



ONTOLOGICAL APPROACH TO PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-MANAGEMENT REGARDING THE SEAPORT

Saulius Lileikis

Lithuanian Maritime Academy

Abstract

The object of this article is psychological self-management regarding the seaport. The purpose of the research is to conduct a theoretically heuristic investigation of psychological self-management regarding the seaport at the ontological level. The type of the research is theoretically descriptive. The main method of the research is heuristic analysis. The basic methodological principle is existentialism. Psychological self-management regarding the seaport is discussed from the point of view of the concept of a personality and his/her moral self-development, ideological marine self-liberation for independent decision-making, the seaport symbolism and personal resistance to defense mechanisms, personal self-concept regarding the nature of psychological terror, and marine ecological self-identification in accordance with self-esteem.

KEYWORDS: seaport, self-management, psychology, ontology.

Introduction

The relevance of the research. The seaport is characterized by intensive activities of cargo handling, warehousing, ship agency, forwarding, etc. A skilled seaport employee must survive in stressful situations because of mentioned activities.

Personal self-management is a psychological tool in order to maintain the direction of one's own professional career and to survive in critical, unusual and stressful situations.

The most important condition for psychological self-management is ontologically based self-motivation as a psychological mechanism that encourages a personality at existential valuable level to somehow think, to do or not to do so.

One of the greatest opportunities for creating existential self-motivation is studies, higher education, where young people can:

- Achieve professional competencies;
- Realize their personal, individual interests;
- Raise exciting questions;
- Receive intelligent answers based on science;
- Experience intellectual satisfaction, which helps develop their motivation, relevant for their psychological self-management.

There is a great possibility to get intellectual satisfaction while studying, especially when students can learn almost everything they are interested in. This is the most important factor that encourages a person to think, to feel, to do, and he/she gets motivation to overcome professional challenges regarding the seaport activities (in this case).

From the ontological point of view of the seaport, we should understand that the transport does not carry the goods but people do.

So, the ontological approach to psychological self-management regarding the seaport includes the concept

of the personality in terms of dignity of difference, moral development as personal self-liberation for one's own maturity, ideological marine self-liberation for independent decision-making, relationships between a person and the seaport in anthropological psychoanalysis, resistance to defense mechanisms in relation to the anthropological symbolism of the seaport, personal self-concept regarding the nature of psychological terror, and marine ecological self-identification.

The ontological approach to psychological self-management regarding the seaport relates to the anthropological investigations (Freud 1930; Levi-Strauss 1967; Corbin 1994; Jovaiša 2001; Beresnevičius 2002; Goldschmidt 2003; Kaufmann 2006; Schmid-Höhne 2006; Tenzer 2007; Chiesa 2014; Lileikis 2011, 2015; Mega 2016).

Especially worthy ontological insights we can get from the investigations of C.G. Jung (*The Earth Has a Soul* 2016).

The object of the research is psychological self-management regarding the seaport.

The subject is an ontological level of scientific insights.

The purpose of the research is to conduct a theoretically heuristic investigation of psychological self-management regarding the seaport at the ontological level.

The type of the research is theoretically descriptive.

The main method is heuristic analysis of theoretical investigation of psychological self-management regarding the seaport at the ontological level.

The main methodological principle of the research is existentialism, which emphasizes the freedom of a personality and his/her noble activities including psychological self-management. Despite the many stressful situations that arise when working in the seaport, a skilled employee is able to base his/her life on values

and perceive the meaning of his/her daily life as well as of his/her professional activities.

Psychological self-management regarding the seaport in this article is ontologically discussed from the point of view of the concept of the personality and his/her moral self-development, ideological marine self-liberation for independent decision-making, the seaport symbolism and personal resistance to defense mechanisms, personal self-concept regarding the nature of psychological terror, and marine ecological self-identification in accordance with self-esteem.

