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# TOGETHERNESS AS A GOVERNANCE SYSTEM FOR GUIDING AND DEVELOPING THE EMPLOYEES AND THE UNIVERSITY[1]

In this paper I will suggest a governance principle of togetherness applied at an academic department characterized by diversity in many characteristics, including academic qualifications, in order to promote academic freedom and the principle of faculty governance, i.e., teachers elect among themselves those responsible for the organization.

The background to my suggestion is my experience of working 30 years in four Swedish universities. Sweden left the elitist university education from the 1950'ies, when there were 3 universities and 4 specialised universities, by an expansion in the 60'ies, which today has led to almost 40 universities with at least the right to give bachelor degree. (Högskoleverket, 2006). The number of students have increased from less than 50.000 at the beginning of 1960 to 340.000 students in 2004. The number of PhDs increased from 250 at the beginning of 1960 to almost 2750 year 2004. The number of full professors increased from 1200 the year 1980 to 3900 the year 2004. Thus, first came a big expansion of students, introducing mass university and developing a commodification view on education, that later were followed by a catch-up process of recruiting and training teaching staff. The result is, however, a high diversity of academic qualifications among teachers at the universities, education as a commodity making the student employable, a weakening of academic professionalism and a sharp decrease of faculty governance, with a corresponding increase of hierarchical governance.

Let us now assume that a university is characterized by academic freedom (Lehrfreiheit) and faculty governance (Freiheit der Wissenschaft). Academic freedom implies that the professionals have the right to perform their research and education in accordance to their professional standards. Faculty governance implies that the

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university is governed by the professionals, making Rectors, Deans, Program directors and the alike, Primus inter pares, first among equals, doing the service to the other equals.

Faculty governance that characterised the elitist universities of yesterday, could be hard to apply today, with a high level of diversity among the teachers, especially in academic qualification. Small, yet to become prestigious universities have problems recruiting employees that are highly trained, experienced and reputational academic professors, since the big city universities tend to attract these academics. Thus, some universities have a hardship fulfilling their goals due to a poor pool of candidates for academic positions. And if they cannot select the individuals, they have to train the individuals they attract.

I believe that this diversity of the employees, especially concerning academic norms, can be a partial explanation to the reduction of professionalism and increase in hierarchical governance and the increase of power of the administration in the Swedish universities.

In hierarchical organisation, like todays smaller and newer universities in Sweden, corporate management principles with corporate rewards systems have been introduced. They are geared towards individual performance and to obeying the commands of managers, resulting in loss of academic freedom and faculty governance.

In order to retrieve the principle of a university, the existing employees have to be governed using a different principle than hierarchy. The faculty governance is hard to fully use since it presupposes that all are equals, which is not true in a diverse organisation. Therefore, we need a principle of governance that can develop individuals into equals and thereby pave the way for faculty governance.

I suggest a principle of university governance that derives its main idea from the principle of faculty governance, that of a flat organization where some elected individuals perform service to the organization, but adjusted to the fact that the university does not contain equals, but a diverse set of individuals.

The principle is Togetherness, and defined as a mean of socialization into norm congruence, using rotation and diversity management, in order to achieve both short and long term developmental goals for the individual and for the organization. It is assumed that a university has to be able to perform its present task, but also be capable of developing its capacity. Thus, an organizational principle has to include both operation and development.

A university is characterised by diversity, where much of the diversity is an unintended consequence instead of a conscious choice. Diversity can appear along dimensions such as academic subject specialization, academic qualification, organizational position, age, social characteristics such as gender, class origin, ethnicity, and professional experience, gained from teaching, research, praxis and university service.

Diversity can create centrifugal forces, in organization science termed fault lines (Lau & Murnighan, 1998), where individuals create sub-groups looking for homogeneity, and creating conflict when the different groups are confronting each other. However, diversity can become a strength since we know that diverse groups can create innovative environments (Pelled, 1996). Since centrifugal forces of diversity will tear apart the group, the group needs centripetal forces, joining forces, that keep the group together. Studies indicate that norm congruence is one such force (Collin & Umans, 2008; Umans, 2013).

