

The Coaching Maps as a Tool for Developing Reflectivity in Organisations

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Our view of organizations, labour and the competencies of managers will soon need to change. In the postmodern and post-Fordist world, economy and organizations function differently than they did in the 20th century. Workers and managers will have to face new expectations. Not only has reflectivity become one of the key organisational factors; it is also taught, learnt and shaped. Drawing on an autoethnographic model and action-research, authors of this paper provide an education and development tool that managers and workers can use to develop and trigger reflectivity. Picture ethnography, coaching philosophy and hermeneutics are theoretical bases for the construction of a new model of self-development.

Keywords: reflectivity, organizational ethnography, visual ethnography, business anthropology, *The Coaching Maps*.

Coaching Maps narzędziem kształtowania refleksyjności w organizacjach

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Przyszłość wymaga od ludzi innego spojrzenia na funkcjonowanie organizacji, wykonywaną w nich przez ludzi pracę oraz posiadane przez menedżerów kompetencje. W świecie ponowoczesności i postfordyzmu gospodarka i organizacje funkcjonują w odmienny sposób niż w XX wieku. Tym samym innego rodzaju oczekiwania adresowane są do pracowników. Refleksyjność stała się nie tylko jednym z kluczowych zasobów ludzi i organizacji, lecz także przedmiotem kształcenia. Autorzy tekstu, w oparciu o model autoetnografii i action-research, ukazują autorskie narzędzie do pracy rozwojowej, skierowane do menedżerów i pracowników m.in. w kontekście kreowania i wyzwania w nich refleksyjności. Etnografia obrazu, filozofia coachingu, hermeneutyka stanowią podstawy teoretyczne do skonstruowania modelu nowego modelu pracy nad samym sobą.

Słowa kluczowe: refleksyjność, etnografia organizacji, etnografia obrazu, antropologia biznesu, *The Coaching Maps*.

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1. Introduction

Reflectivity is a recognized and popular concept in European social theory, considered and analysed in the context of modern social life since the early 1990s. It is conditioned primarily by the culture in which we live, people we surround ourselves with and our habitat. In turn, it influences our sense of agency and subjectivity (Archer, 2013). This relatively new social, psychological and cultural phenomenon has become a challenge for researchers and, at the same time, a practical issue tormenting not only managers and employers, but also teachers and parents. Reflectivity has, or at least should become, an element of everyday life. This is why reflectivity studies and analyses have been immediately embraced by researchers of organisational management and those exploring the development of organizational culture, taking into account its application aspects or, to put it simply, using reflectivity when performing work-related tasks and activities.

In this paper, we intend to look at reflectivity from the point of view of both theory and practice, social sciences and business. This will require us to continuously shift between the realm of abstract social theory or philosophy and the world of business, or management practices. Our discussion shall, therefore, combine two areas of knowledge – Aristotelian *theoria* and *praxis*, i.e. theoretical, universal knowledge based on an analysis of causes, with knowledge resulting from the life of an organization, knowledge that is external to the knowing subject.

The subject has been explored by the authors for two main reasons. First of all, for many years, we have operated professionally at the interface between science (through research and writing) and business practices (running and managing a business). Secondly, the area of our business activity is the transfer of knowledge, creating awareness and developing competences among those working in business. In training, coaching and consulting activities, reflectivity – shaping it, developing, reconstructing, creating, as well as applying and embracing it in our everyday activities – has become an issue of great consequence. Authors' reflections, analyses and hypotheses shall be presented in subsequent sections of the paper.

The aim of the article is to present suggestions for shaping reflectivity in 21st-century organizations, accepting axioms about the role of reflectivity in contemporary social and economic life, and thus the need to implement it into the daily practice of managers and employees. In terms of methodology, this article is based on autoethnography and action-research. Autoethnography is understood here not so much as self-narrative, or autobiography used for a critical analysis of the position of an individual (in this case – authors) against others in social contexts, but as a research genre whose boundaries are, in a sense, co-created through research practices typical of anthropology or sociology (Holman Jones, 2009, p. 178). It is a method that combines the personal with the cultural and the social,

encouraging first-hand experience (Holman Jones, 2009, p. 177). Personal experiences of authors reflect their thoughts and meanings that emerged in situations in which they participated. The article is not, however, a purely autoethnographic work. Authors' autobiographical themes, their experiences and the emotional sphere, as well as the combination of different styles typical of autoethnography have been omitted.

