Reconciling the “Global” and “Local” by Using the Soft Systems Methodology:  
A Case of Building Trust Relationships in South Africa

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A systems methodology has been presented for coping with globalisation by analysing a case of ‘building trust relationships’ in a Bank in South Africa. The traditional interpretation of Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) of Peter Checkland is reinterpreted drawing on the notions of “reality” and “actuality” as developed by the Japanese psychiatrist Bin Kimura. Through the application of this reinterpreted SSM in a bank in South Africa it is demonstrated that the accommodation that forms the basis of trust is actualised via the application of the methodology. The interplay between the real and the actual is the fundamental insight provided by the reinterpretation of the SSM. It is contended that it is this very dynamic that feature that forms the basis of the reconciliation between the “global” and “local”. Furthermore, it is this process that implicitly facilitated the absorption of foreign cultures into the Japanese culture in ways that maintained the ‘local.’ If this argument proves convincing it may form the basis of a whole new way of thinking about development and globalisation in the age of mass modernisation.

Introduction

According to Anthony Giddens’ book “The Consequences of Modernity” (1990) modernity is a distinctively Western project in terms of the ways of life fostered by it. He continues in the same book:

“One of the fundamental consequence of modernity ... is globalisation. This is more than a diffusion of Western institutions across the world, in which other cultures are crushed ... The ways in which these issues are approached and coped with, however, will inevitably involve conceptions and strategies derived from non-western settings. many kinds of cultural responses to such institutions are possible”

He never mentions anything about the exact means by which these non-Western settings are to be introduced, although he provides structuration theory as a tool to analyse the process. In this paper, we will propose a methodology to tackle these issues, not as analytical device, but rather as a device for action research. We will do this by examining a case study in the South African context. We propose to explore these issues by locating them in the general frame of the reconciliation between the “global” and the “local”. As Giddens indicated, the movement of modernisation, which started two and a half-century ago, has promoted globalisation at the cost of local cultures. One of the reasons why this problem has occurred is that the fundamental concept of Modernity is based on ‘scientism’, which is the seeking of the truth in the world by using a particular methodology that originated in the West. Based on this scientific world view, globalisation becomes available by using technology based on the fruits of science. However, this scientific way of thinking tends to neglect human aspect particularity in order to attain universality. It is our contention that as the stream of globalisation, through scientism and the modern project, sweeps us along, we are losing the ‘actuality’ embedded in the local culture. We no longer live in the actual world but rather in the world of reality, provided by science.

The argument that we want to explore here is that some form of harmonisation between the “real” and “actual” on the small group level is necessary in order to understand the reconciliation between the “global” and the “local” on a societal level. In other words, we have to understand the creation of some form of accommodation between “real” and “actual” as a means to harmonise the ‘importation’ of foreign cultures into an existing culture. In the Japanese context we can look
at the accommodation of Buddhism from China in the 6th century, or the emergence of Modernisation from the West a 100 years ago, for some answers. Although, in this regard, we may note that Japan did not explicitly conceptualise this process of accommodation. This may be because her culture is largely based on tacit knowledge compared to the more explicit view of the Western culture. In the absence of explicit knowledge of the accommodation we want to reflect on some possible avenues for understanding this process.

There may obviously be many ways in which we can interpret the Japanese way of accommodating the local and the global, the actual and the real. Nevertheless, we want to explore and reinterpret the Soft Systems Methodology (SSM), that originated in England, as a methodology to establish this harmonisation of "reality" and "actuality". The reinterpretation of the SSM that we propose is largely affected by our interpretation of the Japanese culture, with its duality of subjectivism and objectivism. It is, as such, also very closely connected with the Japanese management style and the Japanese understanding of nature. In this paper, we want to explore the transfer of the Japanese ways of thinking, especially Japanese management modes, into an organisation in South Africa by using a particular interpretation of SSM, and then reflect on the result of applying the lessons learnt, through the reinterpretation of the SSM, to the problem of "global" and "local". To sum up: the major theoretical contentions of this paper are:

(a) The problem of the reconciliation between "global" and "local" at the social level can be studied as a problem of the harmonisation between reality and actuality at the individual or small group level.

(b) The terms "actuality" and "reality" as defined by Kimura, a phenomenological psychiatrist, which corresponds to Heidegger's conception of "Being" and "being of being", are fundamental to this project.

(c) A methodology to harmonise "reality" and "actuality" can be found in the reinterpretation of the SSM in a way that conceptualises the Japanese way of thinking, especially in the way they mediate aspects of other civilisations or cultures.

The paper is organised as follows: First, we will discuss the background of the case study and point to the need to introduce the notion of "actuality" into the situation; Second, we will explain the SSM methodology which was applied to the case and explain why SSM is useful in the case, reinterpreting SSM from Kimura's notions of "actuality" and "reality"; Third, we will describe the flow of the case with some comments and interpretation; Fourth, we discuss the understanding drawn from the case to articulate the difference between the Western and Japanese use of SSM; Finally, we will discuss how the problem of "global" and "local" can be replaced by that of the "real" and "actual" by reflecting on the case—this may point us to a methodology to reconcile "global" and "local."

Background of the Case and Discussion of Issues

As is well known to the world, in 1994 the first South African general election in which all races were represented, resulted in the birth of a constitution which abandoned the discrimination policies of the previous government. The new government has as priority the creation of a national state with participatory development under the slogan of "synthesise with respect to differences." However, there are still many levels of distrust among races, or memories of distrust, in the South African situation. It is difficult for them to merely eliminate these feelings from their emotional store, although they know they have to get over these distrusts, in a rational manner.

This is also true in the organisation that we will consider, a certain national bank of South Africa (we call it the Bank). The bank is attempting to transform itself and its human resources by introducing team building, and staff participation. However, the bank faces a problem of lack of trust between staff members, such that teamwork and participation are difficult or impossible. In this context there is a need for a suitable methodology to address these issues. Trust relationships or the willingness for participation cannot be built by force, or achieved simply by rational thought. Trust relations are not only built upon rational judgements of reality, but also require value judgements about the
shared meaning of actuality. In other words, we need agreement not by power or money but by sharing values or meanings. Fukuyama\(^2\) (p26) notes:

> "Economists typically argue that the formation of social groups can be explained as the result of voluntary contract between individuals who have made the rational calculation that co-operation is in their long-term self-interest. ... But while contact and self-interest are important source of association, the most effective organisations are based on communities of shared ethical values. These communities do not require extensive contract and legal regulation of their relations because prior moral consensus gives members of the group a basis for mutual trust."

The important thing about the quotation above is that he finds the greater value in the trust that exists in the ethical previous agreement rather than the trust that is based on the rational calculation. We would prefer to call the former trust "the actual trust" and the latter "the real trust."

