



IFSR Newsletter

Official Newsletter of the International Federation for Systems Research

Guest Editor: Silvia Zweifel

Editor-in-Chief: Gerhard Chroust

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Dear Readers!

I want to thank our Guest Editor, Silvia Zweifel from Argentina, for putting this NEWSLETTER together: It is devoted to Latin America and the systems activities there. As can be seen, many activities of wide interest take place there, but at times they do not receive the necessary attention.

You will also find two very important announcements in the Newsletter: the next IFSR Board Meeting is taking place on April 2, 2016, and our 2016 IFSR Conversation, April 3 – 8, 2016. A report on the IASCYS Conference in Chengdu, China, completes this issue.

With IFSR's best wishes for a successful New Year.

I remain

yours truly

Gerhard Chroust



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Guest Editor's Introduction

Silvia Zweifel

Silvia Zweifel is an active participant of the Systems Thinking Community. An economist with long experience in the financial system in Argentina, currently she develops artsience narratives. Her last published book is "Tenues Hilos, entretienen vidas, traman destinos", and more recently she presented a work of artsience "The World of NAVIS UTOPIA" to envisioning desirable futures and promote individual-collective learning.



Getting to know each other

This special issue is devoted to picture the spreading of Systems Thinking in Latin America. A network growing with great potential; seeds are maturing and challenges are ahead.

In the following pages the reader will find a sample of nodes of this net: GESI - Integrated Systems Study Group Association; Group ECONOMÍA AMABLE; SDC System Dynamics Center/ITBA - Technological Institute of Buenos Aires; CEI Center of Interdisciplinary Studies/National University of Rosario; Vizer & Carvalho; IIGG - International Institute Galileo Galilei; SBSP - Brazilian Farming Systems Society; IAS - Andean Institute of Systems; The Latin American Chapter of the System Dynamics Society and ELAPDIS - The Latin American School of Systems Thinking and Design.

Much has been accomplished, although there is still room for improvement. Systems Approaches are gaining momentum since more Universities are including courses, seminars and programs, and the community is strengthening its inner liaisons. However there still is a low capacity to take advantage of systems concepts and methodologies to contribute with relevant impact.

We are moving forward. The IFSR new logo "Uniting the World of Systems Science" makes great sense in our highly interconnected world. Moreover, unity in diversity and diversity in unity are familiar ideas for all of us: key concepts in our world of fast growing complexities. In addition to putting the mission in its logo, the IFSR is running a quality project to assess where we are as the global community of scientists and practitioners that enlivens the IFSR and its member organizations. It will shed light on to where we are willing to go and how. Will we be able to recognize the richness of our planetary network? And develop the ability to engage in projects and activities to valuably contribute to the world we live in?

An organizational learning process is already taking place. Surely, answers will come up.

I am grateful the IFSR Board and to contributors for the opportunity to edit this special issue. I sincerely hope you enjoy the reading and find a new comprehension of the movement we are protagonists.

Silvia Zweifel



Systems Sciences in Latin America

ARGENTINA-Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires

GESI - Integrated Systems Study Group Asociation

Grupo de Estudio de Sistemas Integrados Asociación Civil
IFSR Member

José Luis Roces

GESI is a community of collective learning, a cooperative of knowledge and a laboratory of ideas. It is a non-profit association founded by Prof. Charles François aimed at studying and systemically solve the challenges posed by the growing complexity of today's world. Since 1974, it offers a space for the study, spreading and application of concepts and models related to the growing complexity of systems of any nature, ecological, and social.

It is the Argentine chapter of the ISSS (International Society for the Systems Sciences), a member of the IFSR (International Federation for Systems Research); of ALAS (Latin American Association of Systemics), and of ELAPDIS (Latin American School of Thinking and Systemic design).



Photo, from left to right: *Ernesto Grün, Enrique Herrscher, Gloria Nazer and Charles François.*

At present GESI accomplishes its purposes offering courses, workshops and other learning events, participating in conferences, meetings and networking with other institutions engaging in collaborative learning events, such as The Conversations of The Extreme South (Las Conversaciones del Extremo Sur) which are inspired by the IFSR Conversations model; ALAS regional meetings, organized by the Latin American Association of Systemics (Asociación Latinamericana de Sistemas) and the ELAPDIS annual workshop organized by the Latin American School of Thinking and Systemic Design (Escuela Latinoamericana de Pensamiento y Diseño Sistémico).

