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Review paper

A SYSTEMS RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS IN BUSINESS ECONOMICS*

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Abstract. *An increasing complexity and variety of the management problems in contemporary circumstances implies that the problem situations that are relevant for the enterprises' survival and development should be observed and explored as appropriate complex, dynamic, interactive, and ambiguous systems of problems. A systemic reconceptualization of the management problems in business economics is aimed at creative improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the management process in enterprises. Actually, through the critical systems thinking and practice, the dichotomies of management problems should be identified, the two corresponding methodological orientations ought to be singled out and reviewed, and then the appropriate systems methodologies for structuring the problem situations and the suitable methods for solving the problems in enterprises should be joined to the main problem contexts resulting from the simultaneous consideration of the two key dimensions of the management issues. By means of systems reconceptualization of management problems in business economics, the process of making the theoretical-methodologically grounded, practically useful and socially responsible changes, whose implementation should result in a significant improvement of the enterprise functioning, can be significantly underpinned.*

Key Words: *systems approach to management, problems and problem situations, methods and methodologies, problem contexts, creative improvement of management.*

INTRODUCTION

An increasing complexity, ambiguity, and variety represent the relevant features of management process in contemporary circumstances.

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Actually, in the problem areas that are important for the enterprises' survival, growth, and development, there are many different aspects, issues, and problems which a researcher, practitioner, manager has to address, while their relationships and interconnections are often more significant than the isolated issues, problems, and dilemmas associated with them. Additionally, each problem area that is significant for the enterprise functioning is conditioned by the other problem domains, on the one hand, and it acts itself on particular events important for the enterprise, on the other hand. Also, the complex processes that decisively affect the success of enterprises' functioning take place in each relevant problem domain of a contemporary enterprise.

At the same time, the management problems of business economics are, as a rule, characterized by numerous and various stakeholders. It is about the individuals and groups who are interested in a certain problem area in the enterprise. Because of their different interests, opinions, beliefs, values, various power, different participation in formulating the problems and finding their solutions, different participation in making the decisions and their implementation, these individuals and groups understand the problem area in question in different ways, and propose, as a rule, different goals and means for its improvement.

So, it can be stated that the management problems which are important for the enterprise survival and development should be observed and explored as appropriate complex, dynamic, interactive and ambiguous *systems* of problems.

A systemic reconceptualization of the management problems in business economics is aimed at creative improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the management process in contemporary enterprises (Petrović, 2010).

In fact, first of all, an appropriate continuum of management problems - at whose ends there are the laboratory or structured problems, i.e. the real-world problems or unstructured problems - ought to be identified, and the two basic methodological orientations - the dominant and alternative - corresponding to these *dichotomies* should be reviewed. Then, the two key *dimensions* of problems, i.e. problem situations - the systems dimension that conceptualizes the complexity, dynamism and interactivity, and the participants dimension that encompasses and expresses the ambiguity of the management problems in enterprises ought to be determined precisely. Finally, the appropriate systems methodologies for structuring the problem situations and the corresponding methods and techniques for solving the problems in enterprises should be joined to the main management problem *contexts*.

Generally, a creative management of the problem situations and problems in enterprises implies identifying the suitable changes, the implementation of which will enable a continual improvement of the enterprise functioning. In the context of this consideration, it means that creative dealing with the complex management problems requires the development and employment of a suitable holistic theoretical framework and methodological instrumentarium. As a scientifically valid manner of thinking which is focused on connectedness, relationships, contexts (Capra, 1997, 29), *systems thinking* represents a conceptual framework for a conceived, scientifically grounded and practically useful tackling of the management problem situations. Thereby, the systems ideas are not used only with the aim to express holistically the explored entities of the business reality. On the contrary, the systems concepts and systems models are treated as the appropriate instruments for creative organization of the thinking about the real-world problems. In other words, the systems ideas are being introduced in a way that is immediately relevant to those who solve the problems and make the decisions. That is, the concrete contents and practical

relevance are joined to the appropriate basic systemic concepts (subsystems, inputs, outputs, connections, boundaries, environment, structure, transformation, behaviour, state, functioning, open system, homeostasis, hierarchy, emergency properties, control, communication, (in)stability, purpose, effectiveness, identity, feedback, etc).