Action-research is, in turn, a research and practical model that requires one to continually analyse practical activities. In line with the tenets of action-research, authors rejected from the very outset any research model and, subsequently, recognized the competence of the respondents – i.e. themselves – to define what is important to them in order to understand the rules and mechanisms of social life. In addition, when conducting action-research, a participative, democratic process of developing knowledge about practical application was applied with respect to the entrepreneurial activity of authors. In short, the paper provides an analysis of business activity, subjecting it to critical thinking and interpretation according to the postmodern paradigm.

2. What is Reflectivity?

Over the past twenty years, reflectivity has become the subject of keen interest of social scientists. Zygmunt Bauman analysed reflectivity in the context of human emancipation. In evolutionary terms, the process of gradual emancipation of individuals from social structures has been observed throughout history. Feudal lords, the nation-state and the capitalist enterprise of the 19th or 20th century all enslaved individuals, expecting from them routine actions and general passivity instead of creativity or the spirit of initiative. This attitude favoured conformism and acting without reflection. Human emancipation in the postmodern era, according to Bauman, incited individuals to reflect on their everyday life and on daily practices. Given the general sense of instability and the absence of great social structures organizing the world and making it predictable, every human being is somehow compelled to think and reflect (Bauman, 2006; 2007).

In a similar vein, Anthony Giddens argues that reflectivity is the ability to think about new situations, which allows humans to interact and create reality (Giddens, 2003). Margaret Archer proposes a synthetic theoretical model of reflectivity, an agency theory, in which she inquires and interprets the individual's entanglement with social structures in which (s)he functions. It is an analysis of the relationship between freedom and enslavement, subjectivity and objectivity: *As subject of action, we tend to be rather active than passive, because we can adapt our life projects to those practices that we believe ourselves to be able to undertake* (Archer, 2013b, p. 35). (...) And further: *a complete description of the structure and of agency, as well as the reflective process mediating between them requires the acknowledgement and*

examination of interdependencies between two ontologies – socially objective and individually subjective (Archer, 2013b, p. 35).

Theoretical considerations, often very abstract, need to be translated into everyday life. Is there space and time for reflectivity in the business practice of organization management? The answer seems simple: if such is the requirement of modern times, it is always possible to find space and time. The question is rather whether business owners, managers and employees are prepared for it. After all, during the many decades of Fordism, they were formed and moulded to be conformists, passive puppets of organizational structures. As a consequence, aren't passivity and conformism their default setting? If we look at it from the point of view of evolutionism, in many cases we are dealing with a habitual absence of reflection and thought or, at best, only the first stages of rebuilding this way of thinking and consciousness.

In view of the above, how can reflectivity be taught? How can it be instilled? How can benefits of practicing reflectivity be presented to people?

Training, consulting and coaching work of the authors is an attempt at answering these questions. *The Coaching Maps* tool shall be presented as part of an autoethnographic analysis. It shall take the form of a case study of a qualitative tool applied to foster and develop reflectivity among individuals within organizational structures.

3. The Old and the New – the Eternal Problem

Searching for new solutions and alternatives, matching methods to needs, the relentless rush of corporate life, constant rotation of people and shifting priorities bear witness to the accelerating pace of the modern and future world. As Peter Drucker wrote: *Changes have become the norm, a totally natural phenomenon. (...) Changes are inevitable, you can only try to anticipate and prepare for them* (Drucker, 1999, p. 73). Thus, changes have become a fixture of everyday life, and not an exception, as they used to be in the 20th century. Liquid modernity, soft capitalism, flexibility, and the feeling of insecurity are all phenomena related to change (Bauman, 2006; 2007; Beck, Giddens & Lash, 2009; Beck, 2002; Naisbitt, 2007; Rifkin, 2001; 2003; Castells, 2007). Constant changes in everyday life bring confusion, frustrations, social tensions, loss of one's anonymity, lack of energy, apathy or burnout (Sennett, 2006; 2010). We resort to a plethora of 'lifebelts', such as passions and hobbies, changes of perspective, mentoring or consulting services, space rearrangement in companies, flexible working conditions and time arrangements or team-building training sessions. These are only a few examples of a plethora of attempts made to find new means and methods of work that facilitate adaptation to and acceptance of constantly changing tasks and duties, goals and professional roles.

