

# Foster cooperation

Tough tradeoffs, individual responsibilities, policies over regulations

What we have here is a rare opportunity to embrace an opposite (to mainstream) perspective on "today's reality" and what we have to do to shape it into more desirable form. To take chance of the odds we need to introduce two categories: 1. What is in fact more desirable form of reality we want to be part of? 2. How this perspective is different from others?

**The more desirable future:** It obviously is hard to put a finger on what is desirable for all the future to come, what are the contents in catalogues of what we would and wouldn't want to happen. I think (and I'm probably wrong) we could all agree on this: More desirable reality has more robust opportunities to grow as an individual and a group, our standard of living is better, there is less poverty, hunger and water shortages all over the world, people are healthier, more satisfied with their lives and in fact happier, and last but not least - differences are solved in peaceful way, or to simplify, people do not wage wars. All this in sustainable way so generations to come could enjoy standards we worked on and grab it from there to progress it even further. Is it a reality that you would sign onto? I know I would.

**The perspectives:** Reality of our middle world is rather plain simple: the matter around us plus interactions and interplays (mostly between human beings) constitutes it. If you want to distill from this reality of ours any kind of "system", you are most welcome to - your system then would be the container of rules, policies and regulations within which most of interactions and interplays between people take their place. Ok, so what are the perspectives pushed into mainstream of ideas and knowledge? You could divide them roughly into two categories: the hard approach and soft approach (or combination between them).

The hard approach people criticize present "system" - namely capitalism - for not being regulated as much as this perspective would like it to be. They want to create boxes, matrixes, structures, processes, sub-systems etc. All to manage constant flow of interactions and interplays between individuals.

The soft approach people criticize the "system" for not being sympathetic as much as they want it to be. They want to work on sentiments, psychology, elevate awareness, induce the need to relocate accumulated resources from one place to another on the emotional basis. They almost want to guilt you into buying Priuses, put your accumulating savings into consumption circle.

Problem with both of these approaches can be described from economic and managerial stands but in both cases we can say that those "hard" and "soft" efforts are counter-productive. Economic stand point would be this: reality of human interactions, the flow of information is a

constant process which "proceeds" in direction of optimal allocations of resources - namely - where scarce resources can satisfy the most of unlimited needs. The thing is: those needs are ever changing and through the hard approach you could create an entire system able to manage that reality, but just in this one static second the preferences create that exact matrix of patterns. The soft approach in economical view is also rather bad idea, because relocating resources where they're not as productive is adverse to interest of us all as consumers, workers and entrepreneurs. If we're that wealthy to relocate resources into unproductive spheres then ok (but then if we're that wealthy then the poverty is rather marginal), but to say that such allocation decreases poverty/creates additional value... It's not logically true.

Managerial stand point is probably easier to grasp as it provides more natural associations. The classical technique of hard approach - if new requirement or problem emerges you should create new function to address that. If there is problem with cooperation between front and back offices, you should create middle office. If there is requirement to be ecological you create entire bureau of ecology. Between all of matrixes, boxes, bones in systemic skeleton your bureau of eco stands for less than one percent of decisive process. So what is the impact on real actions? To simplify - 0. After a year of middle office existing instead of one operational problem you have two, between the back and the middle and between the middle and the front. The soft approach? If workers will like each other they will cooperate more frequent and better. What about the hard tradeoffs that would strain those liking each other relationships? Those will be stalled until lost value will need arbitrary solution, or the tradeoff will be replaced with use of additional capital - if you and your wife want to watch different channels at the same time the most probable solution is the purchase of the second TV<sup>1</sup>.

It is rather obvious to me that today's system suffers not from too less of hard and soft approach fixes, but from too much of those. If you would analyze today form of capitalism it is awfully lot regulated, with most of the important tools transferred into hard managed, governmental sphere (currencies is the head example). In fact what we do is heading new complexity of possible interplays and interactions with more and more complicated and thus non-efficient systems. And through the soft approach instead fostering cooperation we almost actively acting against it.

**The thought:** My argument is simple, but not simplistic. We could obviously state what is in the subtitle to this article and be angry at those in power that they're not listening and act stupid. Instead I say this: best managerial and economically sane practices should start at the

---

<sup>1</sup> Managerial stand point in proofing the obsolescence of hard and soft approach is provided from one of the TED Talks -Yves Morieux: *As work gets more complex, 6 rules to simplify*; [[http://new.ted.com/talks/yves\\_morieux\\_as\\_work\\_gets\\_more\\_complex\\_6\\_rules\\_to\\_simplify](http://new.ted.com/talks/yves_morieux_as_work_gets_more_complex_6_rules_to_simplify)]

self-governing levels. From towns to regions. It is, in my opinion, crucial to keep this notion in our circles of influence rather than circles of concern. This way we can foster the actual change, feel engaged and consume satisfaction from our actions.

To foster cooperation we need to create pressure on executing policies rather than creating strict regulations; hold everyone in our influence to their responsibilities and deny to suffer through unwillingness to cooperate; hold account and blame not for failing but in failing to help or ask for help - this one particularly changes the "lenses" through which you see interplay and interactions; empower whoever you interact with the deck of utility or knowledge you discovered - this really fosters cooperation between you and them, and also between them and further people with the best part being: you preserve, and even extend this way, your own comparative advantage.

If you have any questions, opinions or simply want to connect please do so either through mail [\*\*przemek.kucia@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:przemek.kucia@gmail.com), my blogs: [\*\*http://charismaworkshop.wordpress.com\*\*](http://charismaworkshop.wordpress.com) [\*\*http://fancyeco.wordpress.com\*\*](http://fancyeco.wordpress.com) or whatever means find suited

Take good care  
Przemek Kucia