

Evolution of Ideas on Management Processes in the Society: From Cybernetics to Evergetics

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Abstract R. L. Ackoff initiated a discussion about the possibility of such a “way of organizing a society, which would stimulate more social and individual development than socialism and capitalism do it”, and he called it a developing society. In continuation of the started discussion, the article that is proposed to the reader, traces evolution of ideas on the management processes organization in the society and substantiates necessity to create the science on the management in a developing society. In his monograph “Cybernetics and Society”, N. Wiener set forth his expectations of results of social life cybernation, which he associated with the use of new emerging opportunities “for the benefit of man, rather than merely for profits”. However, the success of society cybernation was largely due not to the fact that “the world has become kinder”, but to the “instrumental performance”: the widespread use of Informatics and Computer science, often becoming an end in itself, came to the foreground. The man with his vital needs and spiritual requirements dropped out of sight of the cybernetic systems creators. In order to remedy this situation, this article presents a postnonclassical approach to create the science of management processes organization in a developing society, the focus of which is “the man of culture”, i.e. the man, not just adhering to cultural norms, but also creating new concepts and products of culture. This science is proposed to be called Evergetics (Greek’s *evergétis*—benefactor) and determined as the science of management processes organization in a developing society, each member of which is interested in augmenting his cultural heritage he is producing, which entails a raise of cultural potential of the society as a whole and, as a consequence, an increase in the proportion of moral and ethical managerial decisions and corresponding to them benevolent actions in public life.

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1 Introduction

Throughout the centuries-old history, humanity struggled for survival, using for this purpose traditions and authoritative methods at first, and then market economy (Heilbroner 2011). In such a “survival society”, a stratification of people on rich and poor, constant wars, economic crises, growing environmental problems, drop of safety and many other misfortunes occurred, and that doesn’t allow talking up to now about a satisfactory quality of life of people living on our planet. So, for example, “nearly 40 million people live in poverty in the United States, and it is several times larger than the population of Sweden. In the World, 162 of 192 countries have populations not exceeding the number of poor people in the United States”,—wrote Russell L. Ackoff, a famous scientist, specialist in system analysis, management and operations research (Ackoff 2009). In his view, “poverty has become a socio-hereditary characteristic in many highly developed capitalist countries”, and the countries of socialism, with their priority purpose of benefits distribution, have finished, most often, with “poverty distribution”. Therefore, R. L. Ackoff raised the question of the possibility of such a “way to organize society, which would stimulate more social and individual development than does socialism and capitalism”, and called it a developing society. Having set fourth his view of a developing society organization, the author of the article (Ackoff 2009), nonetheless, believed that his “goal was not to complete the discussion, but to start it”. In continuation of the started discussion, the present article retraces the evolution of ideas of management processes organization in the society and the necessity to create the science on management in the developing society, which must have not only a theoretical, but also a great application significance for the practices of public and corporate governance.

2 Wiener’S Expectations of the Results of Social Life Cybernation

In the middle of the past century, N. Wiener formulated in his monograph “Cybernetics and Society” the principles of management organization in a cybernetic society, based on a large use of computer aids in all spheres of human activity, and set forth his view of the results of social life cybernation. We need to take care, he wrote, that “the new modalities are used for the benefit of man, for increasing his leisure and enriching his spiritual life, rather than merely for profits and the worship of the machine as a new brazen calf.” Wiener saw in the cyber society a developing society, which (in contrast to the society that supports the status quo) reserves a part of its resources for the development of future generations, because “the more we take from the world, the less we leave in it, and, eventually, we will have to pay our debts at the very moment that may be very unsuitable to ensure the continuation of our lives.”

In a society in which the automatic devices are involved in the processes of preparation and making decisions and “know” how to perform the functions entrusted to them, N. Wiener writes that there is one quality which is more important than “know-how”,

this is “know-what” by which we determine not only how to accomplish our purposes, but what our purposes are to be”. This selection of goals, objectives, criteria and limitations should be done not by a “machine à gouverner/controlling machine”, but by human beings, who, dependently of their value reference points, may use the achievements of the second industrial revolution “both for the good of the mankind and for its destruction”. “The hour is very late, and the choice of good and evil knocks at our door”,—this sentence crowns the Chapter X of the monograph (Wiener 1958). N. Wiener saw in this choice the major problem, the solution of which people try, as far as possible, to push “for later time”, “so long as we can continue to pretend that all is right with the world, we plug up our ears against the sound of ancestral voices prophesying war”. At the same time he hoped that “the roots of good will are there” despite the fact that “there are many dangers still ahead”.

