4.1 The relevance of inter-systemic relationships

The understanding of a phenomenon by an observing subject assumes the activation of a cognitive process that, thanks to the identification, consolidation and use of conceptual schemes, leads to complication and so to creation of a model, out of what previously would have appeared as a blur and a number of indeterminate events.

What is important is that there is no objective reality, but a reality as a result of a process of perception which presupposes the simultaneous presence of the following elements:

1. An observing subject.
2. One or more purposes of investigation.
3. A specific context.
4. A time period relating to the investigation.

The change, also only relative to the perspective of the observing subject and the change of the purposes of investigation, has significant implications for the conclusions where the analysis of a specific phenomenon could arrive and, in the case of a specific context, in a given time. To illustrate this, it is assumed that the observed object is a specific company operating in Italy.

The different entities that may be interested in the survival of the company, although for different purposes, represent, for this interest, partial and several observation points from which it is possible to understand the evolutionary dynamics of the viable system.

In addition to the subject, either directly or indirectly involved in the survival of the company (we should think of the entrepreneur or
manager, or the supplier or customer, or also the employee), there are other categories of subjects who may have reason to observe the structure and the behavioral dynamics of the viable system enterprise, for documentary research, statistical, or scientific purposes.

It is evident, therefore, that the observation and study of any area or phenomenon connected with the company investigated, does not concern only the choice or the delimitation of the research field, but it requires qualification/justification of the specific observation point, or of the perspective of the researcher involved in the survey.

This implies a relativization of the search result in terms of the different conclusions to which it is possible to come. Having assumed that the object to be observed is a specific environment in our case, the survey may reach different conclusions if it is performed from two different vantage points with their different purposes: considering, for instance, the opinion of the researcher and of that of the governing body.

In the case of the scholar, the purpose of the investigation is to be as faithful as possible to the representation of the entities, in the context and of relationships intervening among them, in order to draw conclusions about the logical behavioral and evolutionary dynamics of the business taken into consideration.

Of course, as it has been said, the cultural matrix to which the student belongs, induces different perspectives on the conduct and results of the study. It is possible to verify that the student of political economy analyzes the main macroeconomic variables, and among these companies as well, in order to arrive at the general direction of economic policy; the student of industrial economics observes companies in order to determine the laws of operation, the trends at the macro level and in relation to specific sectors.

Finally, the student of business administration tries to learn the laws of operation of companies at the micro level in order to determine the conditions for survival in a specific context.

According to the perspective adopted here, that of the governing body, however, the survey effort is justified by the purpose of collecting a set of information – both quantitatively and qualitatively significant—that may merge into a model of representation of the context useful for the functional decisions necessary to the survival of the governed system. A proper representation and analysis of the context is, in fact, the necessary condition, since the evolutionary dynamic of the business system can take place in conditions of consonance and, at the limit of resonance with the context, thus implementing their own probabilities of survival.