the fact that the concept of “Confucian dynamism” is by far a grounded achievement of scholars delving into the legacy of the ancient philosopher. In the broadest sense, it means looking for Righteousness, which Confucius himself focused on, leaving the question of Truth open.

## Managerial virtues worked out on the foundations of the Western civilisation

For the Western civilisation, pursuing the Truth has always been extremely precious. The analytical approach, combined with the need to generalise, resulted in developing several laws of nature, which began to be particularly discernible since the Enlightenment and the First Industrial Revolution. At the beginning, searching for the Truth concerned the discovery of the principles that lie behind the functioning of society seen as a special kind of organism. This was the domain of ancient philosophers: from Socrates, who lived eight years after Confucius; through Aristotle, who unequivocally set out the role of a citizen in a society; to Cicero, who developed the idea of civil society (*societas civilis*). According to the latter, the state is a community of citizens, and at the same time a political community. In his reflections, he made it clear that human beings fulfil themselves through active participation in public life. This will be fostered by practising civic virtues, such as justice, responsibility, or courage. Following the Middle Ages, in which the citizen was basically absent in social life, at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many novel trends within philosophical and social thought came about. It was connected to all the dynamic changes that were taking place in private ownership. The market economy began to flourish, which gave the impulse for the demands regarding liberty and the rights of the individual to come to the fore. Various concepts regarding the principles underlying the functioning of society as a whole were put forward by such thinkers as Jean Bodin, Niccolò Machiavelli, John Milton, or James Harrington. In the first liberal conceptualisations of civil society, it is possible to discern the shaping of a new type of economy based on private property. This was when civic virtues and their stimulating impact on a responsible economy were debated in the public sphere. One of the conditions *sine qua non*, however, was active involvement and

participation of citizens, which also resulted from Adam Smith's previously promulgated concept of self-regulation of the market. In the nineteenth century, professional consciousness was gradually awakening, reflected in the affiliation to a given interest group. At the same time, the birth of nation states caused a slight divergence of the road taken by the analyses of economic issues and the one focused more on social and political issues. Having said that, this was when researchers pointed to the danger that came from the dominance of civic consciousness by professional consciousness. Admittedly, this moment in history can be regarded as the potential source of managerial virtues.

At a certain point of the social development, and above all the economic development, of the Western world, one can clearly see that civic consciousness detached from professional consciousness. This does not mean that these two types of consciousness are contradictory. A minimal feeling of social satisfaction is connected to the growth of civil society and the improvement of the quality of life. This fact brings us almost automatically to 'social capital', a notion devised by several scholars and closely linked to civic society. James S. Coleman defines 'social capital' as "a set of such qualities of a social organisation as trust, norms and ties between individuals, which improve their overall effectiveness in collectively taken actions, and at the same time turn them into a community, allowing them to achieve certain objectives that would otherwise be unattainable, were such capital unavailable" (Bartoszek 2003: 20), (Coleman 1988: 95–120). It is indeed a concept that joins back remote perspectives in which the question of trust and active position is the thing that unites civic virtues and managerial virtues.

The analysis of social reactions and human activity in society is also expressed in the context of the role of a region, and the flow of knowledge, seen spatially. For sure, the regional community and the community of a given group has a direct impact in socialization on the identity of managers and citizens at the same time. The culture of a given region has an unquestionable influence on the senior management, shaping their qualities – both positive and negative (Suchacka 2014). Applying the personality models codified throughout socialisation, managers learn certain behaviours and attitudes. Private property and the attitude of society to it are related to the need for participation in social life, which means civic involvement, active search for communities in order to provide for collective protection of one's own interests. The various associations and organisations thus established shape new qualities in business people, qualities that could be called virtues, such as e.g. trust, sensitivity and openness to others, activity – not just professional, tolerance, and feeling safe and secure. Participation is a certain equivalent of the Confucian responsibility for a group, but in this case it is the responsibility that relates very clearly to the behaviour of single, and what is of key importance, free individuals who are claiming their rights. John Naisbitt wrote about it at the beginning of the 1980s: "the ethics of participation spread

across America, radically changing the images of the way in which people need to be managed in institutions. Citizens, workers, and consumers demand a bigger right to speak their mind in the government, the world of business and in the market, and they get this right” (Naisbitt 1997: 197). The notions of social responsibility are gaining momentum and seem to be joining the business milieu and the social and political domain.

