

Management Philosophy: Ontological Problems

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Abstract: Management philosophy is a new branch of philosophical knowledge, which is designed to serve as a philosophical and methodological basis, providing the holistic perception and essential understanding of social management phenomenon. The existing points of view on the subject and object of management philosophy are compared, the ontological aspect of management philosophy is revealed. The place of social management phenomenon in the system of social being is shown, the content of philosophical-methodological problems of management activity is revealed.

Keywords: management philosophy, ontology, being, management ontology, activity approach.

I. INTRODUCTION

The important part of philosophy content is *ontology*, i.e. the doctrine of being, of universal foundations, methods and laws of existence and development of objective and subjective reality. The category of being is the central and fundamental concept of philosophy. It reflects and embraces the whole diversity of existing forms of the objective and subjective world. To be is to exist in movement, space and time.

The main forms of manifestation of being are a natural being, social being, human being and spiritual being. All of them are subject to change, movement and existence in space-time forms. In each of these forms, the laws of development operate and manifest themselves, including the universal philosophical laws — the law of interaction of opposites, the law of mutual transition of quantitative and qualitative changes, and the law of the negation of the negation. In general, their action expresses the universal connection and development of all forms of being, including the existence of social management as an integral social phenomenon.

The philosophy of management in its ontological aspect shows and proves the objective necessity of management from the standpoint of philosophical understanding of being [1]. To reveal the ontology of management means to bring this process out of being itself, having answered a number of questions, including:

- At what level of being does the management problem arise?
- What is management in its essence?

- What are the content and structure of management?
- How do the universal ways of being and the laws of development manifest in management?

To answer the posed and other questions means to consider the philosophical and ontological problems of management. The proposed article offers one of the options for the constitution of problems of management ontology as a section of management philosophy

II. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

A. Management in the system of social being

The objective necessity of management process follows from the fact that it is naturally connected with attributive properties of social being and the laws of its development. At the level of natural reality, plant and animal life, the laws of objective expediency and natural selection act. Nature itself does not need to be managed; it governs itself according to the indicated laws. However, people, having learnt its laws, can influence the development of nature and even control some natural processes [2].

Some scientists, especially representatives of cybernetics, are inclined to believe that management takes place not only in social but also in biological, as well as technical, systems. Thus, according to academician A.I. Berg, there are three main areas of management – technical management, social management and biological management [3]. However, in technical management, a person controls the equipment, and the equipment cannot fully control itself. Here, the situation of management is reduced to the “person – engineering” system. The situation with biological management is similar: it is a person who controls the development of biological objects, and there can be no one’s own subject of management. Therefore, one must speak here not about biological control, but about managing the development of biological systems.

The merit of cybernetics, as the academician V. G. Afanasyev rightly points out, is that it revealed the most general laws of control:

- it showed that control processes occur not in all, but only in complex dynamic systems, which are characterized by a network of nonlinear cause-and-effect dependencies;
- it revealed the anti-entropic nature of control;
- it stressed the unity of control and information, set the measure, the amount of information;
- it showed that the necessary attribute of a self-control system is feedback;
- it indicated the appropriate nature of control;
- it formulated the ultimate goal of control, its ideal is “to ensure the optimal course of the process” [4].

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However, it should be said that management is a unity of control, as the impact on a controlled system from the outside, and self-control, as the internal interaction of the elements of this system. In each case, control is not just expedient, but of purposeful nature. Expediency dominates in nature, and purposefulness dominates in society. With regard to natural processes, the

concepts of “regulation”, “organization” and “self-organization” are more applicable. Management cannot be without a subject and consciously attaining his/her goals, and this is possible only in society, at the social level [5].

The problem of management arises, first of all, at the level of social being, when society was separated from nature and began to develop according to its own laws. In contrast to nature, in society, everything is carried out and occurs through a conscious and purposeful activity of people. Separated from nature and opposing itself to it, society is forced to carry out its livelihood through labor – material and spiritual production [6, 7].

From the very beginning, people have lived and worked not alone, but jointly. Even the simplest types of labor need to streamline and distribute responsibilities among people. One of these responsibilities gradually came to the front in the course of joint work and management emerged. In the process of joint activities among people, individuals are promoted as organizers of labor. In the future, as organizers, people can be appointed or elected.

The objective need for management in society consists in the fact that the social system should be protected from disintegration as a result of a violation of the optimal measure of interaction between centripetal and centrifugal forces and processes. The essence of management, therefore, consists in the conscious regulation of social processes for the sustainable, optimal and effective development of social systems. With respect to society as a whole, management consists in achieving the optimal and effective measure of interaction between centralization and decentralization of power functions in the interests of stable and sustainable development.

