A METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW OF THE TREATMENT OF INDIVIDUAL GOALS IN
SOME RECENT GERMAN SYSTEM APPROACHES TOWARDS MANPOWER PLANNING

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ABSTRACT
If manpower planning is considered as a (sub-)system within industrial organizations which contains a hierarchy of levels, one has to take into account a corresponding hierarchy of normative regulations. It is introduced as an explicit, normative proposition that manpower planning has to reconcile organizations' profitability and employees' individual needs and goals. An attempt is made to analyze some recent German manpower planning studies with special regard to the consideration of individual goals and their methodological treatment. In conclusion a dialogue-oriented approach to consider individual needs and goals in manpower planning systems is proposed.

INTRODUCTION

A short review of manpower planning studies shows that their treatment is justified by its growing importance. This is said under the aspect of economic efficiency. Besides that, a growing level of aspiration of the individuals towards an adequate employment is given as a reason for the increasing relevancy of manpower planning problems, e. g. in relationship with the demand for a better quality of the working life. Legal prescriptions often include both, resulting in actual restrictions of the corporate scope of activities.

This is accompanied by a high popularity of system approaches in the area of manpower planning. There are some doubts that the system approach is able to fulfil both requirements, an increased efficiency and a better quality of employment.
Especially the question of an equivalent integration of individual goals seems to be a problem because of some methodological qualities, which are inherent in the system approach.

This will be the base for our analysis of some recent German studies of manpower planning. The leading question of the entire argument will be: which methodological aspects become relevant if the systems approach is used to integrate economic efficiency and individual goals simultaneously.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SYSTEM APPROACH IN GENERAL AND ITS METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

"The distinctive qualities of modern organization theory are its conceptual-analytical base, its reliance on empirical research-data, above all, its synthesizing, integrating nature. These qualities are framed in a philosophy which accepts the premise that the only meaningful way to study organizations is as a system." (Scott, Mitchell 1972, p. 55)

Not only in organization theory, but also in sociology (Parsons 1964, Homans 1950, Luhmann 1968), in psychology, especially the approach of "gestalt psychology" (Koehler 1929, Lewin 1948) and in management science (Simon 1960) there are many advocates but also critics of the system approach as an attempt to analyze relationships of high complexity. In contrast to other scientific theories, conceptions of system-theory claim (1) a holistic view, (2) an interdisciplinary language and (3) an explicit interest in design (Schanz 1975, p. 1 - 22).

"... the principle of wholeness, of organization, and of the dynamic conception of reality becomes apparent in all fields of science" (Bertalanffy 1952, p. 176). The compulsion, to choose totalities or systems as the object of scientific efforts to solve problems, is growing with the same degree as the complexity of the problem areas (problem-inducing parts of reality) causes the danger of increasing unintended side-effects of intended actions. At the same time the complexity of real systems forces the scientist to abstract and to concentrate on the elements and relationships, which are regarded as relevant for the actual analysis. Such a selectivity, which is led by the (subjective) research interest, probably is inherent in every scientific approach. This becomes a special problem for the system approach, if its view is restricted on direct and manifest phenomena, following a black box consideration, which is not able to produce a progress in scientific knowledge. The progress which should be reached by a consideration of totalities, then - caused by an inadequate pro-