GESI enhances the possibilities to achieve its institutional goals through the GESI Groups: groups created and coordinated by GESI members that operate autonomously, favoring their flexibility and

freedom to liaise, often in joint projects or collaborative activities, with a wide range of actors/institutions. At present three of such groups are working actively:

The Group ECONOMÍA AMABLE promotes an economy kind to people and to nature by means of research-action: facilitates learning events; coordinates groups of co-creation of desirable futures; develops teams of innovative thinking and problem solving and enables meaningful conversations and appreciative inquiry using arts/science tools to enrich decision making processes.

The Group Sea (Grupo Mar) fosters an eco-systemic approach for a sustainable management of the Argentine waters and coasts. The group addresses this objective through a synergetic learning system which aims at contributing to the decision making process at all levels of action: educational, scientific, technological, economic, social, and political.

The Group Hologram (Grupo Holograma) shares the vision that the complex-systemic paradigm can make substantial contributions to the betterment of the quality of the educational system. The Group aims to leverage changes through training of “trainers” by means of workshops, seminars and courses and actively networking towards the dissemination of the systemic approach.

For the period 2015-2017, GESI's Board commits to:

- ❖ Train in systemic-complex thinking to address global-regional-local complex issues by using available technological possibilities.
- ❖ Promote GESI's activities and the GESI's groups.
- ❖ Expand GESI's presence at local-regional-planetary levels participating in conferences, meetings and seminars and through the WEB Site.
- ❖ Honor GESI's relationship and commitments to international institutions within the systems community.
- ❖ Expand and strengthen communication and design of joint projects among different nodes in Argentina's and the Latin American network.
- ❖ Promote consistency within GESI's declared paradigm and institutional goals.

Board members for the 2015-2017 period are: President: José Luis Rocés; VicePresident: Eva María Sarka; Secretary: Thelma Elisa Chisleanschi; Treasurer: María Teresa Barinotto; Deputy Member: Valeria Verónica Delgado; Substitute Member: Gladys N. Figueredo de Bassa; Auditor of Accounts: Antonio Anselmo Martino; Substitute Auditor of Accounts: Ricardo Barrera.

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ARGENTINA & URUGUAY - Buenos Aires & La Paloma, Rocha

Group ECONOMÍA AMABLE

Silvia Zweifel

The Group ECONOMÍA AMABLE emerged from collaborative interaction of two economists committed to foster sustainability from a positive angle. Having a very different background they took the opportunity to complement their experiences and talents to nurture the emergence of an economy kind to people and to nature, a society where human potential can flourish while preserving

Life. Each one in the Group develops professional activities on her own, taking advantage to add value through collaborative modalities when appropriate.

A recent case of interest is the institutional organization process of The Friends of the Coastal Lagoons Foundation ([Fundación Amigos de las Lagunas Costeras](#)), supported by Mechthild Adameit in La Paloma, Rocha, Uruguay. When it came to the moment of creating an inspiring institutional vision for the Foundation, Silvia Zweifel was invited to facilitate a special event. Both agreed on a design aiming to nurture conviviality among participants in a joyful and easeful encounter.

A vision has to be placed into a future scenario. To imagine a world it is necessary to think about key aspects and patterns of interaction behind its dynamics, which is not the usual activity for most people. A work of artscience served as a tool to foster the process: “The World of NAVIS UTOPIA” presents a scenario that points out that the seeds of a desirable future already exist. Since the work of art describes synthetically a whole world, it facilitates a systemic approach to the complexity involved in the issue to people of all walks of life, moreover if they are interested in a sustainable society and a flourishing culture.