We will consider the notions of real and actual in much more detail in the next section. Nevertheless, we can, to start the discussion, start to develop them by referring to their Latin roots: The word "reality" comes from "res" which in Latin means "things." We can see it as an object by observation and comprehend by perception. Also, we can express it by words clearly. The word "actuality" comes from "actio" which in Latin means "action." We cannot observe it as an object, but can only comprehend in the abstract.

The Japanese psychiatrist, Bin Kimura, former professor of the Medical Department in Kyoto University, argues for the fundamental distinction between "reality" and "actuality" (p13-14). He explains the meaning of these notions by referring to the symptom of "depersonalisation" in mental disorder. The patients of depersonalisation, he argues, have lost their actuality whilst retaining their reality. They can still perceive their physical existence in the situation as 'observers of themselves' as it were, however, the patients feel with a deep sense of agony that they have lost their actuality. He also suggests that this difference between reality and actuality is equivalent to Heidegger's famous ontological difference between "being" and "Being of being." Kimura attempts to transcend the Cartesian dualism by making the "reality"/"actuality" distinction. He claims that the famous Cartesian statement, "I think, therefore, I am" should be understood as "It seems to me that I am thinking." He claims that there exists a duality of self, namely the actual self (corresponding to "me" in the above sentence) and the real self (corresponding to "I" in the above sentence). To make the distinction a bit more clearer let us consider the example of music. We play music by creating sounds in real space. However, we cannot continue to play (by creating sounds) without also listening to music as a whole, which includes sounds we created in the past, sounds we are creating and sound, "we expect to create in the future. We can only play music by referring to music as a whole. Other players listen to the same music (not sounds) on the actuality level. Therefore, if we play music coherently, we simultaneously exist in the same actuality that enables us to play music as a whole. We cannot continue to play music by only listening to sounds on the reality level.

Let us use this reality/actuality distinction to consider the issue of trust relationships in the Western and Japanese context. It is easy for the Japanese people to understand meaning of trust on the level of actuality because Japanese people experience it as tacitly present in their everyday lives. By contrast, Western people tend not to enter this shared meaning on the actuality level because they tend to see it as a threat against the independence of the individual ego. For Japanese people trust is a "partnership" based in the actual sharing of values and meaning. In contrast, Western people tend to see the notion of trust rather as an expectation that if we behave rationally towards others, others will tend to behave rationally towards us. Thus, a trust partnership for Westerners means a relationship on the reality level based on a more or less explicit agreement on mutual interests. Back et al\(^8\) (1994: p.122) point this out by referring to the Japanese firm in which information flows are optimised through trust relations, in contrast with the USA and UK firms, where blocking of information flows happens in low-trust, market-governed system:

\(8\) Institutional economists have complained for some time about the inability of banks in the USA and UK to act rationally and put an end to their bad habits of short-term loans at quite high interest rates. But perhaps free market rational-choice assumptions are not the solution but rather the problem. It is instead perhaps the productivity of the Anglo-Saxon institutions for neo-classical, cost-benefit thinking of the calculating rational actor that has predisposed them to the failure of such short-termism. This rational choice, neo-classicism, stands polar opposite to the rational contracting of the
Japanese and German banks, the fact that their relationship which industry is more one of "status" than 'correct', the fact that corporatistic (as distinct from neo-classical) trust relations enable also a flow of symbols between financial and industrial contractors. It is the shared meanings, the shared 'world' of the two, which explains the tendency of bank in Japan and Germany to lend long and lower interest rates. And in return they are included in the information structure of the industrial firm.  

This distinction is also tacitly present in the way employees express their relationship with the firm. Japanese workers will tend to say that they work "in the firm" while their British or American colleagues will refer to working "for the firm".

In the White Paper "Eliminating World Poverty: A challenge for the 21st Century" issued by the UK government, the concept of "partnership" is defined as a contract between donors and developing countries based on the agreement on the reality level. Also, for them the concept of "participatory approach" means the democratic process to create a consensus which can be gained on the reality level. Can we always create a consensus in such complex situations? We tend to see the situations differently depending upon our Weltanschaunngen (our world view). We hope to show that on the actual level we can develop an accommodation among people who have different world views. The word consensus usually refers to one hundred percent agreement on the reality level, accommodation, on the other hand, refers to a reconciliation between people who have different world views. Thus, consensus can be said to be the special case of accommodation. Japanese people never aim for consensus on the reality level. Rather, they prefer the more ambitious accommodation at the actuality level. The Japanese attempt to understand each other. This is helped by frequent informal meetings after work, for instance, in Karaoke bars. This understanding allows them to accommodate successfully, and through this process, trust relations may gradually emerge.

If South African people are to achieve "synthesise with respect to differences", they will have to look for accommodation on the actuality level rather than consensus on the reality level. In doing this, it seems useful for them to consider the Japanese way of creating accommodation. However, this is quite difficult, because the Japanese have not developed any formal theories to express what they experience. Fortunately, there is a methodology similar to the Japanese way of achieving accommodation, known as Soft Systems Methodology (SSM). SSM was developed by Professor Peter Checkland and his colleagues, and has been studied for over 20 years at Lancaster University. SSM has been applied to many complex problems. In addressing the problems faced by the Bank we have attempted to combine SSM with Japanese methods of reaching accommodation, drawing on the reality/actuality distinction of Kimura. In the following section, we will explain the theoretical grounding of SSM and how to apply it to the situation in South Africa.

Theoretical Grounding

Generally, it could be argued that there are two traditions of system methodologies to deal with problematic situations namely: the "hard systems methodology", and the "soft systems methodology". The main differences between "hard" and "soft" approach that is of importance to us is the underlying, mostly implicit, purpose of the approaches. In "hard" approach, the users seek consensus on the best solution based on one hundred agreement. In the "soft" approach, the users explore an accommodation, which can be accepted by most people who are concerned with the situation. In applying their views to the situation they respect each other's world view. Therefore, the "hard" approach can be said to be a solution created by attempting to find the unique and correct answer while the "soft" approach can be said to be a learning mode for accommodating various Weltanschaunngen. J Rosenhead (p10) notes:

"Instead of attempting to solve problems, we should be attempting to manage messes - which involves not finding a solution but planning. If we insist on the 'solution' mode, we will be relegated to problems which are nearly independent, while messes go inadequately managed."