The concept of the personality and his/her moral self-development

Ontology requires a deep approach to the possibility of personal self-management. So, first of all, it is appropriate to define the concept of personality. In order to be able to apply psychological self-management, an employee must be allowed (by his/her boss in the port company) to be himself/herself, i.e., to be different than others. It helps him/her to be self-confident and to believe that he/she can manage himself/herself and his/her personality is a value, and solidity along with endurance is right for him/her.

Personality in psychology means individual uniqueness. The prerequisites for a personality, who works in port companies, from the point of view of humanistic psychology are as follows – he/she is original, stable and valuable.

Each personality is characterized by his/her unique differences – physical (e.g., a human body, face), mental (e.g., professional approach) and social (e.g., the way of communication). Each person is not only different from others but also he/she is unique and only this makes him/her a personality (Sacks 2002).

The personality perceives himself/herself and is able:

- To project his/her personal and professional life;
- To take personal responsibility.

He/she can talk to himself/herself:

- “I am the boss in my life, in my decision-making process and in my professional career”.
- “I am CEO (Chief Executive Officer) for me”.
- “I can decide”.
- “I am able to learn what is needed”.

Business management, seaport management, personnel management, technology management start with personal self-management. The motto is: *“If I can manage myself, I can manage the technology and processes at work”*.

From this point of view, moral development is a personal self-liberation for one's own maturity. Psychological self-management is based on personal independence (psychological freedom) but it must have some limits because the seaport is characterized by very fast activity, technological and social tensions and many stressful situations.

Mature psychological self-management can have problems with obedience of a subordinate to his/her boss but obedience is very important despite personal self-management because of technological and social tensions (extreme situations) in the seaport.

How can the psychological self-management of a subordinate be reconciled with his/her obedience to the boss?

The ability of self-management is naturally related to flexibility in communication and teamwork:

– You can manage yourself because you are an independent person;

– A higher level of your psychological self-management is when you (being independent) can obey your boss.

Democracy with time for discussions is very limited in the seaport. So, there is an art of cooperation in order to flexibly combine:

- Limited business discussions,
- Independent decision-making of a subordinate,
- His/her obedience to the order of the boss.

Psychological and moral development of a person is based on L. Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory:

Level 1 (*Pre-Conventional moral*):

– Obedience from fear of punishment (a person is obedient because he/she wants to avoid punishment for disobedience);

– Self-interest orientation (“what's in it for me?”).

Level 2 (*Conventional moral*):

– Interpersonal accordance and conformity (social norms affect behavior);

– Law and social order (obedience to the law without great awareness and questions about the correctness of the law).

Level 3 (*Post-Conventional moral*):

– Social contract (a person asks questions about the correctness of the law and its conformity, e.g., to democratic values);

– Universal ethical principles – principled conscience does not allow enforcing the law, which is unacceptable because it can violate human rights (Kohlberg, Hersch 1977).

Mature personal decisions as a direction of psychological self-management do not contradict the mission of the port company or the decisions of the boss.

Ideological marine self-liberation for independent decision-making

An employee of a port company, who is well educated in the field of marine culture history and is able to identify himself/herself ideologically, can be stronger by applying psychological self-management because he/she feels his/her professional mission.

Marine self-concept of a personality was historically developed from ancient pagan to Christian, i.e., Judeo-Christian and then post-Christian one. Personal pagan self-concept was limited by naturism and animism as faith to spiritual beings, gods, demons (Durkheim 2007). The main ideas of the pagan mentality are as follows:

– A person considered himself/herself as part of nature only;

– His/her self-concept was oppressive (Durkheim 2007);

– Pagan ideology without transcendence (experience beyond the physical level of existence) did not allow mental freedom;

- Impersonal gods ruled the whole life of an ancient man;

- Natural cycles overpowered the person, so that the ability of free and conscious psychological self-management was not allowed (Guardini 1994).