In accordance with this preliminary consideration, the conditions, ways and outcomes of the systemic reconceptualization of the complex and multifaceted management problems in contemporary enterprises represent indisputably a valid research *subject*. The main research *aim* is to acquire the scientifically based and practically useful insights into and knowledge about the necessity, ways and overall results of the systemic conceptualizing, exploring and managing the real problems of business economics. The following *hypothesis* should be tested and confirmed within the research process: through a systems reconceptualization of the management problems in business economics can be underpinned creatively the proces of making the theoretical-methodologically grounded, practically useful and socially responsible changes, the implementation of which should result in a significant enhancement of enterprise functioning. A scientific *instrumentarium* that is corresponding for the specified research subject and aim, as well as for the hypothesis that will be proved through the research process is the contemporary critical systems thinking with its three key commitments to critical awareness, improvement, and pluralism.

THE MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS DICHOTOMIES

A creative management of the complex, amendable in time, interactive, multidimensional problems in enterprises implies, first of all, making a clear distinction between (Wilson, 1984, 2):

- laboratory problems and
- real-world problems.

In *laboratory* problems, the researcher has a freedom to define a problem and a possibility to relatively control the environment. In accordance with the determined nature of the problem and the specified research goals, the analyst makes a choice of the variables whose influences on the process will be examined.

Laboratory problems can be illustrated by the following example of an inventory problem of the final products of an enterprise with serial production: The task is to determine the quantity of the final products in stock so that the corresponding costs are minimal. Different concrete expressions of such a general inventory problem can be developed depending on elements that are - as relevant - included in the research process. In other words, different models of setting and solving this problem can be developed - for example, the inventory model with a known demand, or, the inventory model with additional costs etc.

Unlike laboratory problems, the researcher into *real-world* problems, i.e. problem situations should identify and take into consideration all aspects and influences relevant to the situation in question as well as the relationships between them. Also, important relationships between the considered problem situation and its environment ought to be explored. In the problem situations (Rosenhead, 1994, 115), there are a range of participants who possess a significant degree of autonomy. Different participants have their own interests and perspectives, and, as a result, they generally tend to different goals and identify different factors as important. In principle, in the problem situations, there is a possibility

of conflict, and, usually, a great degree of uncertainty about some of the participants' options and their probable consequences, about other people's goals, and possible tactics, etc.

So, real-world problems in business economics, i.e. the management problem situations in enterprises can be determined as the appropriate complex mixtures of the following two key issues:

- *What* should be explored to identify the areas for a potential improvement? and
- *How* should the changes be implemented to achieve the desired improvement in the considered problem situation in an enterprise?

Any complex and ambiguous management problem area that is important for the contemporary enterprises' functioning, i.e. for their survival and development can be used as an illustration for the real-world problems of business economics, i.e. the problem situations. When a research subject is, for example, management of an enterprise's growth and development then, unquestionably, this problem area should be considered as an appropriate problem situation because of its key features of great complexity, changeability in time, interdependence with the numerous and various phenomena of economy and management, involvement of different stakeholders, etc (Petrović, 2010, 276-277). It is about the strategically important problem area whose research requires: a) identifying and exploring the main determinants of the enterprise's growth, i.e. of its development in different areas - on the market, in the technique and technology, in the products, in the human resources, in finances, etc. - as well as the relationships between them; b) singling out and reviewing the relevant factors which restrict the enterprise growth; c) researching into the impacts of the enterprise's size on its growth; d) formulating different strategies for the enterprise developing; e) discussing a crisis in the enterprise's development and managing the crisis, etc.

The poles of the management problems' dichotomies, that have been just determined, can be viewed as the appropriate ends of a *continuum* of management problems in organizations. At one end of this continuum, there are problems, i.e. laboratory problems, or structured, i.e. well-defined, problems and at the other end, there are problem situations, i.e. real-world problems, or the unstructured, i.e. ill-defined problems of business economics.

THE TWO CORRESPONDING METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS

The specified nature of the management problems' dichotomies is directly related to the resulting relevant issue of a method, i.e. methodology, that is appropriate for the considered problem, i.e. the problem situation, respectively. Preliminarily, the two basic methodological orientations can be singled out (Rosenhead, 1996, 12-18; Petrović, 2010, 302-304):

- the orthodox methodological orientation and
- the alternative methodological orientation

as suitable to tackle the identified laboratory i.e. structured problems and the real-world problems, i.e. unstructured problems of business economics, respectively.