The soft approach comes from the reflection of the failure of the "hard" approach such as Operations Research (OR), Systems Analysis (SA) and Systems Engineering (SE). They all contain a common assumption, that is, real world problems can be formulated as a search for an efficient means of achieving objectives known, to be desirable. The search can be conducted systematically by defining the objective to be achieved and manipulating models of the situation, or of the alternative forms it might take. They were
very successful and dominated management science in the 1960s and 1970s. For example, in the Apollo project, these "hard" approaches took the main role in the project management and worked very well. As such researchers in the management science tried to apply them to the social problems under the name of Technology Transfer (TT) or Technology Assessment (TA). However, as most of the trials failed it became clear that in social problems it is very difficult for the problem solvers to define what the problem is. There are various views to the situation depending upon the interests of stakeholders. As such the problem solvers could not define the unique objective to solve the problems. In these situations the "hard" approach does not work well, as they tend to focus on "how to" solve problems and not on "what the problem is."

Reflecting on these failures, other approaches were proposed in 1980s such as "soft" systems approach. These approaches try to focus on "what the problem is" rather than on "how to solve the problem." Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) is one of the "soft" approaches, which has a firm philosophical foundation and a wide scope of application areas—as a methodology which formulates the messy problems in the real situation. The main paradigm shift from "hard" to "soft" in SSM is the view that systems are contained 'in' the process to explore the situation rather than 'in' the situation itself. This notion to shift from an ontological stance (systems as they are) to an epistemological stance (systems as we see them) is fundamental and revolutionary. It provides the possibility for many views which in turn provides the foundation for a new concept of learning.

If we conceive systems as something in the real situation then we can only find the system model that is closest to the system by using scientific observation. In this case, we can only judge the model as correct or not by examining the model in the situation. There is no room to allow for 'actual' learning. We only deal with real judgements by using logical processes. This is the typical "hard" approach. In contrast to this, if we conceive systems as something in the process of our exploration of the world, there is room to allow for actual learning. In this mode we can create models from our subjective point of view, in other words, we can interpret the situation from our Weltanschaunungen, and bring actual learning to our Weltanschaunungen by reflecting on the outcome which resulted from our action based on the model. In this case, the model becomes an epistemological device for learning, not the model of the situation. Thus, in the SSM we ask ourselves "how the situation can be seen?" and not "what is the real system in the situation?"

Although the SSM is generally well known, it may be useful to rehearse briefly the major steps in the SSM. The basic structure of the SSM can be viewed as follows (Figure 1):
because there is very little difference between real
the participants of the SSM, accommodating their world
differences".

However, no learning comes from such a comparison,
that in Checkland's SSM it is better to use the notion of
reality/actuality distinction of Kimura. Before doing
this in detail, and by way of an introduction, it may be
worthwhile to compare the "epistemological differences"
which Checkland proposed, to the "ontological
differences" of Heidegger. It is possible to interpret that
both Checkland and Heidegger argued for the difference
between "actuality" and "reality". However, Checkland
does not refer to the notion of actuality explicitly. He
does, however seem to implicitly utilise it as indicated
below (p.6):

"That this is the case stem from the acceptance that
although feats and logic have a part to play on human
affairs, the feel of them, their felt texture, derives equally
(or more) from the myths and meaning which human
beings attitude to their professional (and personal)
entanglements which their fellow beings..."

These processes are conducted by the group, that is,
the participants of the SSM, accommodating their world
views.

We will now reinterpret the SSM drawing on the
reality/actuality distinction of Kimura. Before doing this
in detail, and by way of an introduction, it may be
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This feeling or felt texture is the presence of actuality
in Kimura’s sense. With this in mind we would claim
that in Checkland’s SSM it is better to use the notion of
"actual model" rather than "conceptual model." For
example, it is our experience that it is often the case that
participants are mislead to take the conceptual models
as real models (i.e. models of the way the world is), and
so, to compare these models with the perceived real
situation in stage five of the SSM. (see Figure 1).
However, no learning comes from such a comparison,
because there is very little difference between real
models and the perceived real situation. The real model
is merely an expression of the real world.

We would now want to attempt the reinterpreting of
the SSM triggered by the application of the traditional
SSM in the Japanese context. From these applications,
it emerged that the default interpretation and use of SSM
in the Japanese context differed radically from the use
of the methodology in the Western context. Initially the
difference was attributed to a pure cultural difference.
On closer investigation it became apparent that there
was a much more fundamental dynamic at work. It was
at this point that the work of Kimura provided the key
notions of actuality and reality that enabled us to
articulate what seems to us to be the fundamental issues.
It is with this reinterpreted and rearticulated SSM that
an understanding of actual accommodation becomes
possible. It is our contention— which we wish to indicate
with the case below—that by doing this reinterpretation
we can get the appropriate methodology to deal with the
South African situation where people need to create team
work with trust in their organisations and to
accommodate each other with respect to their different
views.

First, while the “relevant human activity system” is
regarded as a perceptual or cognitive model in the
Western interpretation, it is regarded as a vehicle of
actuality—an expression of the participant’s ontology—in
our reinterpretation. Secondly, in the comparison
phase, we regard it as a comparison between reality and
actuality, mediated by models rather than as a comparison
between the models and the perceived world. Therefore,
thirdly, the process of accommodation is not the creation
of the models relevant to the real world, but rather the
process to explore the actuality of the group as mediated
by the models relevant to actuality. Of course, although
Western style of accommodation is also the reconciliation
of the others world views and the exploration of the
shared world view, there is still a vast difference between
the Western style and the style of the Japanese, as will
become clearer in the discussion below and in our
analysis of the case.

With respect to the notion of “reality and actuality”
of Kimura, the Western approach is regarded as a
creation of a shared world view held by the individuals—a
shared “public intersubjectivity”. Kimura also notes:

"The notion of intersubjectivity was originally
conceptualised as a place where a judgement shared by
plural persons, such as a common knowledge of the
objective world, could be constituted, in contrast to
more private, subjective mental contents, such as pain
and sensual feelings".
This "public intersubjectivity" is logical and rational, and can as such, be expressed in an explicit way by the models of the SSM. In contrast with this, the accommodation of the Japanese style is more characterised by the sort of accommodation (or harmony) of oneness one tends to find in a team sport (such as basketball or football) or the oneness of an ensemble of musicians. This is the kind of accommodation, as it were, of shared intersubjective pain that a mother, looking at the injury of her child, feels—the child's pain is also her pain, its illogical and irrational. Kimura calls this kind of intersubjectivity "unindividuated private intersubjectivity." He notes 10.

"Such private intersubjectivity can be considered, in contrast with the public intersubjectivity [which is] based on an open network system composed by plural individual intentionalities, to be an actual state of affairs in which the "Between-ness", "aida" in Japanese, itself come to assume its own intentionality, functioning like a single subjectivity existing quite independently of the real individual subjectivities constituting this very 'Between-ness.'"

He also claims 10 that this kind of intersubjectivity cannot be recognised from the third-person point of view, observing it objectively from without. It can only be experienced through and amidst an active subjective participation in it. He calls this "Between-ness" "actuality," and distinguishes it from reality which can be comprehended by perception. This actuality can be characterised as being present in the pre-conscious level, since the unindividuated private intersubjectivity means something that is prior to the individual, that is, the ambiguous state of simultaneous objectivity and subjectivity.