Photo: Silvia Zweifel showing one piece of “The World of NAVIS UTOPIA”

The Friends of the Coastal Lagoons Foundation cares for a series of coastal lagoons, of particular ecological and biodiversity value, in Eastern Uruguay. The Foundation is the local member of the [LIVING LAKES](#) worldwide network of 104 organizations engaged in partnership to enhance the protection, restoration and rehabilitation of lakes, wetlands, and other freshwater bodies.

Friendship and caring for the lagoons and their environment was the origin of the institution, and



continues to be the attracting and binding motive to the Foundation: people with high ecosystemic consciousness and willingness to take action to care for the lagoons and its vitality. This resulted in an easygoing interaction flow to envision the LAGOONS as “A LIVING LEGACY”. Furthermore, at the event’s closing all participants expressed his/her intention for actions towards this shared vision.

Photo: Mechthild Adameit explaining the aim of the Meeting “To envision desirable futures”.

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ARGENTINA - Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires

ITBA (Tecnological Institute of Buenos Aires) - SDC (System Dynamics Center)

Instituto Tecnológico de Buenos Aires – Centro de Dinámica de Sistemas

Fabian Szulanski

ITBA is a prominent Engineering School in Buenos Aires, Argentina, offering undergraduate and graduate studies. Its System Dynamics Center focuses on making systems thinking salient in several institutional and executive education initiatives directed by Prof. Fabian Szulanski since 2005, when it was created.

During 2015, ITBA's SDC has delivered undergraduate courses related to systems thinking applied to value networks, and to entrepreneurial tools such as business models and innovation.

The System Dynamics Center delivered extracurricular workshops showcasing the intersection between systems thinking and design thinking as well, interacting with the Business and Systems Administration Department; Prof. Szulanski also delivered a Systems Thinking course to an automobile manufacturer in an in-company graduate course. This was a project-based learning course, and integrated content such as an introduction to the systemic viewpoint, causal loop mapping, systems archetypes and systemic leverage and interventions.



Photo: Prof. Fabian Szulanski (right) and his group

He designed and facilitated an innovation short course for an intrapreneurship program for a financial service institution, interacting with ITBA's Entrepreneurship Center. In that course, methodologies such as systems thinking, design thinking, and systematic inventive thinking were integrated.

Another contribution made was collaborating within a small team to an institutional initiative around educational innovation, which integrates interactive content creation with blended and flipped classroom learning models. Another activity carried by this small team was to do strategic foresight of educational trends, aiming to carry Idealized Design initiatives in the future.

Prof. Szulanski co-facilitated many World Climate and World Energy exercises which were developed by MIT's System Dynamics Group and Climate Interactive. He also created and co-developed a program which integrated generative dialogues to the aforementioned workshops. As a result he is co-writing an academic article focused on enhancing the World Climate exercise learning experience deployment and evaluation, aiming to publish it in the peer reviewed journal *Simulation & Gaming*.

During 2015, Prof. Szulanski has become a member of GESI (Grupo de Estudios de Sistemas Integrados Asoc.Civil) after two decades of interaction with this institution founded by Prof. Charles François.

As usual since 2005, Prof. Szulanski acted as referee in Latin American and international System Dynamics conferences and lately, he contributed short articles to mainstream Argentine newspapers: such as [La Nación](#) and [Cronista Comercial](#). The last one was included in a small Website dedicated to an event called "[Negocios del Futuro](#)" (The Future of Business).



In the future, ITBA'S System Dynamics Center will go on with its transdisciplinary value creation, integrating systems thinking with different frameworks and approaches, interacting with internal and external stakeholders of ITBA's ecosystem.

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ARGENTINA - Rosario, Santa Fe

CEI - Center of Interdisciplinary Studies, National University of Rosario

Centro de Estudios Interdisciplinarios- Universidad Nacional de Rosario

Saúl I. Fuks

There is a very active group related to Edgar Morin's Complex Thinking at Universidad Nacional de Rosario, the 3rd most populated City of Argentina. A Program for Complex Thinking was established on November of 2008 at Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of that University chaired by Prof. Dra Josefa J. García de Ceretto.

The overall objective of the Program launched in 2008 is to create a space for inter/transdisciplinary academic work for the study of complex thinking, teaching and research to address current university issues from this perspective.