Each period in history has its own characteristics, its own challenges for individuals and organizations, and looks for specific solutions

tailored to present needs and expectations. In the industrial era, the Ford-type organization had a relatively steady assortment of features and, consequently, a defined set of work tools that were used by managers or HR specialists (Ash, 2003). It was due, among others, to the fact that professional roles, and therefore also the scope of tasks, did not undergo major transformations. A trade and skills associated with it were acquired once in a lifetime. Managers had specific and clearly defined tools they used to motivate employees, referring to either financial or non-material factors. HR specialists had many tools to diagnose future and current employees, as well as training scenarios. They hinged primarily on the categorization of individuals and the use of measurement scales based on the quantification and conversion of behavioural indicators. On a daily basis, tests, questionnaires, scales measuring predispositions, personality traits of employees and managers were commonly used. In fact, we may venture the hypothesis that people – or, rather, their suitability for tasks – were evaluated in a zero-one system. However, employees quickly learned to mark ‘the right’ answers, that is, those expected by the employer. These tools were constructed in line with market expectations, on the so-called scientific bases that often failed to meet the requirements of companies.

Quite unexpectedly, these methods ceased to be effective: situational factors or the fact of playing many roles in one’s life were not taken into account in classifications. Work scenarios, in turn, failed to account for present-day challenges, such as growing sets of competences or the diversity of specializations. There was fluidity, volatility, unpredictability of life, but also individuality or human emancipation, that is, one’s independence from the environment. In other words, economic and technological contexts have also contributed to the emergence of new values, patterns of behaviour, lifestyles and social norms.

As a result, it became necessary to revise the existing management model and to construct new tools for working with people. Managers and HR specialists were faced with a new challenge: they had to change their perspective. First of all, they needed to accept the subjectivity of individuals, the possibility of constructing one’s future life, giving meaning and sense to one’s thoughts by people working in organizations, and above all, designing actions (Kostera, 2010).

Enterprises began to add new management practices to their methods in the spirit of changeability, flexibility, search for innovative solutions, but also to use the potential of people, their individuality and uniqueness. New tools were employed: tools that, instead of categorizing and segregating people, define their individual features or identify the characteristics and the potential of each person. These tools were designed to stimulate reflectivity, sense of purpose and meaning, or to create opportunities allowing the individual to design and build his/her life. Only open-minded, creative people, capable of taking risk and of thinking outside the box could have

a significant impact on the company's added value and capital growth, as they contributed to its efficiency (Drucker, 2009).

4. How Should We Work in the 21st Century?

We live in a culture dominated by image and will continue to do so (Olechnicki 2003, Sztompka, 2005; Collier, 1967). With the development of new media and technologies, we turn away from texts in favour of images that refer to a written or spoken word. The world is becoming more and more spectacular, and human environment is filled with increasingly expressive and abundant pictures. At airports, railway stations, on the Internet, on mobile phones or in shopping malls, we readily resort to images in the form of simple sketches or geometric figures (Levinson, 1999). It is not new: after all, humans have always communicated through images – suffice it to mention prehistoric paintings on cave walls. Throughout human history we find evidence of pictorial forms of communication.

This culture of image is directly connected with consumer culture (Aldridge, 2006; Ritzer, 2001). It concerns both material and non-material elements, for example sensations. The insatiable hunger for sensations is becoming an important driver of our culture. In turn, satisfying these needs provide no more than fleeting sensations: they are as transient and brief as they are intense. This has resulted in a model of an individual focused on sensations, or even on 'collecting sensations' (Bauman, 2006; 2007). This is how the culture of image favours the development of consumer culture. In addition to sensations, we consume images and signs, both moving and still, with each of these images appearing in a specific context. Contextuality, or a given moment or a specific time-space unit, becomes one of the key issues necessary for understanding the world or for building relationships.

For those living in the contemporary culture of image, one of the challenges is the selection of methods for studying it, i.e. appropriate tools with which to acquire knowledge, explain it and use in our everyday functioning within the 'world of images'. One of methods that could be applied is the ethnography of image. Before we explore this issue further, let us define ethnography itself. It is a manner of studying the world and culture that is rooted in socio-cultural anthropology (Silvermann, 2007; 2008; Barth, Gingrich, Parkin & Sydel, 2007; Denzin, 2009; Barnard 2006). It is based primarily on participant observation, interviews, or the analysis of existing data, including visual data. Its main purpose is to understand a particular culture, and therefore individual experiences, motives or behavioural patterns. In order to do it, the researcher can describe it, and thus construct a narrative, or a specific story based on details collected in the process of a long-term study of people within their natural environment. An investigator-ethnographer is a person that looks at a culture that is foreign to him/her and tries to explore and learn it from scratch. The purpose

of this endeavour is to understand, translate and interpret the culture in question, which involves interpreting, and often also guessing, the various meanings of behaviour of the Other. It requires the researcher's presence in a different culture, his/her hidden participation, in order to look at this culture from a different perspective, that is, through the eyes of those who are the subject of research, and observe their behaviour in their natural environment. The advantage of this type of methodological approach is the fact that it allows one to acquire in-depth knowledge of another culture and write a new story on the basis of the observed details.