It is with this notion of unindividuated private intersubjectivity that we can use to understand the Japanese interpretation of "relevant human activity system". For them, it is not a cognitive model but a vehicle of actuality. They comprehend situations, not as "reality" but as "actuality." It is 'in' the situation, in the ambiguous state of objectivity and subjectivity that they find themselves. They see the situation as a reflection of themselves and not as an object 'out there.' It is in this sense that we re-interpret the notion of "relevant system" as the vehicle of actuality, and the accommodation process as a process to explore the "unindividualised private intersubjectivity", or actual accommodation. This view brings us to a greater understanding of the SSM in which the models can be understood as a mediation between actuality and reality, and accommodation as the result of comparing 11 these two.

With this understanding of Kimura's notion of actuality and reality, we can now redefine the SSM as follows:

"SSM can be seen as a methodology of learning, which makes possible the reconciliation between "actuality" and "reality" mediated by systemic models. Analytically, the process of SSM can be divided into

![Contextualised SSM Diagram]

Figure 2 — Contextualised SSM
First, in the process of "actualisation", systemic models are created from the people's individual actualities, and an accommodation of people's individual actualities are explored by comparing models and comparing models with real situations, guided by the methodology. In this process the tacit source is the unindividualised private intersubjectivity of the participants. When some degree of accommodation is attained, action plans are created based on the model from the perspectives of cultural feasibility and systemic desirability. The action plans are 'familiar' to the participants since they flow from a reflection on their individual actualities and shared unindividualised private intersubjectivity.

Secondly, in the process of "realisation" participants themselves carry out the action plans in the real situation. Thus, some learning occurs in the participants through the process of the realisation of action plans. The whole process takes place mediated by systemic models reconciling reality and actuality which enables both an improvement in the real situation, and learning in the participants. This re-interpreted SSM will be referred to as the "Contextualised SSM."

Thirdly, the differences between the realisation process and the actualisation process are explained by referring to the transformation that occurs. In the realisation process the transformation is defined as a "real transformation (RT)" which is a transformation from "possible" to "real". In the actualisation process the transformation is defined as an "actual transformation (AT)" which is a transformation from "virtual" to "actual". In the real transformation, we are given an output first as a real form, and then we imagine the possibility as input, from the real form as an output. For example, when we make a car as a product, all specifications are previously defined. The process to realise the product is to design the process on how to make the product as a given objective, and to define the most suitable materials as inputs. In other words, RT focuses on the "how" not the "what". In contrast, in the actual transformation, there is first an input, as virtuality, and the output cannot be seen explicitly—though the output as actuality will appear through the process of actualisation. To make this complex idea a bit more accessible let us look at the eyes as an example. Although the eyes manifested themselves in the process of evolution, the function of eyes was not clearly known before they became actualised. Of course, there was a need for eyes previously, yet the eyes were not designed, rather they were being shaped through the process of evolution. In other words AT does not focus on "how" but on the "what". Hence, the input is 'virtual' in the process of actualisation and it is 'possible' in the process of realisation. What car is actually produced is a selection of hindsight as a possibility of design.

This difference between "actualisation" and "realisation" also corresponds with the difference between "soft" and "hard". In the "hard" approach, the best alternative (objective) is selected amongst possibilities and carried out (realised). In the "soft" approach we accommodate our individual actualities which means the so-called best accommodation is not the guaranteed outcome. Furthermore, this accommodation can not reach a final stage, in a sense, because it is always in the process of actualising its evolution. We call this kind of accommodation an accommodation attached by the indefinite article. On the other hand, the pure "realisation" is impossible in the real world because an unexpected output can be realised in the process. In the real world, the process of realisation and actualisation happens at the same time within a dual relationship. We can only separate them analytically. In the final instance we can see SSM as action in the reality level that is, accompanied by the cultural change and attitude change of people in organisation as its actual outcome. The typical example is the use of SSM in the Shell group. For example they reported that when Shell applied SSM to the transformation of one of its organisation, both the innovation of the structure (restructuring), and the process (business process to re-engineering, so called BPR), were seen as real transformations, and the innovation of the mission or raison d'être of the organisation (re-orientation) happened at the same time as change in actuality.

It is our contention that this power of actualisation embodied in the SSM is the key to deal with the human
development process in South Africa. In other words, in order to build team-work with trust in organisations, the actualisation process which accommodates the participants actuality, is required prior to the realisation of team-work with trust. In the "hard" approach organisations tend to analyse the facts of the current problem situation without trust. Yet, most organisations do have an ideal conception of trust which they then try and develop by teaching skills for trust relationship building as a separate activity to the current attempts to solve the problem situation at hand. In contrast, the "soft" approach, as embodied in the SSM, tends to seek accommodation of participants views as an integral part of the problem solving process. In this approach trust is not the explicit intention yet it is the definite outcome of the process—in other words a very welcome side effect.

Further, it is also our contention that this approach is a Japanese way of teamwork building. It does not work well for team-work building to teach skills of team-work. Rather, it is necessary for the team work building to discuss people's world views of their own situation informally, behind the scene as it were, in the way the Japanese do in Karaoke-bar after five. In other words, any discussions and courses on skills are in vain unless people already share the context. The context here is nothing but actuality. The "hard" approach tends to define the content and to implement it by force in the context of actuality, which has various cultures 'already there' behind the scene. Thus the style of the "hard" approach repels the local people and creates a feeling of distrust towards the solution with a resulting lack of a participatory consciousness. In contrast, the "soft" approach tends to guide the participants to shape the content through the process of sharing the context, and not a content previously defined. The content is not given but actualised by the participants themselves. As a result of this process the participants see the action plans as content of a participation in the actual. Such participatory consciousness in the actuality cannot happen through the "hard" approach, which tends to analyse the ideal solution scientifically and then realise it.

We will now proceed to try and show how the Contextualised SSM functions in the case of trust and team building in the South African Bank

**Case Description**

**Course Schedule and Objectives**

The participation in the case consisted of two sessions. The first was the SSM course, where the participants experienced and learned the foundations of SSM and created their own action plans. The second was the follow up course, where the participants reflected on the outcome of their SSM based on action plans in their organisation. This stage involved interviews with the participants six months after the original course.

The objective of the SSM intervention in the Bank was to improve trust and consequently enhance team work among middle managers in a South African bank by using SSM and Japanese management techniques, in order to introduce new flexible working practices, improve motivation and transform the culture of the bank.