The *orthodox* methodological orientation is represented by the traditional Operational Research (OR). It is about a dominant scientific paradigm which is characterized by numerous and various ideas, methods, techniques, and models. For the context of this consideration, objectivity and optimization can be singled out as the two main features of the

orthodox methodological orientation. In fact, the notion that the phenomena and the problems of the real world can be objectively perceived, understood, represented and explored lies in the basis of this methodological orientation. The appropriate algorithms, i.e. the precisely established procedures for seeking and finding not any solution but an optimal solution have been determined for the objectively perceived and formulated complex, dynamic, interactive phenomena, processes, and problems. It is about the certain algorithmic-optimizing procedures, through use of which - in a finite number of iterations - the solutions for the objectively formulated problems should be found; these solutions should meet certain pre-set constraints and at the same time they should ensure that the initially singled out relevant variables reach their extreme values - maximum, or minimum.

Any example of employing the traditional OR can be cited in order to illustrate this methodological orientation, for example, the use of linear programing in finding the optimal program of production for two or more products under the determined technical-technological, and market conditions, where the profit achieved in the enterprise is maximal.

In contrast to the laboratory problems, i.e. structured problems, which are, as a rule, characterised by a great technical importance, but a limited social relevance, the real-world problems, i.e. the problem situations are opposed to finding the technical solutions. Actually, the methods for tackling the problems which are characterised by the stable conditions cannot be employed validly for addressing the problem situations whose main features are turbulent and more problematic environments. Additionally, in a situation where there is not an individual who issues the orders, an insight into the optimal solution is of little use - especially when it comes to the optimal solution for one of the versions of the considered problem. Also, since the interactions and negotiation are necessary in the systems of problem management in order to reach an agreement, the algorithmic-optimizing procedures - which are often complicated to understand - as a rule, do not help in discussing the different stakeholders' perspectives on the problem situations. At the same time, in the problem situations, in which there is uncertainty, the certainty in decision making process must not be achieved by changing the specificity of a particular expression of the considered problem situation.

So, creative dealing with the unstructured problems in enterprises, i.e. with the real-world problems in business economics, implies a different methodological instrumentarium. It is about the *alternative* methodological orientation which is represented by the systems methodologies for structuring the management problem situations. As a different theoretical-methodological and applicative possibility, the alternative methodological orientation is parallel with the widely accepted traditional OR, and it should be understood as a complement to the ortodox methodological orientation rather than as its opposite. Namely, first of all, participation, i.e. appropriately understood subjectivity, that has been recognized and involved in the research, and structuring can be identified as the two main features of the alternative methodological orientation.

Actually, within the alternative methodological orientation, the management problems in contemporary organizations have been determined above all by the fact that the organizations' key entities are people - individuals and groups - with, as a rule, more or less various interests, values, opinions, with various goals and means for their achieving, different power, various participation in formulating the problems and their solving, different participation in making the decisions and their implementing. This recognition and acceptance of the relevant fact that in each management problem situation there are different

stakeholders who observe, evaluate, and determine the important and ambiguous problem areas in contemporary enterprises, results in introducing a participation, i.e. - in appropriate ways grasped and expressed - subjectivity in the process of dealing with the real-world problems of business economics.

At the same time, since the management problem situations are observed and determined as the corresponding systems of complex, dynamic, interactive and multifaceted problems, it means that in processes of creative addressing the problem situations, it is more appropriate for one to deal with their structuring by means of the systems methodologies rather than to endeavour to find the solutions for their particular isolated problems. Compared to the methods and techniques for problem solving, the systems methodologies for problem situation structuring represent a complex instrumentarium of a higher order which provides the appropriate instructions, i.e. guidelines for creative tackling the problem area in an enterprise through: identifying and exploring its relevant subproblems, uncovering and researching into the relationships between these subproblems, and singling out and considering the interactions between the enterprise' problem area and its relevant environment.

So, in contrast to the prevailing algorithmic-optimizing approaches, the alternative theoretical-methodological instrumentarium implies a participation, i.e. requires an inclusion of the relevant stakeholders in the processes of dealing with the problem situations, and, at the same time, it is focused on structuring the real-world problems of business economics rather than on finding the solutions for the well-defined, structured management problems.

Any example of employing - particularly interpretative, emancipatory, postmodernist - systems methodologies for structuring the management problem situations in enterprises can be quoted as an illustration of the alternative methodological orientation. For example, Interactive Planning, as an interpretive systems methodology, is based on an idea that the planning process in enterprises has to be continual, holistic and participative, and that this process is focused on the two key phases - to design a desired, i.e. idealized future and uncover ways, instruments, resources for its achieving.