Analogically, the ethnography of image is one of the methods that allow us to understand the individual within an environment, where it is possible to capture natural reactions, authentic words, gestures, drawings and other types of messages. In this case, however, the environment is not understood as a physical space to which a given community belongs, or within which an individual functions, but the space of an image that (s)he creates and designs responding to specific details of his/her life.

It is the study of a new reality constructed on the basis of any image representing meanings that are relevant to a human being who is a member of a given community or culture. The respondent may respond to questions asked during an interview by drawing, painting or sketching his/her answers. By doing so, the respondent gives them a meaning that, on the one hand, is cultural (i.e. it is common to all representatives of a given culture, community, organization) and, on the other hand, is extremely individual and subjective. In other words, visual ethnography is a relatively young research method based on a combination of observations, data resulting from answers provided by respondents during interviews and the analysis of visuals created by the respondent. Defined in this way, visual ethnography has two important features. First, when answering questions during the ethnographic interview, a reflective process is triggered in respondents. Unlike in the case of filling in a quantified questionnaire during a survey, respondents are invited to reflect. They engage in deeper thinking processes and give each answer a lot of thought. Second, the so-called 'thick description' of meanings that results from the answers provided forms a specific story. As American anthropologist Clifford Geertz argues, the ethnographer deals with the meaning of what people do and their interpretations of their own actions and the actions of others (Geertz, 2000; 2005a; 2005b; 2006). Visual ethnography is the interpretation of a particular image with a given context.

To be a good ethnographer, one needs specific skills, such as the ability to make astute observations, attention to detail, natural curiosity about the world and desire to understand another human being – in this case, a representative of a different culture. In addition, in order to carry out ethnographic research, one needs to be able to look at another culture from a distance, without judging it or imposing meanings. An important

skill is the ability to ask ethnographic questions allowing one to inquire and explore a given topic in depth. An ethnographer of image should have the same competencies and skills to be able to carry out an ethnographic study.

5. *The Coaching Maps* – a Response to the Challenges of Today and Tomorrow?

The Coaching Maps is one of the tools adapted to this liquid, constantly changing and flexible reality. It has been designed for personal development, management – including HR management – consulting, brokerage and career guidance, facilitation and design thinking. It was built for the purpose of studying and, consequently, improving 36 social competences recognized as crucial in the light of present-day requirements. It emphasizes the multifaceted and complex nature of individuals. At the same time, it has not been developed to analyse the level of knowledge, skills or predispositions of the individual, but rather his/her attitude towards them, the way the individual perceives these competences in order to create, as a result, his/her own opportunities allowing him/her to use them.

The Coaching Maps is largely founded on coaching philosophy (Blackman, Moscardo & Gray, 2016) and visual ethnography, which are put into the service of development, training, workshop and consulting work. It has specific theoretical foundations, i.e. hermeneutics (Kurt 2004), ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 2007) and post-structuralism, and consists of four elements: 36 thematic photographs, 36 corresponding *Coaching Sketches*, 36 scenarios examining attitudes towards competences and 36 ready-made sets of exercises for project work which is conducted using *Sketches*. *The Coaching Maps* has been designed for those who want to find their place in the liquid modernity, who are able to look at themselves with courage and delve into themselves with openness and authenticity in order to design their lives.

At least two of its features render this tool unique. First, it allows the client/participant of a training or workshop to define the situation/problem. Until now, scaled statements that provided ready results have prevailed in various types of tools developed for the same purpose. Upon completing the test, an individual (a manager or an employee) or his/her superiors became equipped with knowledge about their suitability for tasks, along with specific recommendations. In *The Coaching Maps*, the client is not provided with a ready result or an external evaluation of him/herself. In accordance with the assumptions of subjectivity, freedom and individuality, clients independently work out their own interpretations and present only the most important conclusions at which they have arrived. To prove truly useful, *The Coaching Maps* undoubtedly require total honesty and activity from the client, but it makes the latter more responsible. Self-determination is emphasized and strengthened.