Of the many qualities regarded in literature as potential managerial virtues, the key ones include “pursuing autonomy, the possibility to realise one’s own ideas freely, challenging the competition, and securing a stable position in the market” (Dylus 2000: 249). Amidst the other most often listed managerial qualities, Barbara Pogonowska mentions:

- professional approach of the senior management – understood as the ethical imperative of constantly using one’s qualifications in practical actions, and respecting such standards as: reliability, honesty, loyalty, fairness, and impartiality;
- the ability to effectively manage a modern business – which means appropriate use of employees’ qualifications and knowledge, and taking full responsibility for the performance of a given task;
- the ability to be a good communicator – it includes the ability to make contacts easily, harmoniously cooperate with the team, building trust, and taking account of the needs of other staff;
- the ability to make decisions – it is above all the ability to avoid situations that might hinder the growth of a business;
- avoiding actions that could interrupt the principles of fair competition and ruin the trust bestowed in the company (Pogonowska 2004: 231–232).

An interesting overview of the subject literature has been presented by Bogusz Mikuła, who has looked at the various concepts of managerial roles, starting from Taylor and Fayol, finishing with the ideas put forward by Nonaka and Senge. His analysis encompassed real diagnosis of people working for knowledge-based organisations. The main conclusion of the studies has led to the claim that mutual trust, which was originally related to the features typical of a civil society, is now becoming an economic category and has a quantifiable value. “It is hard to speak of attitudes of involvement, trust and creative orientation if there is no mutual respect between people. Its lack can be a strong barrier in human communication, which underlies the functioning of each type of modern organisation” (Mikuła 2006: 219).

Hence, acknowledging the assumption that the system of individual managerial virtues on the one hand is related to elements of the culture of a regional community, and on the other hand with the organisational culture adopted by a business and aimed at favouring the growth of appropriate qualities of em-

ployees, one could attempt to write down the register of the basic managerial virtues. It could be a certain exemplar for a potential ideal model of a manager. The list below aimed to be exhaustive, but for sure it will remain a possible starting point for further discussions of the topic.

#### Managerial Virtues – Basic Register

1. **Ability to manage in a professional way** – the ability to lead teams based on authority, which, in turn, stems from expertise;
2. **Ability to make decisions** – the ability to make responsible decisions combined with a comprehensive understanding of the essence of the global economy, local markets, and situational intelligence;
3. **High level of business ethic**, i. e. a “socially responsible manager” attitude – honest, transparent rules of conducts in professional matters;
4. **Highly moral life attitude** strictly correlated with the professional attitude;
5. **Ability to inspire Staff** – the ability to define the key objectives of a business;
6. **Ability to give the right direction** to positive change within an organization combined with creative non-conformism;
7. **Ability to focus other members of staff** around the execution of fundamental objectives – *kratos* skills (Greek *Krátos* – power), i. e. readiness to transfer passion;
8. **Adequate assessment of competencies, skills and potential of the employees** and at the same time using them and limiting the consequences of professional shortages;
9. **High individual motivation and professional aspiration** in line with the principle which says that they have an impact on the other staff, are noticed by them, and internalized;
10. **Respect for employees’ dignity**, respect – for subordinates, peers, superiors, clients, and other groups from the company’s surroundings;
11. **High level of rational trust capital** towards people;
12. **Ability to collect, process and use managerial and business information in different forms** – both traditional, and one that has been registered on modern carriers, and the ability to handle modern means of communication;
13. **Attention to the physical and emotional condition** – the ability to handle stress, guide one’s career, the awareness of the threats brought by addictions, including most recent types – addiction to the Internet, shopaholism, and workaholism;
14. **Presence and orientation in the world wide web, and in the world of flows** combined with the ability to connect seemingly loosely related facts and the ability to analyse the global economy and its key institutions;