However, the success of society cybernation was largely due not to the fact that “the world has become kinder”, but to the instrumental performance: the widespread use of Informatics and Computer science, often becoming an end in itself, came to the foreground. For example, a total computerization of schools does not mean that pupils, who have mastered to work with computers and obtained access to the Internet, have become more literate and well mannered. It should be recognized that “the worship of the machine as a new brazen calf” yet happened despite the warning of N. Wiener, and *the man with his vital needs, spiritual requirements, aspirations for a safe existence and creative development, virtually dropped out of sight of the cybernetic systems creators*, who were interested primarily in technical and economic performance of these systems, and only after that comes the so-called “human factor”, which performs (in their view) rather a role that impedes an efficient operation of the elaborated systems. And the case was not only (and even not so much) in the practice of cybernation, as in the theoretical foundations of Cybernetics and Management considering the human being perhaps only as a “behavioral system” transforming a “stimulus” in the “reaction”. Therefore, there was a need to return the man into the theory, a man endowed with consciousness, cognizing and transforming the world in cooperation with other people, and for this purpose, an adequate methodological base should be chosen.

3 Postnonclassical Approach to the Science of Management Processes Organization in a Developing Society

During the Enlightenment Era, associated with the establishment of capitalist relations in the society, rationalism began its “triumphant march”, signifying the faith in unlimited potentialities of the human intellect (World Encyclopedia: Philosophy 2001). Mechanistic view of the world was developed on the basis of concepts of Newtonian Natural Science in the writings of Diderot and Holbach, and, as for Helvetius, when he explained the driving principle of human behavior, he proceeded from the utilitarian concept of rational self-interest, which postulated that material interest is the basis of all actions and feelings of the man (New Philosophical Encyclopedia 2010). Adam Smith, in his “Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations” introduced the concept of “Economic Man” who, driven by motives of personal gain, with the help

of the “invisible hand” of market, “serves often more validly the interests of society” (Heilbroner 2011). The Scientific Revolution, which took place, consisted, in essence, “in the liberation of knowledge from ethical values” (Kara-Murza 2011): knowledge acquired by science should not depend on any moral, ethical norms or any subjective qualities of the man-researcher. And such an “objectivist” position began to play an inhibiting role in the development of sciences, primarily Social science (including the science of management processes in society), *since the society is a product of consciousness and will of the people who compose it*, and not of any “quasi-natural” object functioning “objectively” without participation of its subjective source, i.e. the people.

In his work “The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology”, E. Husserl saw the main cause of an ailing condition of science to be just in the fact that the decomposed “objective” science has lost the man from its focus of attention (Zotov 2010). So long as to achieve objectivity (as required by the classical gnosiology) the subject must observe the object from the outside, the people then should be “withdrawn” from the society, if it is the object of their cognition and activities. But, in this case, it wouldn’t be anymore a society. Since initially it is an aggregate of interacting individuals, each of which has its own subjective view of the world, i.e. by definition, the society is heterogeneous (nonuniform), and this heterogeneity is the major problem in the study of society and organization of management processes therein. To solve it, a methodical technique is used which delivers researchers from an “uncomfortable” reality: to consider the society being homogeneous (uniform).

The hypothesis of homogeneity of society, used in the classical Management, *makes people impersonal*: each of them becomes “a man in general” (a man). In this case, the subject can look at the object, i.e. the society—“from the outside”, becoming “master of the situation”, which reduces social ties to any stable rules prescribed by him (by the subject) (for example, when he establishes hierarchical relationship between “superiors” and “subordinates”). Moreover, he can build formalized models of human behavior, describing rules of communication between them, etc. The basis of social homogeneity is a productive, useful work, and the man, in terms of a homogeneous society, is only a function of the collective production (Modern Philosophical Dictionary 1998), the optimality criteria of which, objective functions, constraints, etc. are defined by the subject, who sees himself at the top of management hierarchy, where he makes the decisions.