B. The objective necessity of management process

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From the very beginning, people have lived and worked not alone, but jointly. Even the simplest types of labor need to streamline and distribute responsibilities among people. One of these responsibilities gradually came to the front in the course of joint work and management emerged. In the process of joint activities among people, individuals are promoted as organizers of labor. In the future, as organizers, people can be appointed or elected.

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C. Management being a social phenomenon can be explored from different methodological positions

The *systematic approach* to the phenomenon of social management is methodologically fruitful. From the standpoint of this approach, the ontology of management answers the question: why does any social system necessarily need to be managed?

- Firstly, because it always experiences the influence of environment in which it is located (and often such an impact can be destructive for the given system), and is forced to respond to disturbing influences from the outside in a certain way. In this sense, management is anti-entropic in nature; it prevents the destruction of the system and ensures its improvement and development.

- Secondly, since each system consists of a set of elements and subsystems, some mechanism is needed that coordinates and reconciles their interaction. Management performs the role of such a mechanism.

- Thirdly, each system has a certain purpose, in particular, social systems always have a specific goal. Management allows the system to realize its purpose in the most optimal way and achieve the goal.

However, the ontology of management is not only interested in the question of why management is necessary or what it gives, but also the question of how it is implemented, what the general algorithm of management activity is. In this aspect, management is considered as a set of consecutive, interconnected operations (actions) that constitute in their totality the management cycle.

In the ontology of management, among other problems, the conceptual apparatus of the study of social management is clarified, since in addition to the category of “management”, such concepts as “leadership”, “governance” are often used as synonyms. Despite the fact that in the literature such identification is often found, in our opinion, some explanation is needed on this issue [8].

Of these concepts, the most universal is the concept of “management”, since it takes place (as stated by the founder of cybernetics N. Wiener) in biological systems, both technical and social, while the terms “leadership” and “management” are applied only to social systems.

In the theory of management, the latter is more studied from the point of view of the concrete situation arising in management practice, i.e. as the art of management. The term “leadership” means mainly the definition of the general direction of movement towards the goal, development of common strategy without specification and detail characteristic of management. Therefore, it is appropriate to speak, for example, of the political leadership of a country, but when it comes to the specific impact of one subject on another in the process of solving a specific task, then it is more correct to speak about management [9].

The concept of “social management” has, at a minimum, three semantic meanings:

- Firstly, it means that not only the subject but also the object of such management are people and social systems;
- Secondly, this term is used when one wants to emphasize that they talk about the impact not on any particular component or sphere of public life (for example, economics, politics, etc.), but on society as an integral organism;
- Thirdly, the term “social management” is used when it

comes to managing the social sphere and social processes.

We will use the term “social management” primarily in its first meaning.

Analyzing various forms of social labor in “Capital”, Karl Marx came to a very important conclusion for understanding the genesis and essence of management: “Any direct social or joint labor carried out on relatively large scale needs to be more or less controlled. This establishes consistency between individual works and fulfills general functions arising from the movement of its independent organs. A separate violinist controls himself, the orchestra needs a conductor” [10].

The objects of social management are social phenomena, processes, spheres of life and society itself as a social system. The object of social management is, first of all, people possessing consciousness, pursuing some goals of their own.

All objects of social management, on the one hand, are unique, unrepeatable, and on the other hand, they possess some common properties.

Firstly, the object of social management is real people living and acting in historically specific socio-cultural space, i.e. they directly or indirectly perceive the objective and subjective conditions existing in the given society, and along with the managing influence of the subject of management, these factors have a corresponding influence on them. Therefore, the subject of management must take into account how and what can influence the object managed except him/her.

Secondly, self-manageability is always inherent in social objects to a greater or lesser extent, since this is not about automata, but about people who are endowed with consciousness, who do not passively perceive and implement managerial influences, but pass them through and, ultimately, their real behavior depends largely on their consciousness.

The subjects of social management are actively working managers. Therefore, the activity approach to management is methodologically fruitful.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. The essence of the activity approach to management

Firstly, social management itself acts as a specific type of social activity.

Secondly, the main object of social management is directly social activities.

Activity is an essential attribute of a person throughout the history of mankind. It is the activity, the need for its realization and improvement that contributed to the development of man himself in the historical plan. If a single individual does not engage in activities – educational, labor, spiritual, creative or other, he/she will not be able to develop his/her inclinations, abilities, will not be able to be formed as a full-fledged person.