15. **Aesthetic orientation** – attention not only to physical appearance, but general awareness of the true nature of beauty and different forms of art; high level of the *handy knowledge resource*;
16. **Ability to harmoniously combine professional issues and family matters**, having hobbies that are not related to one's job;
17. **Curiosity of the world** – openness to novelties and a sympathetic distance to all kinds of eccentricity;
18. Broadly understood **tolerance for other cultures** and different forms of social distinctness;
19. **Active participation in the life of a local community and the life of a nation** – being well-versed in political, historical, and cultural issues;
20. **Mobility and the consciousness of being a “citizen of the world”** (“*Civis totius mundi*”) – full independence as far as attachment to a given place is concerned and at the same time respect for the “homeland of bread” and the private homeland (Suchacka, Szczepański 2008).

The register above is an attempt to create a possibly full array of the most universal qualities singled out as the ones that are best for modern managers. It is worth emphasising that the ultimate ideal model of the most desired virtues is the effect of a mutual learning process carried out by all the actors featured in this social system; therefore, not just managers themselves, but also representatives of the local and regional authorities, politicians, and all kinds of activists of the third sector. Contemporary managers are indeed a part of the global elite which S. Huntington has defined as Cosmocrats, “golden collars”, or “the people from Davos”. “Among them you can also come across scientists, politicians, lawyers, and consultants” (Micklethwait, Wooldridge 2003: 365).

## **Between Righteousness and Truth: the sense of responsibility?**

Looking at the issue of managerial virtues against the backdrop their theoretical sources, one can discern the framework of a new managerial revolution in which the endless search for intellectual inspiration, even in ancient philosophical conceptualisations, is becoming common practice. Among the contemporary researchers, one of the most frequently quoted authorities is Peter Drucker, whose works have, among others, been devoted to the broadly understood functioning of economic organisations. He stressed the growing role of knowledge and other qualities that each manager ought to develop. He anticipated that the so-called “knowledge employees” were beginning to play a fundamental role. He noted that “any organisation based on knowledge requires everyone to take on individual responsibility for the goals and single contributions, as well as the behaviours”

(Drucker 1999: 91). From his words, it is clear to see that responsibility seems to be an extremely important virtue that needs to be practiced all the time.

Responsibility seen in the context of a manager means above all awareness of the consequences of one's actions, and the readiness to take the relevant consequences. Business more and more often realise that they are responsible for functioning in a given community and culture. The actual behaviour patterns adopted by the employees of a company are the actions of specific groups that are integral parts of the entire organization. "Its members live in this community, speak its language, send their children to its schools, vote in it, and pay its taxes. They need to feel in it at home. Having said that, an organisation cannot immerse in a community, or subjugate it. Its culture has to surpass the community" (Drucker 1999: 55). This is related to the need for an organisation to assume the role of the "carrier of high culture", promoting responsibility in its surroundings.

The socially responsible approach on the one hand implies a long-term orientation close to the Confucian philosophy; on the other hand, it is related to the concept of sustainable growth, which means "a process of widening people's choices and using capabilities by shaping the social capital in such a way so that it can fully meet the needs of the current generations without jeopardising the needs of the future generations" (Szczepański 2006: 17). It is clear to see how two distinct traditions reach similar practical conclusions. Changing the short-term orientation into a long-term one seems to yield better results. Searching for the principles that underlie harmonious growth seems to be the initial premise for the growing trend of businesses and local communities to cooperate symbiotically in the field of social responsibility. "Since the middle of the twentieth century, in the West, pursuing the Truth has gradually ceased to pay and has with time turned into a clear burden. Analytical thinking works out well in the hard sciences; however, management and supervising require mastering the arcana of the art of synthesis" (Hofstede 2000: 257). Integrating the objectives of a business and the community in which it functions based on a set of common values seems to be a desirable process on all accounts – one that is necessary to both attain Righteousness and to discover the Truth.

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