

Introduction

Human Systems Management consists of synergistically interacting components of human knowledge, its production and use, management systems conceptual development and technical modeling, and the management itself: as rules and principles of decision making, coordination and evaluation.

Human societies and institutions can maintain their cohesiveness and unity through their “rules of conduct.” The order of social events, although it is the result of human action, has not been entirely created by men deliberately arranging the elements in a preconceived pattern. If the forces or rules that bring about self-organizing orders were understood, then such knowledge could be used to produce orders of greater complexity and effectiveness than those attempted by deliberately designing all the action and activities of a society. We shall show that if a social institution is self-producing (or autopoietic) then it is also necessarily “alive,” i.e., it maintains its identity in a biological sense.

The task of human management is to stimulate growth of a network of decision processes, systems, programs and rules, i.e., an organization, which would be effective in attaining institutional objectives.

Humans *live* their lives through human systems – they do not “just go to work.” Rather, they shape the institutions through their individual aspirations, goals, norms and action, creating a set of systemic aspirations, goals, norms and behavior, which could be quite different and independent of the individual ones. Humans are in turn continuously being shaped by such self-organized entities, their spatial and temporal arrangement evolving through a succession of interrelated, state determined structures.

A new mode of inquiry into such complex human systems is being evolved – Human Systems Management. It is based on a set of observations and experiences:

- 1) Human systems are to be managed more than analyzed or designed. HSM is not systems analysis or design.

- 2) Management of human systems is a process of catalytic reinforcement of organization, communication and bonding of individuals. HSM does not design a hierarchy of command and control.
- 3) The components of human systems are humans. HSM is not a general systems theory but an experience-derived theory of human organizations.
- 4) The inherent complexity of human systems can be lost through the process of mathematical simplification. They can be studied through a relatively simple set of semantic rules, governing the self-organization of their complexity. HSM is not operations research, econometrics or applied mathematics.
- 5) The interactions among individuals are not those of electronic circuitry, communication channels, or feedback loop mechanisms – they are action-based. HSM is not cybernetics or information theory of communication.
- 6) The order of human organizations is maintained through their structural adaptations under the conditions of successive environmental disequilibria. HSM is not a theory of general equilibrium.
- 7) The concepts of optimization and optimal control are not meaningful in a general theory of human systems. Human aspirations and goals are dynamic, multiple and in evolving, continuous conflict. Such multiple criteria conflict is the very source of their catalysis. HSM is not an optimal control theory or a theory of conflict resolution.
- 8) The inquiry into human systems is trans-disciplinary by definition. Human systems encompass the entire hierarchy of natural systems: physical, biological, social and spiritual. HSM is not interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary, it does not attempt to conciliate scientific disciplines, and it transcends them.

The way a self-producing, autopoietic system will respond to a gross environmental challenge or fluctuation can be highly predictable – once *the nature of its autopoiesis* is understood. Good managers and politicians intuit such adaptations naturally. They can be helped by good scientists using human system management concepts and models. Not so good managers and politicians fail to grasp why corporations and social institutions do not lose their identities overnight when they are presented with perfectly logical reasons why they should. And not so good scientists devote their lives and efforts to developing such irrelevant logic of strategy, design and change.

Human Systems Management (HSM) has two inseparable, conjoint ying and yang aspects:

Management of human systems – the science and technology of management, striving for productivity, efficiency, and competitive competence through innovation.

Human management of systems – the art of management, linking human beings into teams and networks, catalyzes their full creative potentials through enterprise and leadership.

In this book we try to start our walk along the above outlined path. The contours of the goal – an effective Human Systems Management – are only slowly emerging from the fogs of habits and experience. We do not pretend to achieve such goals through sharper and sharper defining and redefining the target. We sense it is there and we can see it come forth by thinning the fogs.