Norm congruence is achieved through socialization, i.e., individuals internalizing or at least, accepting the norms. One mean of socialization is interaction. One necessary condition for interaction is presence, thus one needs to have high presence at the work place. Another is to create arenas where individuals interact. It can also be achieved through a clever diversity management, where the specific diversity dimensions are considered, in order to create working groups that have a good mix of diversity and similarity, given the task at hand.

Another mean of socialization is to signal the appropriate norms. One way is to celebrate when individuals adhere to the norms, for example to acknowledge the teacher that receives the student's price of best teacher, to celebrate achievements of

importance, such as attracting external funding, and to have a price for those that include others to a large extent.

Togetherness is to create an atmosphere of a community, i.e., that everyone belongs to the community and that everybody has rights and obligations within the community. This implies that everyone has to interact in the arenas of interaction, be it the coffee room, the course or at a committee. Thus, nomination to groups at the department has to be subject not only to considerations of competence needs but also the rotation of individuals that is needed in order to create the condition of inclusion into the community.

Rotation of individuals is also necessary in order to create conditions for the faculty governance, since rotation makes it possible for transmitting competence between individuals, i.e., to make them equal. Thus, rotation is part of the developmental aspect of togetherness.

Since norm congruence needs the input of the norms, it is important to identify carriers of the norms, the normative paragons. They are those that in a solid way carry and express the norms, and shows the norms through their behaviour and legitimizes them through their reputation. Note that a normative paragon is not a manager in a hierarchical organization or a service worker in a faculty organization, but one that is identified as a proper worker that shows, implement and legitimize the proper norms.

Togetherness implies both norm congruence and dissemination of competence. Therefore, when there are tasks that have to be performed, cooperation with rotation and clever diversity management have to be used. Tasks are solved through cooperation between individuals selected in order to 1.) solve the task, thus some have to be experienced with the task at hand, 2.) be creative and find innovative solutions, thereby developing the department, thus some have to have competence outside the task in order to be able to contribute with fresh ideas 3.) infuse the group members with the accepted norms, thus at least one needs to be a normative paragon, 4.) develop the skills of the members of the group.

Most control systems exploit the egoism of humans (Collin, 1993). A university containing professionals also has to use the motivation of duty, i.e., that professionals have to perform an act because it is fair and correct according to the standards of the profession. But humans also have two other drivers, belongingness and care. The motivation of belongingness says that humans can perform an act because it makes the individual more accepted or at least not excluded from the group. Togetherness exploits this motivation by putting individuals in groups where more inclusive behaviour is rewarded by acceptance in the group and where non-integrative behaviour is punished, ultimately with exclusion. The motivation of care is when an individual interprets another individual's needs and tries to satisfy them. Togetherness exploits this motivation by supporting those that show care towards the others in the group.

Togetherness has, however, some limitations. Firstly, it is easier to implement togetherness in smaller groups. For example, care as motivation presupposes an understanding of others needs, which can only be achieved if the number of others are quite small, since understanding of another human demands individual knowledge about the other. This implies that there is a limitation on the number of individuals that can be considered with care.

Another limitation concerns governance through norm congruence. The importance of norms is that they direct and limit actions through the individual's preference system, i.e., it is internalised and becomes part of the individual's will. The risk of governance by norms is that the norms become too restrictive and become outdated. The norm of no-plagiarism makes an individual restricted from using a text without giving proper reference. This norm could become too restrictive if it implies that a researcher does not dare to use an idea the researcher has, since he or she does not remember if the researcher found the idea in another text or invented it. One norm I learned at my PhD studies was that of general education in business administration, that as a PhD in business education, you are supposed to know so much that you can teach all sub-subjects of business administration. Today, due to the extreme specialisation in the subject, that is an outdated norm.

In a governance system based on norm congruence, there is a need of continuous critique of the established norms. While the normative paragons are mostly defenders of the established normative set-up, there is a need of revolutionary individuals that always put the norms at stress. And ultimately, one of the basic norms of the community is that it is right to critique and question the norms. Without this norm, the community becomes a fanatic, fundamentalist community, which is the negation of the scientific spirit.

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