Secondly, the uniqueness of *The Coaching Maps* lies in the method employed. Until now, the so-called 'existing images', i.e. photographs predominated; in turn, in *The Coaching Maps* the flexibility of the tools is emphasized, along with their adaptability to one's needs. This is why laminated *Coaching Sketches* are used. They are unfinished black and white images that are completed as a result of the client's project work. Clients can modify these images at their discretion: paint, draw and transform them as many times as they wish. As a result, the client creates his/her own image which reveals the hidden meaning of his/her thoughts.

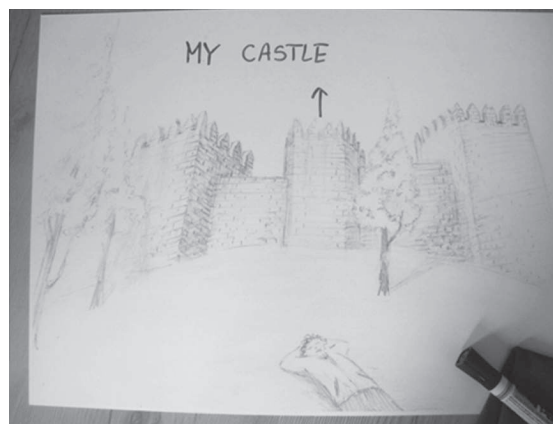


Fig. 1.

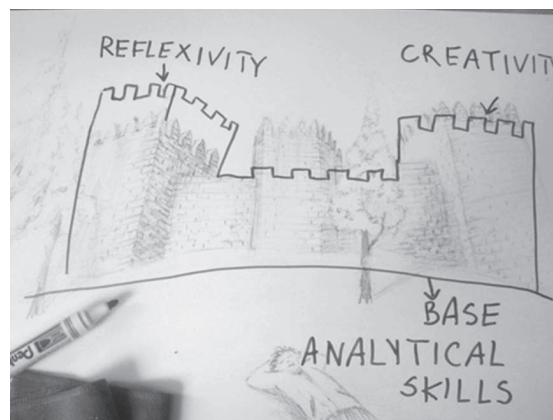


Fig. 2.

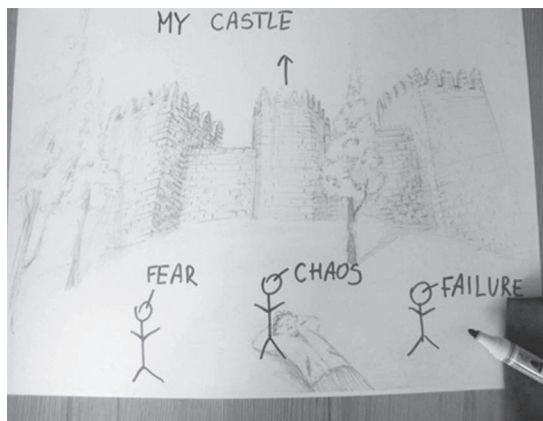


Fig. 3.

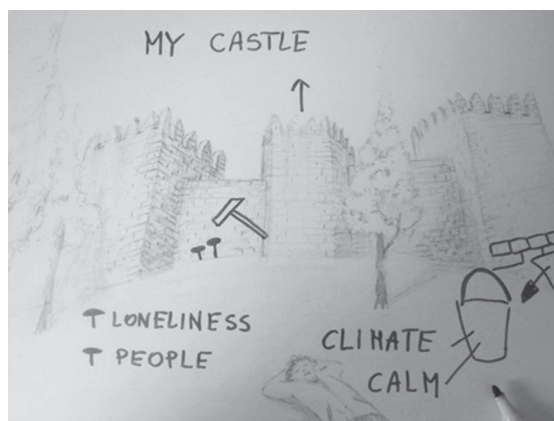


Fig. 4.

The *The Coaching Maps* tool has been created as a the result of applying a wider methodology of work with people in the era of postmodernity and liquid modernity. It is founded on the tenets of this era and translates them into business practices. It has been developed for those who are willing to reflect and seek less obvious answers to their questions – those that do not fit into the existing schemes, templates and conceptual frameworks. *The Coaching Maps* are a tool for those who value the individuality and uniqueness of a person.