Heterogeneous society is composed of a nonuniform aggregate of people, each of which is a specific living man with his subjective understanding of the world (the man). The man, who communicates with other people, is aware of himself, together with them, in one or more problem situations, since a society is considered as a “kaleidoscope of situations”. *Intersubjectivity of consciousness encourages people to jointly seek a way out of this situation*, and for this purpose they must create, by common efforts, a shared by all “integration platform” of knowledge that will be used to make management decisions. Thus, the structure of human relations is based on the principle of lowerarchy (Ackoff 2009), when the “lower” elements are the source of resources and power for the “higher” ones, in the contrast to a hierarchical organization “from top to down”, based on dictates of the supreme power. The lowerarchy gives flexibility to the structure of society and is the basis of its development. Thus, if a homogeneous

model of society initially turns people into “uniform mass”, *the idea of a heterogeneous society allows to deal with a particular individual, who is both subject and object of management, and to take into consideration his value reference points and a variety of interests in the processes of decision-making to settle the problem situation, including the selection of goals, objectives, criteria, etc.* In other words, in this approach, the science of the management processes organization in a developing society must be based on *postnonclassical scientific rationality*, which takes into account “correlation of received knowledge about the object not only with the peculiarity of facilities and operations of activity, but also with structures of value and target”, as “modern science, at the forefront of its quest, sets in the centre of research unique, historically developing systems, which include, as a special component, the man himself” (Stepin et al. 1996). It should be noted that the principles of postnonclassical rationality have been put in the basis of construction of the Theory of Intersubjective Management (Vittikh 2014), which can be considered as one of the first steps towards the creation of the science of developing society management.

4 Transformation of a Survival Society in a Developing Society

One of the most significant problems of any kind of society is the problem of reconciling individual interests and group interests of the people. By what reasons a single man, with his subjective view of the world and his own scale of values, would act in interests of the group, for the benefit of society, “weaving” himself in the social fabric? Adam Smith gave the answer to this question *by formulating the concept of “Economic Man” and having supposed that, in the survival society, the people were bound by division of labour as a unique way to meet their needs.* Working for himself, the man works at the same time for the society. Later, Kant would call “automatic” such a mechanism of reconciliation of personal and public interests, providing a “pathologically forced consent” in the society by putting the task of humanizing it, turning it into a “moral” one. He would consider the movement in this direction as the main purpose of the entire history of mankind, which would always seek and approach it, but having no chance to fully achieve it (New Philosophical Encyclopedia 2010).

However, lack of hope for the dream to join the “bright future” does not mean at all that this goal should not be strived, because otherwise life in the human society will be accompanied by disasters and social upheavals of increasing strength. Management processes in the society should be organized in such a way as *to exclude, if possible, every manifestation of evil, that the decisions were aimed at achieving good goals related to improving the quality of life. And it can be done only under condition to raise the cultural level of both individuals and society as a whole.*

Culture is a “system of historically developing over-biological programs of human vital functions (activities, behavior and communication), providing reproduction and change of social life in all its major manifestations” (New Philosophical Encyclopedia 2010). *In such a broad understanding, the culture includes morals, manners and customs, oral and writing language, science, technology, art, economy, statement of education, religion, socio-political organization of the society, etc* (Philosophical Encyclopedic Dictionary 1997). The culture not only preserves and transmits social

experience, passing it from generation to generation, but also “generates new programs of activity, behaviour and communication which, being realized in appropriate types and forms of human activity, generate actual variations in the life of society” (New Philosophical Encyclopedia 2010).

The man, being a creature of culture, is, at the same time, its creator. He becomes a personality only through assimilation of social experience transmitted in the culture, but the man is able to invent new concepts and products of culture, which may match social needs. In this case, they are included into the culture and begin to program the activity of other people. An individual experience turns into a social one, so, new conditions and the phenomena appear in the culture, fixing this experience (World Encyclopedia: Philosophy 2001). *A man who not only adheres to cultural norms, accepted in the society, (what “the cultured man” makes), but also is involved in the creation of new concepts and products of culture, will be called “the man of culture”*. The man of culture is a key figure in the developing society which is situated “beyond socialism and capitalism” (Ackoff 2009). After all, more dynamic is a society, more value acquires the level of cultural creativity, addressed to the future (World Encyclopedia: Philosophy 2001). In such society, each man of culture should aspire to augment personal cultural heritage made by him (and not to a simple personal enrichment) and, as consequence, to increase cultural potential of the society as a whole (and not only “the wealth of nations”) with the help of “an invisible hand of the market of culture”.