**Description of the Course**

In this section, we will try to describe the process of the SSM course (Session I), and the follow-up course by interview (Session II) using the seven-stage model of SSM shown in Figure 1 (Ref. 18). The description is divided into two parts: first part is a description of the various stages of the course, followed by comments on the course by the facilitator. Here, we have to note that the facilitator's comments are not based on emotional feeling but rather on 'deep' comprehension that emerges from the actual experience of the SSM course as an involved participant. With regard to this kind of "feeling", Kimura (p175) notes:

"The first attempt at tackling this question phenomenologically was carried out by Binswanger and Minkowski. Binswanger directed his attention to the so-called "feeling-diagnosis" (Gefühldiagnose) and in contrast with this intuitive knowledge of a schizophrenic patient employed also the usual clinical-diagnostic procedures of establishing pathognomonic symptoms. This, one does not diagnose actually according to, but with, feeling, i.e. every way of perception which has nothing in common with "feeling" in the sense of sensual or emotional feeling other than the word. Feeling here is a very specific experience of the act of perception of the other (Aktierlebnisse der Fremdwahrnehmung)."
Self Introduction by Using Rich Picture (RP)

Each participant drew and presented their own RP as a self-introduction of their situation—at this stage the participants re-thought their situations. The pictures manifested many of the issues from their situations, such as problems in the work place, friction between work and home life (especially in the case of women), their difficulties in accommodating customers, and so forth. They were aware that the issues drawn in their RPs were different from those of other participants. In the cases of women participants, it may be noted that they tend to draw themselves at the centre of the picture.

Facilitator Comments: I felt that the atmosphere of the course ‘softened’ during the presentation of RPs. The participants had not known each other before they met on the course, because they came from different departments of the Bank. However, they became more familiar with each other through the presentation. Through the presentation the first hints of unindividualised private intersubjectivity became apparent as they became aware of each other’s actuality as expressed in their RPs.

After finishing the self-introduction using RPs, the twenty participants were divided into four groups and took up the following themes for discussion:

- Group 1: Role of Experts
- Group 2: Mission Statements
- Group 3: Multi-Skilling
- Group 4: Capacity Building

The Flow of the SSM Course

In line with the SSM methodology (Figure 1), each group drew the situation of their theme on a RP, formulated root definitions (RD), built conceptual models (CM) from the root definitions, and created a comparison table (CT) for comparison of models and real situations. A lecture was conducted before this work was done and the participants followed it with group work. The presentation of the outcome of the course and the process of accommodation were carried out groupwise. The process of each workshop is described in the order of RP, RD, CM, CT and group presentation.

Rich Picture: People in each group drew the theme they had defined by themselves on RP. In some groups, RPs drawn by each person were combined into a group’s RP, while in other groups, the leader of the group drew an RP based on group member’s views of the situation of the theme. In both the cases, members of the groups soon realised the difference in their views and conducted in depth discussions on them. As expressed by one participant: “the SSM approach brings other world views to the fore when talking about a problem situation, it enriches the discussion and forces the persons to articulate their world view which is quite often unarticulated and yet permeates the discussion.” The group leaders tended to draw RP that respected the difference of views: “SSM is remarkable, in that, it forces us to confront the different world views and consciously choose one or combine ideas from a variety of those world views.”

Facilitator Comments: At this stage, the participants were interested in exploring the situation by vigorously expressing their individual views. It could be pointed out that each group came to have an individual colour or character. Some groups were very aggressive, and they had strong intention to recreate the bank’s new mission statement, while other groups were passive, as they had to compromise in order to create an accommodated view on their RP. However, in every group, people discussed their views co-operatively and seriously listened to each other’s views. This is in contrast to the typical Western style where participants tend to suppress each other’s view with aggressive debate. The attitude of discussion in the groups was very close to the Japanese one.

Root Definition: In the process of creating an RD, the discussion style differed from that of an RP. Because RD’s had to be written in the format: “a system to do X (what) by means of Y (how) in order to Z (why)”, the discussion was more concrete rather than the ambiguous sort of analysing mode found during the RP stage.

In this stage the discussion focused on “why” and “how” rather than “what”. They had already attained some degree of accommodation about “what” during the discussion of the RPs. As such they appreciated “why they do X” or “how they do Y”. However, at times, they had to re-think “what” because “what”, “why” and “how” were still rather ambiguous concepts when they tried to express their actuality in the process of accommodating each other’s views. They then conducted the CATWOE analysis. The CATWOE analysis means the participants
Facilitator Comments: In the course the participants used various SSM techniques such as the "what, how, why" formulation of CATWOE. They could accommodate "what can be seen in the situation" easily, yet not the "why they had to do the what." This may be because the participants were mostly the middle managers of each division, who already had some degree of accommodation about their theme. However, about the question of "why" they had different views. The question of Weltanschung (W) in the CATWOE analysis was very useful for them to re-think their prejudiced views. The process of accommodating the 'W' in the RD is a very exciting experience. They often had lengthy discussions and would then suddenly, almost in an instant, and simultaneously agree on the "why." It is as if the unindividualised private intersubjectivity suddenly emerges out of nowhere. Such moments of shared meaning seem to make their team-work and mutual trust leap forward. It was very insightful when one black participant commented in the tea break after the discussion: "I am now starting to see how we create team-work."

Conceptual Model: After a RD had been formulated, a CM was built of the system named in the RD, by using 7±2 verbs.

Facilitator Comments: Although, the teamwork in groups had considerably improved, the tendency towards compromise rather than accommodation manifested itself. The tendency towards compromise to create a model as quickly as possible, (some expressed it as over-accommodation), resulted in the view that creating a model was the objective of this stage, rather than accommodating each other's view. The CM technique for creating a model is often difficult for the beginners. This manifested in some of the participants focusing on how to create a coherent model from the RD, while ignoring the other aspects. The discussion also tended to be on the reality level (how to do it) rather than on the actuality level. This sense of awkwardness is clear from the following comments: "I would suggest that more of the examples used should be aligned to the work situation of the companies receiving training. The course should incorporate the complexity and diversity of work done by various divisions’; also: “Explain the at-work exercises to be closer via a simple practical example.” It seems necessary to consider adjusting the timetable of the course to allow more time for this stage.

Comparison Table: The aim of the CT is to facilitate learning from the difference between the model and the real situation. The model should ‘belong’ to the group as a reflection of their unindividualised private intersubjectivity. If the discussion in the modelling stage does not allow for the accommodation to be cemented then the comparison can in fact turn out to be a comparison of a real model with a perceived real situation. This will not lead to any learning (as was discussed above). The comparison is done by comparing every activity in the model (usually expressed by 7±2 verbs) with every current action in the real situations which the activity in the model indicates. By this stage, since accommodation within each group had been attained to some degree, the attention of the participants was concentrated on the work itself. A leader was selected in each group and he filled up the CT as directed by other members.