Therefore, in the context of this consideration, it can be stated preliminarily that there are two key paradigms for creative addressing the management problems in enterprises. They do not exclude each other, but, on the contrary, they should be understood as appropriate different theoretical-methodological and applicative responses on the differently observed and conceptualized phenomena and problems of the real-world of business economics. In other words, the orthodox methodological orientation can be considered as suitable for the problems, i.e. well-defined or structured problems, and the alternative methodological orientation is appropriate to the complex and ambiguous management problem situations, i.e. unstructured problems of business economics. So, there is a *paradigm shift* which means a significant change in the criteria which determine the legitimacy of both the problem and the proposed solution (Kuhn, 1962, 84, 149).

In fact, creative dealing with the real-world problems in business economics implies a suitable *action research* (Jackson, 2000, 14-15; Midgley, 2000, 117-120, 185-186; Checkland, 2010, 129-132; Gill and Johnson, 2010, 95-97). This is a process in which:

- certain changes in a problem situation under consideration have to be caused - action, and
- through these changes' implementation, one should learn - research.

The action research process can be seen as a learning cycle. Namely, the research into the problem situations in organizations requires, above all, the developed valid ways of their representation. In other words, the suitable models of the considered problem situations have to be determined together with the modelling languages; a model is seen as an explicit interpretation of the researcher's understanding of the problem situation, i.e. her/his ideas about the situation. Then, a creative tackling of the modelled problem situations implies a development and employment of the methodologies which are appropriate to the modelled situations. These methodologies are designed so that they can cope with the great complexity and ambiguity of the different problem situations. Finally, by using the models and methodologies in the considered problem situations, their testing and developing is enabled.

A relevant result of action research represents shifting the focus from the development and use of the methods and techniques for solving the problems on the development and employment of the methodologies for structuring the problem situations (Wilson, 1984, 4). In fact, an idea that a problem can be defined suggests the possibility of finding a solution through whose implementation the problem will be overcome. This approach to thinking is acceptable for the end of the problem spectrum concerning the structured problems, i.e. well-defined problems, but it is not appropriate to the real-world problems of business economics. Namely, the management problem situations in enterprises, as systemic wholes of interactive aspects, issues, problems, and dilemmas associated with them, are not characterized by a possibility of simple isolating and separate treating the constituent problems.

For further consideration, it is essential that the methodology, as the structured set of guidelines, i.e. activities, that should help in the research process, i.e. in implementing the intervention in the problem situation (Mingers, 2006, 215) - is the more general, and less prescribing in relation to the method. Actually, a methodology - compared to a method and technique - has to be more flexibile in the categories of its own structure and application, in order to be suitable for the varieties existing in real-world problems. The employment of a methodology can imply the use of different methods, but the methodology determines whether the concerned method is adequate or not. So, the required flexibility in approach results in the following important stance: in dealing with the real-world problems of business economics, the problem-orientation is more appropriate than the technical orientation. Respectively, in the context of this consideration, the focus is on the methodologies for structuring the management problem situations in enterprises, rather than on the methods, i.e. the techniques for solving the problems.

THE KEY DIMENSIONS OF THE MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

The important features of the business problems - their complexity and ambiguity - can validly be encompassed, represented and explored through determining the two key dimensions of the management problem situations (Jackson, 2000, 94-95; Jackson, 2003, 19; Jackson, 2006a, 868-878):

- the systems dimension and
- the participants dimension.

As a particularly significant aspect of the problem situations in enterprises, the *systems* dimension refers to the relative complexity of the concerned management problem situation,

expressed in the systems' categories. Generally, a continuum of the systems' types can be identified. At the ends of this continuum, there are relatively simple systems and highly complex systems. The basic criteria for classifying systems according to their complexity are: the number of subsystems, the number and level of organization of connections between subsystems within the system, the previous determination/indeterminacy of the subsystems' properties, the deterministic/probabilistic principles of the systems behaviour, the systems evolve over time/non-evolve over time, the subsystems generate/non-generate their own goals, a substantial not-openness/openness of the system towards the environment.