As an exclusively human way of being in the world, activity is a multifaceted phenomenon, including:

- interaction of the subject and the object of activity, during which the transformation of the external environment occurs, as well as the improvement of a person himself/herself, his/her development;

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- interaction of people forming the system of subject-subject relations, public relations; it is an activity that primarily generates various social structures (social groups, social organizations, etc.);

- value-targeted structures, a set of norms and values that determine the formation of business models and its purposeful nature.

The ontology of management considers activity, as a minimum, in four aspects:

- Firstly, as a tool for creating various material and spiritual formations that are necessary for a person and society, i.e. through activity, a man creates what nature has not created;

- Secondly, as a condition and means of human development;

- Thirdly, as the main factor uniting people into various social structures and determining the social structure of society;

- Fourthly, as the most important object of social management.

B. Sources and driving forces of activity

For social management as activity management, the question of sources and driving forces of activity is very important.

In management philosophy, it is recognized that the needs of an individual, social group, and society are the motivating sources for activity.

A need is a requirement for something necessary to maintain the vital activity of an organism, individual, social group, or society as a whole. However, it is wrong to think that the presence of particular need immediately and inevitably gives rise to an activity. Between the need and the activity, a number of intermediate links lies: interest, purpose, the setting of the activity.

A manager must understand that for any need (with the exception of biological, vital needs, such as the need for oxygen, which is satisfied even during sleep, etc.) a person must:

- first, realize;
- on this basis, formulate a goal;
- develop a program of own actions to achieve it;
- finally, give the command to himself/herself for acting.

The last stage is called the installation on the action [11, 12].

Since a person and society have diverse needs, there are many activities. Their content varies in different types of activity, but the structure of an activity (a set of its main elements and relations between them) remains invariant and includes the following structural elements:

- subject;
- object;
- target;
- means;
- process;
- result.

Management impact can be applied to each structural component of an activity.

Efficiency depends on many factors:

- on the funds used;
- on the perfection of the technology used;
- on conditions in which the activity takes place, etc.

However, first of all, the effectiveness of activity depends on the subject of activity, on the motives by which it is

guided. The stronger the motivation of an activity is, the more the subject of activity is set to achieve the goal, the higher is the likelihood that activity will be successful. However, desire and purposefulness of the subject are still not enough for an effective activity, for this one also needs mastery. The desire, coupled with mastery, plus favorable conditions and adequate tools (means) are crucial for an effective activity.

IV. CONCLUSION

The management philosophy exposes the phenomenon of management activity to special analysis, exploring it from different perspectives [13].

So, in the essential plan, management activity is concerned with self-organization of social systems, mechanism of their adaptation to environmental conditions and transformation of the environment in the desired direction for the system.

In terms of content, management can be represented as a set of skills, abilities, methods, means, expedient actions and actions of a person developed by historical experience, scientific knowledge and talent of people, as consistent implementation of management functions.

In the axiological aspect, managerial activity is the realization of human intelligence (subject of management), it is always filled with intellectual content, since it is aimed at developing, adopting and putting into practice management decisions designed to change the state and course of social processes, the level of social resources of society, and indirectly – consciousness and behavior of people.

From the standpoint of axiological ideal, management should be directed to the benefit of people, it should be useful.

In the cognitive aspect, many authors working in the field of management theory, promote the idea that a unified management theory should be created. However, real life refutes such a co-rational setting.

The fact is that social management is qualitatively different from the management of technical and biological systems, based on the laws of nature, which have unequivocal manifestation. Therefore, it is illogical to talk about the existence of American, Chinese, Russian, or some other national cybernetics, since the laws on which it is based are universal.

In social management, the object of management is endowed with consciousness, which always to a greater or lesser degree corrects the managerial influence exercised by the subject of management. The same managerial impact, addressed to people with different consciousness (worldview, views, ideas, interests, goals, etc.), leads, as a rule, to unequal result. Therefore, not only the content of the administrative influence is important, but also the attitude of the managed object to the subject (trust or distrust to it, the desire to cooperate with it or the absence of such a desire, etc.).

Therefore, in social management, there is not one, but many management models, each of which differs, first of all, in the specificity of the subject's influence on the object. Therefore, it is quite legitimate, for example, to talk about the Chinese model of social management, the American model, the Western European model, etc. The basis of each of them is:

- a special type of relationship between managers and managed,

- a special mentality of the people and their ideas about the principles, on which social life should be built, how the relations between the government and the people should be built.

It would be wrong to assume that each of these models remains unchanged. All of them are improving, developing, but at the same time each of them has some significant features, and these features are very stable [14].

Thus, the ontology of management is a philosophical concept that reveals the universal characteristics of social management as an integral phenomenon of social being. It forms the system of ideological and methodological foundations for theory and practice of social management.

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