Facilitator Comments: The CT stage is one of the most important stages of SSM because the participants learn much from the difference between the model, which expressed their actuality, and the real situation. The difference between actuality and reality is a good source of learning because in order to live in reality, people have to reconcile their actuality and reality. In this course, I felt, that quiet learning occurred among the
participants, in other words, they internalised their learning individually. However, more interestingly, in the next stage as I will describe, I could see explicit learning, not in individuals but in groups.

**Group Presentation:** Each group made presentation of both the outcome of the course, that is, PP, RD, CM and CT, and the process of accommodation in discussions between groups, expressing the group’s accommodation to the other groups. Interestingly, if the presenter faced difficulty in answering questions from other groups, they found support from their group members. In doing so, the accommodation of the group was enhanced, despite the challenges posed to it by the questions from other groups. While the group tried to defend its position, it also tried to accept the comments concerning the technical problems of its model, and attempted to use them in correcting and modifying the model. I felt the trust relationships between groups were emerging as a result of such an interaction of teaching and learning.

**Facilitator Comments:** This stage was very exciting for everyone. First, all the participants learned how the other groups had accommodated. Secondly, there was a strong participatory consciousness, with each group defending their positions. In this stage there was teamwork within the groups. However, it was also important that teamwork between groups developed. Compared with the learning in the discussions within a group, more dynamic learning could occur in the next stage, as will be analysed later.

**Creation and Presentation of Action Plan (Individual work)**

In this stage the participants individually created action plan from their experiences of the course, including models and comparison tables, which they were going to use in taking action in their own departments. They had to consider their own organisational unit’s culture and their particular circumstances in the organisation in order to create appropriate plans. They reconsidered their accommodated models using the SSM way of thinking. Again they had to reconcile reality and actuality. When they made their presentations one sensed that they were confident with their action plans because the plans had been accommodated and deeply explored during the course.

**Facilitator Comments:** The action plans differed depending on the maker’s position in the organisation and their particular job. Some had to seek the approval of supervisors to carry out their plans, while others faced with few constraints because they were senior managers. However, in both cases, they clearly emphasised that this SSM methodology could be applied to accommodate subordinates and supervisors as indicated by the following comments: “...can be applied immediately in my personal life and work situation. ...Most important thing learned was a new dimension to problem solving - not just a technical exercise - but through dialogue and engaging with others we can achieve a common solution. ...Here is a relatively easy and “fun” way of achieving integration - yet highly logical and structured, which will produce excellent results and will ensure implementation...” These comments showed that SSM had been internalised by the participants.

**Reflection of the Course: Comments of Participants**

The last session of the last day of the course was for the participants to reflect on the course. This was carried out by asking every participant how they had felt about the course. Prior to this stage, they completed questionnaires on the course. Nevertheless, the individual discussion is much more interesting than the simple written comments, because the participants tended to express their views from the actuality level. In this case, most participants were excited at the experience they had during the course, and talked enthusiastically about their desires to apply SSM in their own situations. As is clear from the following comments: “...can help to solve many of our inter-cultural problems (management problems)...will be of great benefit to speed up understanding amongst the different cultural groups. It also assists with the building of a team, bringing people together...can therefore encourage and accommodate diversity in organisations which will enrich the culture of the organisation. ...The methodology is not rigid and can constantly accommodate changes in the circumstances. ...in my opinion could result in better and more holistic results in problem solving. ...The SSM may prove to be very useful to help me address a number of complex management problems”. There was a surge of enthusiasm for the team-work with trust by this stage. Mostly because the participants acquired some learning from the course which they could be expected to apply
in their own organisations and incidentally, they were relieved to complete the three-day course. After reading every member’s comments, Professor Checkland, who instructed this whole course, addressed the final comments. His final address was met by a spontaneous and rapturous applause. At that moment we were sharing in the same actuality that emerged from an unknown place—an implicitly ‘there’ shared actuality.

Facilitator Comments — This final stage was the most important stage of the course. It is no exaggeration to say that the success or failure of this stage was the key to the whole course. In other words, the learning and experiences which arose in the course came together into actuality, and were shared with each other. In this case, the actualisation was stronger than expected. Most of the participants were excited to be able to accommodate each other and create teamwork with trust. All indications and comments, both written and spoken, supported this conclusion.

Follow-up Course

Individual interviews with the participants who had attended the main course were carried out six months later. One of the aims of the interviews was to reflect on the outcomes of the actions taken in their own organisation based on the action plans and their experiences of SSM. Another aim of the interview was to learn from the experience of their realisation of the plans, in other words, whether their actions had been successful or not. They could learn from the experience and this learning could be effective in creating the next action plans. As stated earlier while describing the background SSM is a cyclic process of “actualisation” and “realisation” through accommodation and learning. These interviews were meant to help the second cycle of “actualisation” by the learning from the “realisation” based on the first cycle of “actualisation.”

The results of the interviews were also very exciting. Every interviewee was pleased to see us (facilitator team) again and spoke with us for a long time about their experience using SSM in their departments. Most people who had participated the previous course applied SSM in their departments as a communication tool for their sharing information with subordinates and supervisors. One participant applied SSM not only to those inside their departments but also outsiders such as customers and suppliers. One of them told us that he tried to use SSM in order to understand the actual needs of customers. Generally, they could comprehend the essence of SSM from the realisation process in their organisation rather than the actualisation process in the previous collective course. This showed that SSM is a methodology which bridged “actuality” and “reality” as a mediation and a device for continuous learning for both individuals and groups.

Learning from the Case

In this South African case, where the SSM was applied to team building and the improvement of trust in the organisation, many lessons were learnt, in particular the different ways in which the African participants of the course used SSM in contrast to the Western or Japanese use of SSM (Table 1).
First, it was felt that the African participants comprehended their situations emotionally, attaching 'themselves' to the Rich Picture (RP) they had drawn. In contrast, the typical Western users of SSM are more objective or logical, detaching themselves, while the Japanese comprehend the situation as a reflection on themselves. Secondly, there were differences with respect to their understanding of 'what' the systems models were. The typical Western uses of SSM call them conceptual models. For them the system models are cognitive models. The models show them how they see the real world. In contrast, the participants of this course regarded the system models as expressions of their desires or wills, in other words, the expression of what they wanted to be. This notion of African participants is very close to that of the Japanese, who see the model as an expression of actuality. Of course, the notion of the model depends on the way they comprehend the situation. If they comprehended the situation more emotionally, the model becomes a more emotional expression of their actuality. Therefore, when they accommodated the models, it was expected to result in the building of stronger trust relationship between them.