Accordingly, the relatively simple systems - as the appropriate representations of the relatively simple management problems in enterprises - are characterised by: a small number of subsystems, a few interactions between the subsystems within the system, the previous determination of the subsystems' attributes, a high organization of the subsystems' interactions, the deterministic principles of the system's behaviour, non-evolution of the system over time, the subsystems do not set autonomously their own goals, a significant non-openness/closeness of the system towards the environment. On the other hand, the complex systems - as the systemic representations of the complex, dynamic, interactive, management problems of the real world - have the following features: a large number of subsystems, many different interactions between subsystems within the system, the subsystems' attributes are not strictly determined in advance, the subsystems' interactions are not rigorously organized, these systems are probabilistic in their behaviour, the subsystems are conceived and relatively autonomous in setting their own goals, the system evolves over time, and is largely open to its environment.

Specifying the contexts of the management problem situations in enterprises in relation to the systems dimension results in the following relevant stance: The relatively simple problem contexts correspond to the relatively simple systems, while the complex problem contexts correspond to the complex systems. The problem contexts' categorization from the systems dimension, clearly, implies a caution and simultaneous inclusion and research into all important determinants of the complexity of the considered problem situations in enterprises.

The second important dimension of the management problems of business economics is the *participants* dimension. As a particular significant aspect of the problem contexts, the participants dimension results directly from the fact that the participants in organizations and the real-world problems represent the key entity of the management problem situations. That is, the participants dimension refers to the relationships between the individuals and the groups who are interested in the concerned problem situation which acts on them, and who deal with it. Actually, an assessment of the unitary/pluralist/coercive nature of the respective problem situation should be built into the understanding of the real complexity and ambiguity of the considered problem area in the enterprise. This is because these two key aspects of the problem contexts (systems and participants) illuminate the nature of the management problems in a relevant and meaningful way, and offer a fruitful manner of characterizing problem situations in business economics.

In general, the relationships between the participants in the problem situations can be classified as: unitary, pluralist and coercive. Thereby, the basic criteria for categorizing the participants' relationships in a management problem situation are: the existence/the lack of the common interests, the level of compatibility/incompatibility of the values and opinions, the level of agreement/disagreement on the goals and means, participation/non-participation in the processes of problem solving and decision making, action/non-action in accordance with the agreed goals.

In the unitary relationships, the participants in the management problem situations share the common interests, their values and opinions are highly compatible, there is widespread agreement on the goals and means, all participants take part in solving the problems and making the decisions, and act in accordance with the agreed goals. So, it can be concluded that a consensus represents the significant general feature of the unitary relationships between the participants in the problem situations. The pluralist relationships between the participants in the business problems are characterized by, first of all, the existence of a basic compatibility of the participants' interests, their values and opinions diverge somewhat, the participants do not necessarily agree on the goals and means but a compromise can be reached, everyone takes part in problem solving and decision making in certain ways, and acts in accordance with the agreed goals. The coercive relationships in the management problem situations have been determined by the following properties: the participants do not share the same interests, their values and opinions are, as a rule, in conflict, there is no agreement on the goals and means, so no compromise is possible. There is a coercion of one(s) over the others to accept and implement the decisions that have been made.

Since the relationships between the participants are categorized as unitary, pluralist, and coercive, the contexts of the management problem situations - from the participants dimension - can consequently be classified as the unitary, pluralist, and coercive. Actually, the unitary problem context corresponds to the unitary set of the participants, i.e. to a team, the pluralist problem context corresponds to a loose coalition, and the coercive context is appropriate to such a set of participants in the problem situation of an organization whose main features are conflict and coercion.

In accordance with the above, it can be stated that the systems dimension, as a systemic expression of a generally conceived complexity of the problem situations in the enterprises, actually comprises and represents their three relevant properties - complexity (in a narrower sense), dynamism, and interactivity. Respectively, complexity, as the essential feature of the management problem situations, represents their appropriate metacharacteristic (Rosenhead, 2006, 759-765), which encompasses and subsumes under itself the significant properties of the problem situations faced by the contemporary enterprises. At the same time, since the participants dimension is focused on the relevant stakeholders, it can be concluded that the dimension of the relationships between the participants actually comprises and expresses the ambiguity of the management problem situations in enterprises, as one of their key features.