Since the year 2013 the academic program of the CEI (Center for Interdisciplinary Studies) offers a Master degree in Systemic Thinking



chaired by Saúl Ignacio Fuks, PhD. in Clinical Psychology and Specialist in "Systemic Facilitation of Collective's Processes".

The focus of the program is the complexity of the interdisciplinary approach in human sciences and research activities, ranging from transformative social practices to interventions in organizational and/or community settings. The curriculum starts with the history of systems thinking and includes the postmodern productions about dialogical and collaborative conversations. On the other hand, research topics range from theoretical subjects to social interventions.

At present, activities are concentrated in courses, seminars and workshops.

Extracurricular activities are performed around specific issues. Among these are the "Metálogos": Appreciative Inquiry Encounters with people who are outstanding for their creativity in the systemic approach, aiming to disseminate innovative visions and give visibility to creative ideas or practices within the systems thinking world.

Plans for the year 2017 include a special designed Meeting on the subject of "Interdisciplinarity". The event has been declared of "Academic Interest" by the National University of Rosario. It aims to produce two participatory flows:

First, an update of the central themes in research and interdisciplinary practices; On the other hand, and of no less importance: generative contexts for dialogue between teams and different research approaches, interacting to improve the comprehension of the challenges involved in interdisciplinary work, and also offer visibility to innovative responses to these challenges.



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ARGENTINA - Santiago del Estero

IIGG - International Institute Galileo Galilei

Instituto Internacional Galileo Galilei

IFSR Member

Susana I. Herrera

The International Institute Galileo Galilei (IIGG) is the research unit of the Argentine Foundation for Talent and Ingenuity (FATI). This foundation is recognized as a non-formal higher-education institution. Therefore, in addition to research, FATI develops the following activities: higher education services,

consulting professional services, studies of regional culture, colleagues meetings -using conversations as an interactive methodology. FATI is a learning community; it studies the complex reality from a systemic approach and it produces new scientific knowledge based on new paradigms of the twenty-first century and on Santiago del Estero's culture.



Photo: *From left to right María Mercedes Clusella, Cecilia Cristina Lara, Pedro Antonio Luna, Susana Isabel Herrera and María Alejandra Santillán. Behind: Fabio Rafael Gallo and María Gabriela Mitre*

Currently, research in FATI is about the following issues:

- ❖ Systemic study of the culture of Santiago del Estero. The study is based on 12 substantized verbs representing the different aspects of this culture; the most important aspects are: knowledge, dance, songs, and doings (sic). The book "Santiagueñidad Siglo XXI" (ISBN 978-987-1754-81-6) was published in Spanish and English versions (<http://www.blueherons.net/multimedia-others.html>). And several contributions were presented in various national and international conferences. Systemic researches about an anonymous song book of Santiago del Estero have been conducted during 2015. These songs are based on the Latin heritage of the Spanish language; also studies on the "vidala" were conducted, a musical form based on ancient religious music; and finally traditional children's songs were systemically collected, for use in the kindergarten.
- ❖ The influence of ICT in learning and communication. The study refers mainly to the development of systemic tools useful to study and promote learning mediated by technologies. The impacts of technology in communication are also studied. A book about mobile-learning "Aprendizaje mediado por tecnologías móviles", ISBN 978-987-1676-18-7, was published. In addition, the main consultant of FATI, the expert Pedro Antonio Luna, has collaborated with the coordination of 3 international conferences about these topics; all of them took place in Huerta Grande, Córdoba, in 2015.
- ❖ Systems Science. Members of FATI have been studying for several years the relationship between Systems Theory, Systems Epistemology, and Systems Practice. Some of the results are: a) Heckhausen model was applied to the study of Systemic as a scientific discipline, b) a systemic epistemology called "Retama" was proposed; c) Systemic Retroprospectivación was proposed as a method to study complex phenomena.