Thirdly, with respect to their style of accommodation: for the typical Western user of SSM, accommodation is the creation of explicit shared world views of individuals on the reality level. In the case of South Africans it was felt that they had found an identity that already existed. This is very close to the Japanese style of accommodation. In considering whether the creation of shared meaning or the discovery of existed meaning is what is taking place, Lash (p.163) points out:

"Bellah and his colleagues usefully juxtapose this intersubjective solipsism to classical friendship described by Aristotle, in which friendship rested in obligations not just between friends but to a wider community of practice of shared activities with particular standards and ends. And perhaps this is a clue to the question of meaning in contemporary reflexive communities. That is, we should not so much ask question of the creation of meaning but look for the meaning that is already there. A number of German thinkers have contrasted two notion of 'experience': Erlebnis, which is subjective, and Erfahrung, which is more public and also connotes, for example, being 'experienced' in say a trade. The point is that perhaps we already live in what is or just an Erlebnis- but also an Erfahrungsgesellschaft. The points that perhaps in various subcultures, in various practices that we reflexively commit ourselves to, the meaning is already there, already inscribed in the practices" (Emphasis added)

In our context, the distinction between "Erlebnis" and "Erfahrung" corresponds to our notion of actuality and reality. Erlebnis can be said to be actual experiences and "Erfahrung" can be said to be real experiences.

Therefore, in the process of accommodation, strong actualisation occurred among the African participants, while Western people tend to only share meaning on the rational reality level. The clear evidence of this distinction is that the process of accommodation of African people was accomplished with "joy", whereas for typical Western users of SSM "tolerance" is needed in order to accommodate each other's views. In other words, they feel they have to compromise their world views. This South African case also tells us that the African people expressed their joy explicitly, while, though the Japanese accommodate on the actuality level like the Africans, it is rather ambiguous and implicit in comparison.

Fourthly, with regard to the discussion style: I feel that the African participants tended to discuss cooperatively. In contrast the typical Western participants tended to suppress their world views and solve the conflict, as though they were taking part in a debate. However, it would be dangerous to generalise about the whole of South Africa. There was a perception that they were already motivated to accommodate in order to build team-work. Hence, they participated in the course with a strong consensus to have to collaborate. There was a tendency for the white participants to over-accommodate the black participants, in what seemed an effort to compensate past failures. The South Africans differed from the Japanese in their accommodation, in that they tended to show more individualism. For example, some participants were unfamiliar with accommodation within groups. One of the reasons for this situation may be that some of the participants have been educated within Western individualism systems, so it is very difficult for them to accommodate on the actuality level with collective identity such as the Japanese.

Finally, with respect to learning style, the dynamism between individual learning in groups and learning between groups could also be seen in the course; though dynamism can hardly be judged as a characteristic of the African people. In the group presentation stage there was dialogue between the groups rather than interrogation. This is where learning between groups occurs. This learning is different from both the Western individual learning and the individual groups. This inter-
group learning draws upon the unindividualised private intersubjectivity already present in the groups.

In consequence of the phenomena of dynamic learning, we had better think about the degree of actuality, such as analytically individual actuality, group actuality, national actuality, etc. If we suppose the degree of actuality, it is easy to explain the competition between departments within a company, because there can also be some learning between groups of departments. Japanese companies have been making use of this kind of learning in order to build employee capacity.

New insights were also drawn from the interviews which were conducted during the follow-up sessions, six months after the course. Normally, SSM courses finish at the planning level and do not follow the application of SSM on the job. In other words, our reinterpretation of SSM includes the actualisation process, which creates action plans designed to improve the situation. In this SSM the actualisation process is half of the whole SSM process. This SSM combines the actualisation process for planning and the realisation process for action with each other. The interviews confirmed that learning had occurred during the realisation process. Most participants of the course had made use of SSM in their own departments and enjoyed the benefits of this action, namely they improved their situations and at the same time, they added learning to their world views as actuality. Most of them actualised their learning from the realisation and were ready to again apply SSM for the next stage. Thus, it seems that our re-definition of SSM can be justified to be sensible and legitimate from the learning gained in this case.

Implication for Development Problems: Reconciliation between the Global and the Local

A big wave of globalisation is currently sweeping over developing countries. Not too far into the 21st century, a basic infrastructure and constitution will be shared in most areas of the world, in spite of differences in the speed with which this occurs. For example, in Eskimo villages in Alaska or provincial villages in Africa, people will be usually using mobile phones for communication, and the information infrastructure, such as the Internet, will cover the entire world. The framework of the institutions accompanying these information technologies will share almost the same standards all over the world. However, aside from questions as to whether the technologies themselves are good or not, the problem is how people in less developed countries will use these technologies and institutions. In our context, the technologies or the institutions themselves are the "contents" as "hard", while how they use them is "context" as "soft".

There are three alternative reactions to this problem. First, people adopt modern Western globalisation, with the Western context, namely the Western way of thinking. If they do so, most of the local cultures, habits, and popular conventions will be destroyed. Thus, the world becomes a unitary cultural society. Second, people prevent the high wave of globalisation by building walls against it, they will attempt to preserve their pure culture within these walls, like some Arabian countries, and Japan during the Edo era. However, it is likely that the wave of globalisation could invade these countries from every direction, finding small holes in the walls. Therefore, it is impossible for them to preserve their cultures completely. The third alternative is, people have to manage to globalisation and preserve the conventional local culture.

When non-western people adopt Western technologies, institutions, and culture into their society these are accompanied by their rationalism or their ideology. We can easily see this in the management styles of South East countries or South Korea or Taiwan, which have been strongly affected by the American way of management.

However, only Japan seems to have digested Western civilisations by reinterpreting them in its own context. Thus, after the World War II Japan has been finding its own original path of economic development. Some Western researchers have commented on this path. For example, R. Robertson \textsuperscript{21}(p.102) notes:

"A major example of great contemporary relevance, which I have already mentioned, has to do with the way in which Japan acquired the substantive theme of universality through its encounters with and modifications, along nativistic lines, of Confucianism and Mahayana Buddhism. Japan's crystallisation of a form of 'universalistic particularism' since its first encounter with China has resulted in its acquiring paradigmatic, global significance with respect to the handling of the universalism - particularism issue. Specifically, its paradigmatic status is inherent in its very long and successive history of selective
incorporation and syncretization of ideas from other cultures in such a way as to particularise the universal and so to say, return the product of that process to the world as a uniquely Japanese contribution to the universal. (Emphasis added)

In our context, this universalism and particularism can be replaced by globalism and localism. It is easy to understand the attractions of transferring the Japanese way of developing to the less developed countries, although questions must be asked as to whether the Japanese way can be transformed. Therefore, it is worthwhile to consider this question; to examine the similarity between the Japanese way of adopting foreign methods and the way in which SSM was applied in South Africa.