There are some aspects of pagan civilizations:

- Ancient civilizations had very strong systems of tribal life and work (e.g., great architecture in Greece or India) and rituals according to closed natural cycles and experience of cosmic time;

- Ancient civilizations had no possibilities of a free moral culture, of respect for others who are different, and to have personal approach in the tribe with customs, which were mandatory for all its members;

- Naturism and animism as ideologies offered no opportunities for the dignity of personal difference;

- The ancient people had no opportunity to *distance* themselves from ordinary tribal thinking and doing;

- A pagan man considered the sea according to his/her mental tribal tradition;

- He/she could not free himself/herself from this tradition;

- A man was subordinated to the sea as part of nature;

- There was no experience of super-nature (Šliogeris 2011);

- A pagan person was completely dependent on nature, which was a great mystery for his/her consciousness and feelings (Guardini 1994).

There are limited self-esteem and perception of one's own "Ego". There is a lack of imagination, freedom for decision-making as well as self-management. A man is very active and creative but only as part of a closed natural cycle and rhythm determined by cosmic laws. Pagan self-concept existed only within the limits of the experienced natural environment.

The sea was religiously considered. It was full of impersonal gods. The ancient people had rituals, that the sea would be calm during their travels. The sea was great and magic but the sea itself and its gods were not independent. The whole cosmos was characterized by gods and the sea represented their influential powers (Šliogeris 2011).

With the Judaic and Christian monotheism, the sea is no longer the house of gods. There are several innovations:

- Freedom of thinking and of creativity;

- The concept of an organized nation of free people;

- The transcendental perspective of life, the meaningful history of humankind and constructive exploitation of nature (Rubšys 2009).

Personal self-concept frees from the absolute natural determination. A spiritually liberated person can experience his/her dignity and dignity of other people. A person becomes free from complete dependence on nature, he/she perceives his/her uniqueness and becomes able to decide and to manage himself/herself by creating European history (Guardini 1994).

Man can mentally leave the universe by entering transcendence (psychological self-liberation), e.g., Christian sea-missions were characterized not only by invasions and robberies but also by:

- Ethnographic investigations,

- The chronicles of customs of tribes,

- Schools and hospitals (Braunstein, Phan 2001).

Christianity spread monotheism. God was not perceived as part of nature but as the personal Creator of the universe. This new ideology frees a person from complete dependence on nature. He/she feels his/her personal freedom to decide, to critically examine things and to see his/her own existence *as from outside* (Guardini 1994).

Self-management, from the ontological point of view, was eventually based on personal freedom for independent decision-making by experiencing one's own significant role in the professional creation of the marine culture of the port business.

The seaport symbolism and personal resistance to defense mechanisms

The possibilities of psychological self-management in the seaport depend on one's own professional self-identification. The port staff has a spiritual opportunity of professional self-identification according to the seashore symbolism.

A person psychologically sees things as human forms, e.g., the seaport is like a man, it was made by a man and has got a human substance. It is based on Freud's psychoanalysis but especially – on Jung's analytical psychology, where the main role is played by subconscious parallels.

A person as well as a seaport is a part of nature. A human being and a seaport are dual structures:

- A man is an integral system of body and soul;

- A seaport is manifested in relationships between land and sea.

The destructive tension between land and sea can contribute to the human creative tension in order:

- To survive in a dangerous port environment;

- To build a positive approach.

An intelligent port employee is able to see the seaport as a border (between land and sea), which historically symbolizes great maritime discoveries when a man physically lived on land but spiritually craved to discover another shore.

The creative approach allows the personality to realize and continue the human seaport history with his/her own productive contribution. The perception of existential analogy between a person and a seaport can help develop eco-awareness and psychologically adopt the Green Port concept based on a comprehensive approach (Green Port: Balancing Environmental Challenges with Economic Demands 2017).

Existential psychotherapy is also characterized by natural parallels:

- The human nature relates to the seaport nature;

- The seaport as an existential dual model helps perceive the opposition and harmony of one's body and soul (harmony can consist of differences only).