In the predominant image culture there is also the need of creating tools for analysing this model of culture. It is not based on any idea or

ideology, but a methodology of collecting and processing data. A relation between the researcher and the client is build: the researcher asks questions recommended and included in *Attitude Cards* or *Metaphor Cards* that relate to 36 areas of his/her competence, and the client provides answers while painting a picture on the black and white sketch provided. Each sketch metaphorically refers to competences. Sketches are designed with a view to creating natural insights. The main purpose is to stimulate the client's imagination naturally and to create the right mood for authenticity. Sketches are laminated, and therefore clients can draw or paint whatever they wish, working freely with the image contained therein. The picture can be repeatedly modified depending on the client's thoughts, feelings and impressions. The outcome is an image that originates from the client's reflection and reflectivity in the context of constructing meanings important only for him/herself. The result of this thorough work is structured knowledge about the individual, which either confirms and reinforces what the person already knows, or provides a new resource. This knowledge is practical: it forms the basis for making decisions, (re)building one's identity, arranging one's social role scenario (e.g. the role of a manager), organizing the obvious or the non-obvious within the organization. The ethnographic tool called *The Coaching Maps* does not examine the here-and-now thinking or beliefs but, thanks to its unique methodology, analyses one's biography in a processual manner. The client can assign meaning to events of his/her life, or construct his/her own narrative.

Just as in traditional ethnographic studies, it is important that the client be in his/her natural environment. The "natural environment" means work within the 36 competences, sought and desirable now and in the future (Davies, Fidler & Gorbis, 2011; Descy & Tessaring, 2002). These competences have been selected on the basis of the functioning of modern companies and the analysis of their expectations towards managers or employees. The client's work within the area of a specific competence is the starting point for his/her interpretation of his/her abilities and, more broadly, a reflection on his/her attitudes, beliefs or values.

To conclude, let us examine the effectiveness of this tool in visual ethnography. This kind of ethnographic research provides a 'deeper' understanding of phenomena, such as patterns of behaviour, ways of creating interpersonal relationships and models of thinking, primarily because we deal not so much with what people do, but with the meaning of what they do and their own interpretations of their acts, i.e. with the explanation of meaning. The tool does not refer only to the viewpoint of the client, his/her concepts and constructs. The possibility of linking natural data with data that is an interpretation or a forecast of the researcher, results in creating a specific case study that captures 'authentic' experiences; this means combining a realistic perspective with an interpretative perspective.

1. VISION	19. POWER
2. DILEMMA	20. FAILURE
3. LIMITS	21. LAZINESS
4. SUCCESS	22. COMMEMORATION
5. AGREEMENT	23. RESPONSIBILITY
6. COMPLEXITY	24. DEVELOPMENT
7. MORALITY	25. DISPERSION
8. VOCATION	26. RISK
9. LEADERSHIP	27. SECURITY
10. LIMITATIONS	28. ASSISTANCE
11. ACTIVITY	29. READINESS
12. APPEARANCES	30. DEFICITS
13. BEGINNING	31. STAGNATION
14. FRAMES	32. ORDERLINESS
15. END	33. COMPARISON
16. REALISM	34. INDEPENDENCE
17. MEDITATION	35. PREDICTABILITY
18. UNCERTAINTY	36. LONELINESS

Tab. 1. A set of selected thematic areas and relevany competences. Source: own study.

Particularly important is the possibility of revealing categories that have yet to be taken into account, namely the openness of the method to the ‘personal’ nature of many contexts of our lives. Therefore, it is an adequate tool for creating new perspectives and discovering new insights; here, emphasis is placed not only on the diagnosis/examination, but also on the development of the individual.

When working with *The Coaching Maps*, clients can arrange their own patterns and structure elements of their lives. Each person is unique and different. Therefore, only the individual can understand him/herself through arranging the puzzle applying methods to which (s)he is open and ready. A unique ethnographic analysis can be performed using a method that is simple, easy and fun.

6. Conclusions

As Archer wrote, *our personal causal forces are realized through a reflective internal dialogue. The inner conversation is responsible for shaping our concerns, defining our projects and, ultimately, determining our practices in society* (Archer, 2013b, p. 32). Meanings we give to practices and their different elements are, above all, important to us. Those meanings combine the social and the individual, objectivity and subjectivity. Contemporary culture and the model of a postmodern society require reflectivity from each individual, regardless of his/her place within the social structure. *The Coaching Maps* provide an answer to this challenge as a tool for creating a new model of consciousness based on human emancipation and participation in visual and consumer culture. It reflects the main ideas of the modern era and the possibility of creating meanings through the interpretation of reality. The

tool can be applied in the process of manager training and in organizational change of individual companies.

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