The latter thesis, essentially, is a modified classic formula of Adam Smith, which works in the modern world, too, “where the result and purpose of economic life are flows of goods and services, consumed by all”, although in the “Wealth of Nations”, he “turned to his epoch, expounding, in this work, the doctrine, which should help in governing the Empire” (Heilbroner 2011). If we look far enough ahead, *we can see an increasing role of culture (in a broad sense) in society*, which is manifested, in particular, in the forms of innovative activity in practically all spheres of human life. This means that *the survival society is being gradually transformed into a developing society, and the “Economic Man”—into the “Man of Culture”*.

5 Evergetics

As noted in Sect. 1, Wiener saw the main results of social life cybernation in meeting vital needs and spiritual requirements of the man, in his creative development and safe existence, etc, which, unfortunately, have not been achieved, largely for reasons of methodical nature: the researches were based on principles of classical scientific rationality, which has a limited capacity for decision-making tasks to manage society. The postnonclassical approach opens up new possibilities of building a science of management processes organization in a developing society, “returning” the man into the theory from which he was expelled by classical science of management, which means that *the new science must be linked with the answers to questions about the sense and purpose of human being, must use spiritual and moral categories in its arsenal*. The main “actor” of this science should be the man of culture, aspiring to perform benevolent actions.

Proceeding from the above considerations, the science of management processes organization in a developing society is invited to be called Evergetics, as “*evergētis*” in Greek means “benefactor”, and to give it the following definition: *Evergetics is the science of management processes organization in a developing society, each member of which is interested in augmenting his cultural heritage he is producing, which entails a raise of cultural potential of the society as a whole and, as a consequence, an increase in the proportion of moral and ethical managerial decisions and corresponding to them benevolent actions in public life.* This interdisciplinary science must rely on both humanities and social sciences, as well as on the Control theory, Informatics and on some other disciplines related to the category of the exact sciences. Such multi-disciplinary nature is due to the fact that the man in Evergetics is considered, on the one hand, as a subject, armed with methods and means to research situations and to make decisions how to settle them, and on the other hand, as the object of education, training, world outlook formation and skill to communicate with other people, etc.

It is pertinent here to note that the Evergetics could be based on the works of Karl Polanyi, scientist-sociologist, who aimed “to search the “third way”, creation of theoretical basis for an ideal social order where the man is the core value” (Rozinskaya and Latov 2007). Karl Polanyi proceeded from the fact that people interact with each other on the grounds of three principles: gift exchange (reciprocity), centralized redistribution and market. So, if market relationships involve mutual calculation of benefits and costs, the gifts exchange is performed without warranty of cost recovery in the future (we can only talk about expectations for any possible response actions). Nevertheless, as Polanyi believed, the market system, for its satisfactory operation, requires compliance with cultural (non-market) factors—honesty, industry, responsibility, trust of partners, etc. The very same market system destroys these signs of culture, inherited from its previous socio-economic systems, contributing to instability of society. Therefore, Polanyi saw the ability to provide humane existence of mankind in the “cultural revolution, allowing to subordinate the economy to the human community” (Rozinskaya and Latov 2007).

6 Conclusion

It is lawful to ask a question: what for to enter a new science when there is its predecessor—Cybernetics, which as far back as in the middle of the last century put similar problems in management of the society? The fact is that, originally put in the rank of a new philosophy and methodology of science, Cybernetics didn’t fulfill its tasks, not having justified promises taken on, which led eventually to the “collapse of the myth of cybernetic miracle, capable to solve all conceivable problems of life”, so Cybernetics “fell quietly into oblivion and went imperceptibly away from the camp of scientific knowledge” (Teryaev et al. 2009). Since many of the problems of society management have remained unresolved, it is proposed to start researches within the Evergetics—science of the management processes organization in a developing society, based on postnonclassical scientific rationality and oriented towards a “human attitude to the man” or, as wrote N. Wiener in the title of his book published by Houghton Mifflin, Boston, in 1950, “The Human Use of Human Beings”.

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