Strong port embankment is a successful result of the technologically developed seashore symbolizing a skilled port employee who is a result of his/her developed personality. Reflection of natural parallels helps calm down a long-term stress recognizing the commonality of human nature, seaport nature and nature itself.

Human integral duality refers to the professional vocation. The dual working environment meets the dual human nature. Thus, the seaport can be ontologically characterized by the best professions.

Greater understanding of existential parallels between a skilled employee and a seaport can provide:

- A more complete professional identification;
- A mature professional self-motivation;
- A wider professional responsibility.

All this can enrich a port employee's personality creating a better ability of his/her psychological self-management.

It is also appropriate to study psychological self-management as resistance to defense mechanisms in relation to the anthropological symbolism of the seaport. Anthropological symbolism means a parallel between human nature and seaport nature. It is based on psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis emphasizes:

- The role of subconscious (approx. 90% of all human activity);
- Permanently active childhood experience (e.g., a kid is afraid of his/her father, and then, as a port employee, he/she is irrationally afraid of his/her boss);
- Very natural semi-unconscious defense mechanisms.

Subconscious is invisible but it is mostly active, e.g., handwriting is caused by one's emotional state, invisible genes and experiences of the past, like sea-waves as a natural "handwriting" designed not only by the wind but also by invisible depths, underwater currents, etc.

Psychological defense mechanisms are natural and important because help survive but they disturb the smooth collaboration in a work-team, e.g., a person, being guilty and succumbing to the projection, blames another.

Stressful situations prevail in the seaport and promote the expression of defense mechanisms, i.e., avoidance, transference, denial, repression, regression, restitution, sublimation, conversion, projection, opposite reaction, rationalization, compensation.

An embankment must resist the sea waves, that symbolize psychological defense mechanisms, against which a mature person can resist being in stressful situations.

There are several examples:

- Avoidance mechanism – a young employee is afraid of criticism and is not doing, what he/she should do;
- Transference mechanism – an employee in a conflict feels as a victim of the chief and vents his/her anger on another person, e.g., on a weaker colleague or a family member;
- Compensation mechanism – if a chief does not have moral authority, he/she can naturally portray a boss;
- Denial mechanism – the wish to deny one's own mistake;
- Repression mechanism – a person forgets his/her unpleasant experiences that remain and manifest by anxiety and/or terrible dreams;
- Opposite reaction – one person hates another but panders to him/her;

– Conversion mechanism – an employee confuses in nonstandard situations but is afraid to ask for help and becomes sick;

– Restitution mechanism – a person feels guilty and manipulates others with apologies;

– Rationalization mechanism – a person, who has behaved inappropriately, is seeking to rationally justify himself/herself;

– Regression mechanism – immature people like children shout on each other in a conflict situation;

– Sublimation mechanism, e.g., an employee of a port company feels bad (dissatisfied, aggressive) and he/she begins to work too much.

What should we do? First of all, it is appropriate to recognize the specific defense mechanism emerged. Psychological self-management begins with the ontological recognition of individual inner activities.

Personal self-concept regarding the nature of psychological terror

It is appropriate to discuss a non-traditional approach to psychological terror (e.g., bullying) according to the humanistic research of Truskauskienė (2012).

There are three introductory theses:

– The research of the nature of terror is most important (human nature and the nature of terror belong to the same psychological system);

– A person naturally has a tendency to terrorize others (it is as if in our "DNA");

– Psychological self-management begins with the correct approach to the essence of psychological terror.

Let's talk about the general points. A human being is characterized by symbolizing his/her own experience. A person needs the symbols because of his/her personal nature, e.g., the sea-storm is an ancient symbol of life problems, and a seaport symbolizes personal comfort.

A dissatisfied aggressor is looking for a victim who can symbolically be a "seaport of comfort" for him. A seaport was designed as a ship service system. A person develops his/her values and friendship in order to get a service system in stressful situations:

– The internal service system is values;

– The external service system is friends as well as victims.