As already stated earlier, we have two types of methodologies to deal with issues in less developed countries, namely "hard" and "soft" approaches. The "hard" approaches claim that when foreign methods are adopted by less developed countries, solutions are sought to adapt them to the current context. In other words, the local context is forced to meet the ideal context. However, since this local context involves not only the logical but also the emotional, friction between the contents, such as technology, and the context, such as culture, arises. The "hard" approaches never attempt to deal with such emotional friction. Thus, the "hard" approaches cannot be used in this case, which involves emotional aspect like "trust".

In contrast, "soft" approaches, especially, Checkland's SSM makes much of people's emotional aspects, and can create accommodated action plans in which people express their actuality, participating in the decision process. People can interpret the civilisation (technologies or institutions) in their own culture or context as in author's redefinition of SSM. SSM is a methodology to bridge "reality" and "actuality", in other words SSM can reconcile "contents" as reality and "context" as actuality. We became aware of the similarity between SSM and the Japanese way of management, from experiences of SSM courses held with Japanese participants.

In other words, the methodology which Robertson refers to in the previous quotation of "Japanese Crystallisation of a form of 'universalistic particularism'”, is provided by SSM in an elaborated way—although, Checkland never considered the Japanese way of thinking in developing SSM. Therefore, if the reconciliation between "global" and "local" undertaken by the Japanese is valid, the main issue for the less developed countries, that is, the problem of "global" and "local" can be replaced by the problem of "real" and "actual" as indicated by our interpreting SSM.

In summary, in order to deal with globalisation, it is very useful for the less developed countries to refer to the Japanese way of adopting other civilisations, that is, people who try to accept Western civilisations have to re-interpret them in their own culture or context, namely they need to actualise them. Japan's case tells us we cannot manage globalisation and maintaining local culture, without the actualisation process such as provided by SSM.

Concluding Remarks

What is the development problem? Does it exist in the real situation? The question itself would be a "hard" approach. We should ask "how the situation can be seen?" One of the answers is provided by Giddens (p.188):

"On the larger scale, globalisation cannot today simply be understood as Westernisation. There is no longer any appropriate term for 'developing societies' and the idea of 'development studies' loses its cogency. On all sides, even in the poorest area of the globe, we see mixed process of development, underdevelopment and overdevelopment. In the societies of the industrialised world, characteristics previously associated with 'underdevelopment' become common place. Cultural diaspora, as Lash observes, are no longer confined to the rich. In dress, in religious and political orientation, in music, people in the poorest ghettos link themselves to transnational 'communities of taste' in an active way".

As Giddens indicates, it can be said that we face the global / local problem rather than the problems of development. That is, it is not only a problem for developing countries but one facing all countries. There are many problems drawn from the modernisation or globalisation in the world summarised by the lost "actuality". In order to get over these problems, we should focus on non-western thinking rather than that of those who invented modernisation in the first place. The methodology to deal with these problems could be found in non-western cultures, such as African, Asian,
Eastern, etc. One example of the way to deal with modernisation or globalisation is the way Japan has been taking since ancient times. Japan took other cultures, reinterpreting them in her own context, namely, "actualisation". Referring to the Japanese case, the global/local problem can be re-articulated as the reality/actuality problem.

However, conventional studies could not have dealt with "actuality" because they did not have the methodology to deal with it. SSM is a methodology that is able to deal with "actuality". Thus, we redefined SSM using Kimura's notions of "reality" and "actuality", and applied them to this case. The case "team-work building with trust" was one of the best cases with which to evaluate SSM from the "actuality" point of view. What we have learned from the case is that there are various ways to introduce "actuality". It can be manifested through using the SSM and the South African people created their own way of using the SSM. This seems to us to be the key that is required in order to reconcile "global" and "local"—to reconcile the "real" and the "actual".

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References and Notes

1 For example, "Building Foundations for Development (the Bank, 1997)" notes that "the Bank's facilitating role is in promoting the optimal mobilisation and flow of resources, within a broad framework of relationship with key role players at all levels. This is pursued through collaboration with donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Community based organisation (CBOs) and other partners at the international, national and provincial levels.


9 P. Checkland’s position is not both Western and Japanese, it is rather neutral.


11 Normally the English word 'compare' means the comparison of things at the same level or of the same category, hence the saying "comparing apples with apples". However, in this reinterpretation of the SSM it would be better to say 'learning from the differentiation' rather than 'learning from the comparison.'

12 In the Japanese culture this unindividuated private intersubjectivity is to some degree already present in as much as Japanese people's relationships are based on this type of trust.

13 This discussion is based on Deleuze and Kimura.


16 Weizsäcker claims the unity of action and cognition.

18 The description is focused on the process and not on the content because the facilitator for SSM is not a consultant for content but for process.


(a) Bomswanger L, *Welche Aufgaben ergeben sich für die Psychiatrie aus den Fortschritten der neueren Psychologie in Ausgewählte Vorträge und Aussitzte II*, Berne, 1924.

(b) Minkoiski E, *La Schizophrenie*, 1927.


GLOSSARY

**Comparison Stage** - In Soft Systems Methodology, stage 5, at which the expression of the problem situation is compared with the conceptual models of relevant systems.

**Conceptual Model** - A systemic account of a human activity system, built on the basis of that system’s root definition, usually in the form of a structured set of verbs in the imperative mood. Such models should contain the minimum necessary activities for the system to be the one named in the root definition. Only activities which could be directly carried out should be included - thus, admonishments such as “succeed” must be avoided. Conceptual models may be validated or justified only in terms of logic, not by mapping on to the real world, since they do not purport to describe the real world. They may, however, be compared with the formal system model in order to check that they are not fundamentally deficient.

**Human Activity System** - A notional purposive system which expresses some purposeful human activity, activity which could in principle be found in the real world. Such systems are notional in the sense that they are not descriptions of actual real-world activity (which is an exceptionally complex phenomenon) but are intellectual constructs; they are ideal types for use in a debate about possible changes which might be introduced into a real-world problem situation.

**Relevant System** - A human activity system which an investigator using soft systems methodology names as likely to yield insight in later stages of the study. For each relevant system a root definition is formulated and a conceptual model built.

**Rich Picture** - The expression of a problem situation compiled by an investigator, often by examining elements of structure, elements of process and the situation climate.

**Root Definition** - A concise, tightly constructed description of a human activity system which states what the system is; what it does is then elaborated in a conceptual model which is built on the basis of the definition. Every element in the definition must be reflected in the model derived from it. A well-formulated root definition will make explicit each of the CATWOE elements. A completely general root definition embodying CATWOE might take the following form:
A (...O...)-owned system which, under the following environmental constraints which it takes as given: (...E...), transforms this input (...) into this output (...) by means of the following major activities among others: (...), the transformation being carried out by these actors: (...A...) and directly affecting the following beneficiaries and/or victims (...C...).

The world-image which makes this transformation meaningful contains at least the following elements among others: (...W...)

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