THE MANAGEMENT PROBLEM CONTEXTS

The main ideal[1] types of the problem *contexts* can be determined by simultaneous consideration of the specified key dimensions of the management problem situations in enterprises - the systems dimension and the participants dimension. In fact, a direct resultant of combining the systems dimension - relatively simple and complex - and the participants

[1] In general, the *ideal types* (Weber, 1949) can be determined as the appropriate logical aids, i.e. as the logical perfections which in fact represent the suitable tools of a methodology for scientific research. These are the theoretical constructions that do not exist in reality, but, in the research processes, they serve the empirical data to determine how much the explored part of reality is near, i.e. far from the concerned ideal type.

dimension - unitary, pluralist, and coercive - is the corresponding six-cell matrix (Jackson, 2003; Jackson, 2006a, 868-878; Jackson, 2006b, 651-653). In this matrix, contexts of the management problems in organizations have been classified into the following six ideally typical categories: relatively simple - unitary, relatively simple - pluralist, relatively simple - coercive, complex - unitary, complex - pluralist, complex - coercive. Each of these problem context types is significantly different from the others. Their integrated characteristics result from the determined relevant aspects of the considered problem situations.

Like any other unstructured management problem of business economics, the problem situation of managing the growth and development of an enterprise is precisely determined by the systems dimension and the participants' relationships dimension. In relation to the systems dimension, this problem situation is validly represented by the appropriate complex, dynamic, interactive systems in the different relevant areas - on the market, in the techniques and technologies, in manufacturing, in human resources, finance etc. These are the systems with a large number of subsystems, interactions between the subsystems are numerous, the subsystems within a system can relatively autonomously set their own goals, the systems are characterized by the probabilistic principles of behaviour, the systems evolve over time, and they are in continuous purposeful - material, energetic and informational - interactions with the relevant environments (the markets of the production factors, final products, and services, monetary-credit and fiscal systems, competition, legislation, and so on). At the same time, in relation to the participants dimension, the problem situation of managing the growth and development of an enterprise is determined by the context of pluralism. That is, in the process of managing the enterprise's growth and development, a certain basic compatibility of the relevant stakeholders' interests (buyers, consumers, customers, employees, owners, suppliers, competitors, financial institutions, local and state political structures, etc) must exist. Although the stakeholders do not necessarily have to agree on the goals and means for achieving them, a compromise on the strategically defined criteria and factors for the enterprise's survival and development is indisputably necessary and possible. Different participants are included in the processes of problem solving and decision making to some extent and in certain ways, and act in accordance with the set objectives.

Taking into account the consideration of the systems dimension and the participants' relationships dimension in the problem situation of managing the growth and development of an enterprise, it can be stated justifiably that this problem situation is characterized by the attributes of great complexity and pluralism. Actually, in the six-cell matrix of the basic types of the problem contexts, the problem situation of managing the enterprise growth and development is determined by the corresponding complex-pluralist context. In this type of the management problem context, relevant issues of the complex organizational structure and processes taking place in the enterprise have been identified, and, on the other hand, a real adjustment of the participants' values and opinions, and a compromise are necessary and possible.

Identifying the basic problem contexts is of vital importance for a systems reconceptualization of management problems in enterprises. Namely, relying on the key features of the management problem contexts, on the one hand, and respecting the relevant theoretical-methodological foundations and applicative potentials of available methodologies, i.e. methods and techniques, to each researched problem situation, i.e. a problem, can be joined an appropriate systems methodology for its structuring, i.e. method or technique for its solving, respectively.

More specifically,

- the *positivist-functionalist* methods and techniques of traditional OR, Systems Analysis, Systems Engineering correspond to the relatively simple - unitary problem contexts;
- the *structuralist-functionalist* systems methodologies (Organizational Cybernetics, System Dynamics, Theory and Methodology of Complexity) are suitable for the complex - unitary problem contexts;
- the *interpretative* systems methodologies (Strategic Assumptions Surfacing and Testing, Strategic Options Development and Analysis, Interactive Planning, Soft Systems Methodology, Robustness Analysis) are appropriate to the pluralist (relatively simple and complex) problem contexts;
- the *emancipatory* and *post-modernist* systems methodologies (Critical Systems Heuristics, Team Syntegrity, Genealogy, Deconstruction) correspond to the coercive (relatively simple and complex) problem contexts.

CONCLUSION

In the conceptual framework of this consideration, holism implies a recognition and creative management of the increasing complexity and variety. Relying on such a perceived holism, systems thinking - particularly the contemporary critical systems thinking and practice (Jackson, 2010, 133-139; Petrovic, 2012, 1-13) encourages the addressing of the following three relevant issues:

- to accept the existence of the increasing complexity and variety of problems faced by organizations;
- to develop a rich diversity and variety of methodologies, methods, techniques, models, which could be creatively used in tackling the management problems;
- to explore continually which methodologies, methods, techniques, models are theoretically, methodologically and practically the most appropriate to the management problems, problem situations, and dilemmas related to them.