People naturally use both systems in order to survive.

Now, let's talk about specific points. In the case of psychological terror:

– We cannot change others;

– We can change our approach and reaction.

There are traditional and non-traditional ways to discuss this problem. The traditional way to understand psychological terror is this:

– The aggressor is "bad, guilty and must be punished";

– The victim is "good and does need to be saved".

This approach is good but not complete. The non-traditional way allows to recognize human nature in general, opportunities for a victim, human nature in terms of the fact that psychological terror partially characterizes all people worldwide, and unconscious motives of an aggressor (what he/she really wants).

The opportunities for a victim are as follows:

- To understand the communicational mechanisms;
- To perceive the hidden motives of an aggressor;
- To understand the victim's reactions as personal indicators.

Persons, who are attacked, usually differ in the group. They are smarter, successful in life, loser or unable, etc.

But a personality must be different. He/she has the right, duty and honor to be different (Sacks 2002).

Psychological terror is not just a provocation for a victim but it also manifests the problematic mental state of an aggressor. The phenomenon and its interpretation are not the same, e.g.:

- A victim says: *"He/she is bullying me"*.
- An aggressor says: *"I'm just kidding"*.

But why is the aggressor joking? Why cannot he/she be quiet without joking?

There are some real motives of the aggressor who wants:

- To communicate and be accepted;
- To discover the secret of a victim's personality;
- To find and confirm his/her status in the group;
- To identify himself/herself;
- To hide his/her real feelings;
- To hide his/her social feelings;
- To show that he/she can no longer hide his/her feelings (Truskauskienė 2012).

Constructive self-management is developed when a person (victim) tries to recognize the real motives of the aggressor, to identify his/her (victim's) own feelings, to perceive his/her (victim's) own reactions in terms of personal dignity.

The victim should consider the aggressors as deficient people and himself/herself as an enriched person who can generously share his/her social wealth experiencing personal dignity. Only in front of deficient people (aggressors), a person (victim) can realize, how rich his/her personality is (Truskauskienė 2012).

Therefore, if any employee of the port company creates problems and attacks you, it is appropriate not just to follow legal instructions but firstly, in terms of psychological self-management, it is appropriate to perceive yourself, to realize your advantage and enjoy, and only then decide, what to do in a particular situation.

Marine ecological self-identification in accordance with self-esteem

The development of ecological self-concept begins with an orientation in the valuable and psychological fields. The exploitation of nature and its pollution have mainly increased over the past 200 years, e.g., Aral Sea ecological catastrophe, an island formed from plastic waste in the Pacific Ocean, mass extermination of marine sanitation – sharks, whales and dolphins, etc. (Great Pacific Shame 2017).

The historical development of marine mentality is characterized by:

- Paganism – the sea is divine;
- Judaism – the sea is no longer divine;
- Christianity – man is divine;
- Atheism – a person denies God;
- Postmodernism – unclear individualized freedom.

After paganism, Judeo-Christianity and atheism, modern generations of polluters are characterized by relative approach. There is no objective truth and there is nothing holy or eternal. There is lack of self-respect and accuracy and lack of thinking about new generations.

The oceans are massively polluted. From ships and industries, the sea receives plastic waste, paints, lubricants, various trash, etc. The meaning of the work becomes uncritically narrow and only as a primitive exploitation. Without critical, strategic, cultural thinking, only manipulative actions remain.

Business and culture should be integrally united in accordance with social responsibility. The professional sector is often not characterized by ecological self-concept around the world. The principle, prevailed in the seaport, is: *"Higher, faster, forward!"* (Gerstenberger, Welke 2008).

The development of harmony culture as well as of sustainability is important for the continuity of humankind. International conventions dedicated for the protection of the marine environment have been announced but waters are still polluted.

Conventional protection of the sea based on sanctions:

- Is not effective,
- Does not offer a sincere desire for implementation of the conventions.