In fact, a creative dealing with the systemically reconceptualized management problems in enterprises requires, first of all: a) *critical* awareness about the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies, i.e methods and techniques that can be used in structuring the problem situations, i.e. in solving the problems, and b) *social* awareness about different social and organizational pressures to use the dominant, i.e prevailing rather than the other, alternative research tools.

Furthermore, the concieved managing of the complex and ambiguous systems of problems in enterprises implies: a) *improving* the enterprises' management process, b) enhancing the relationships between relevant stakeholders, c) liberation from the power relation' influences and creating a basis for learning about the problem situations, i.e, problems and the employed methodologies and methods.

Also, a purposeful tackling of the systemically conceptualized management problem in business economics implies *pluralism* or: a) a recognition of the existence of numerous and various perceptions and interpretations of the considered problem situations, and b) enabling to use different methodologies and methods in combination in problem situation structuring, and problem solving.

Actually, theoretical-methodological and applicative pluralism in contemporary OR or Management Science (MS) recognizes that the management problems are so complex and heterogenous that it is impossible to produce a satisfactory unified whole of thinking, that could help in dealing with all aspects of these problems (Ormerod, 2010, 1694-1708; Ormerod, 2011, 242-245; Ulrich, 2012a, 1228-1247; Ulrich, 2012b, 1307-1322). In such circumstances, it is better to have available the suitable range of the methodologies, i.e. methods that are grounded, useful, and - in some aspects - mutually opposing, rather than to risk a premature completion of the theoretical and methodological debate (Zhu, 2011, 784-798). Also, an important focal point of the pluralism in the contemporary MS is related to the fact that the recent theoretical-methodological and practical systems approaches represent, actually, an endeavour to overcome some of the relevant shortcomings, weaknesses of the traditional OR: the structuralist-functionalist systems methodologies help in dealing with a high complexity in organizations, the interpretive systems methodologies support a research into the multiple perceptions of the business reality, and the emancipatory and post-modernist systems flows strive to facilitate that MS, as a particular science and profession, serves the interests that are different from the status quo.

Many different Case Studies confirm explicitly the theoretical-methodological foundation and practical usefulness of the systemic reconceptualization of the management problems in the most different spheres of management in contemporary enterprises - in formulating a creative business strategy (Hammer, Edwards and Tapinos, 2012, 909-919), in developing and implementing the strategies that focus on the enterprise's sustainable development (Duran-Encalada and Paucar-Caceres, 2012, 1065-1078), in a systemic modelling the uncertainty in business environment, as the key aspect of the enterprise strategy (Burt, 2011, 830-839), in involving the relevant stakeholders in project management (Davis, MacDonald, and White, 2010, 893-904), etc.

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SISTEMSKA REKONCEPTUALIZACIJA UPRAVLJAČKIH PROBLEMA POSLOVNE EKONOMIJE

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Rastuća kompleksnost i varijetetnost upravljačkih problema u savremenim okolnostima implicira da problemske situacije relevantne za opstanak i razvoj preduzeća trebaju biti posmatrane i istraživane kao složeni, dinamički, interaktivni, višeznačni sistemi problema. Sistemska rekonceptualizacija upravljačkih problema poslovne ekonomije je usmerena na kreativno unapređivanje efektivnosti i efikasnosti procesa upravljanja u preduzećima. Zapravo, kroz kritičko sistemsko mišljenje i praksu, dihotomije upravljačkih problema bi trebale biti identifikovane, dve korespondentne metodološke orijentacije bi trebale biti izdvojene i istražene, a zatim primerene sistemske metodologije strukturiranja problemskih situacija, odnosno, odgovarjući metodi rešavanja problema trebaju biti pridruženi osnovnim problemskim kontekstima koji rezultiraju iz jednovremenog razmatranja dve ključne dimenzije upravljačkih problema u preduzećima. Kroz proces sistemske rekonceptualizacije upravljačkih problema u preduzećima može biti kreativno poduprt proces opredeljivanja naučno utemeljenih, praktično korisnih i društveno odgovornih promena, čijom implementacijom mogu biti kreativno unapređeni rezultati funkcionisanja preduzeća.

Ključne reči: *sistemski pristup menadžmentu, problemi i problemske situacije, metodi i metodologije, problemski konteksti, kreativno unapređivanje upravljanja.*