Responsibility can be developed on a valuable basis only. It is appropriate to solve the environmental problems with comprehensive education, development of global empathy, ecological education and development of personal maturity.

Developing person respects himself/herself and his/her environment, and behaves properly without a supervising security officer. There are important ecological development of a person, development of culture of spiritual and technological harmony, and improvement of working conditions.

Just conventions are not enough for the people to follow them. A person wants rights but he/she does not want obligations but if a person respects himself/herself, he/she does not need conventions because he/she does not allow himself/herself to pollute the sea and its environment.

The natural law of ecological maturity expresses the behavior of a mature individual based on highest values, and pollution of the sea is unacceptable because it would violate the principles, on which his/her life is based. Human behavior shows his/her values.

Opportunities for the development of ecological harmony are as follows:

- Mass level – usual, conventional, formal, mandatory education is not effective;
- Individual level – people can existentially perceive environmental problems.

What contributes to a sustainable human action? Self-esteem and desire for long-term happiness. Higher education helps (or should help) to experience intellectual satisfaction, to love and appreciate one's own life and get up after some unavoidable disappointments at work.

A spiritually impoverished person:

- Does not appreciate his/her personality;
- Pollutes his/her thoughts or language;
- Pollutes his/her natural environment.

Psychological projection can explain the pollution: a person assigns his/her negative qualities to others and accuses the environment. A primitive individual cannot live purely. He/she defensively pollutes the sea and himself/herself by semi-conscious showing his/her disappointment in life.

A mature person can develop himself/herself:

- Physically (technologically);
- Psychologically (positive feelings);
- Spiritually (noble and meaningful life).

A person protects what he/she loves, and what increases his/her self-esteem. Human ecological harmony is characterized by personal noble values, ecological self-motivation, intellectual satisfaction in studies and comprehensive (universal) approach to life, to nature and to one's own meaning of existence. Marine ecological self-identification in accordance with self-esteem by applying a conscious psychological self-management helps to avoid the desire to pollute the marine environment.

Conclusions

The concept of the personality and his/her moral self-development enrich the possibilities of psychological self-management regarding the seaport because freely different and self-confident person can apply universal ethical principles. His/her mature decisions as a direction of self-management do not contradict the mission of the port company or the decisions of the boss.

Ideological marine self-liberation for independent decision-making refers to the mental transformation from paganism to monotheism, where psychological self-management was eventually based on personal freedom for independent decision-making by experiencing one's own significant role in the professional creation of the marine culture of the port business.

Greater understanding of existential parallels between a skilled employee and a seaport can provide a more complete professional identification, the mature professional self-motivation and a wider professional responsibility. All this can enrich a port employee's personality creating a better ability of his/her psychological self-management, which begins with the ontological recognition of individual inner activities. It is appropriate to recognize the specific psychological defense mechanisms.

Personal self-concept regarding the nature of psychological terror is associated with the possibility not just to follow legal instructions but firstly, in terms of psychological self-management, to perceive oneself, to realize one's advantage, to enjoy and only then decide, what to do in a particular situation.

Ecological self-identification in accordance with self-esteem by applying a conscious psychological self-management helps to avoid the desire to pollute the marine environment.

The results of this study can be applied training future skilled seaport employees in the field of higher education.

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Saulius Lileikis is a doctor of social sciences, associate professor at the Port Economics and Management Department of Lithuanian Maritime Academy. Directions of *scientific interests* are marine hodegetics and seaport anthropology. *Scientific monographs*: 1. Youth Altruistic Education: Socio-cultural Context. Socialization Perspective of the Personality (2007); 2. Methodology of Cultural and Psychosocial Maritime Education (2011); 3. The Outline of the Maritime Self-concept Development: Direction of the Personality Value (2015); 4. Maritime Leadership: Values, Psychology, Self-Development (2018). Address: I. Kanto str. 7, LT-92123 Klaipėda. Phone: 8 652 08 106. E-mail: s.lileikis@lajm.lt