One of the most important tasks of FATI consists in the diffusion of Systems Thinking. This is achieved through the participation in the teaching teams of the subjects "Systems Theory and Organizations" and "Research Methodology" in several universities in Santiago del Estero. In addition to that, there have also been outreach activities in various universities, by Pedro Antonio Luna, among which are:

- ❖ Course "Simbionomia. The map is not the territory". Open Iberoamerican University, Rosario, Argentina.
- ❖ Lecture in the "VIII University Conference on Health Information Systems", University Institute of Italian Hospital, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- ❖ Visits to universities: Instituto Balseiro (Patagonia Argentina), National University of Jujuy (Northwest Argentina), University of Sao Paulo (Brazil).

FATI maintains institutional ties with other Latin American systemic organizations: GESI - Grupo de Estudio de Sistemas Integrados Asoc. Civil (Integrated Systems Study Group Association), Buenos Aires, Argentina; the Brazilian chapter of ISSS, led by Dr. Dante Martinelli, San Pablo, Brazil; Instituto Andino de Sistemas, led by Dr. Ricardo Rodríguez Ulloa. FATI usually participates in important events such as Brazilian Congress of Systems (Brazil), and The Conversations of the Extreme South (Las Conversaciones del Extremo Sur).

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BRAZIL - Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul

Socioanalysis, a diagnostic device for intervention in organizations and communities

Eduardo Andrés Vizer

At the beginning of the 80ies at the Scientific Society of Buenos Aires, GESI was founded by Charles Francois as a study group dedicated to systems studies. At the same time I was working at the University of Buenos Aires, in charge of the new communications curriculum, where I founded a research group on community and organizational communication studies.

Since the 90ies the Group developed a systemic and communication research methodology which we named Socioanalysis. Its purpose is to realize diagnosis, intervention and social design of programs for communities and organizations, applying and developing the methodology to communities, neighbourhoods and organizations of all kinds. Socioanalysis consists in a socio-communicative device for research, presenting theoretical propositions and categories of analysis for ongoing research and diagnosis of organizational and community issues and problems, as well as the development of applied programs which we consider as an intervention method applicable to institutional and/or community development, information programs, educational and health projects, conflict solving, governance and social participation, communications and promotion of social capital.

The Group considers indispensable the realization of interdisciplinary research associating social practices to communication processes and vice versa. Communication processes are also the fundamental interaction devices through which human practices reproduce social relations, promoting and reorganizing the self-reproduction of a social system. In order to help collectives such

as communities, institutions, social and business organizations to build better environments, better living and working conditions, social research needs to integrate communication and information processes to the diagnosis and design of social and organizational programs.

At present I live and work in Brazil, teaching and applying Socioanalysis as organizational communication analysis for multiple organizations and institutions, both public and private, such as business, banks, government, research and development in community organizations. I published several books and multiple academic publications, some of them with my Brazilian colleague Helenice Carvalho. The first book on Socioanalysis was published by La Crujía in 2003 and 2006, translated to Portuguese and published in Brazil in 2011. Some of the publications are available on the Internet, including academia.edu, and in academic Journals of Spain, Germany, the United States, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, Chile and Argentina.



Photo: *Prof Eduardo Andrés Vizer*

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BRAZIL - Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul

SBSP - Brazilian Farming Systems Society

Sociedade Brasileira de Sistemas de Produção

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The SBSP - Brazilian Farming Systems Society (Sociedade Brasileira de Sistemas de Produção) launched its activities in 1993, and its purpose is to promote scientific exchange among its members coming from different backgrounds and working in agricultural research, extension and education. The SBSP aims to establish a critical debate about the application of the systems approach to the study and transformation of agricultural practices and rural development,

especially the development of family farming. The SBSP is the Brazilian equivalent of the International Farming Systems Association – IFSA (<http://ifsa.boku.ac.at/cms/>), a worldwide acknowledged society. The current President of SBSP is Dr. Lírío José Reichert from EMBRAPA Clima Temperado (<https://www.embrapa.br/en/clima-temperado>), based in the city of Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul State, Brazil.

Since its very beginning the SBSP has organized several meetings and congresses. The first meeting was organized already in 1993 and since then several more have followed, with a growing interest not only in the subjects being discussed but also in the number of attendees. Beyond discussing the adoption of the systems approach in agricultural research and rural extension, the SBSP has also discussed from a systems perspective issues like family farming, organic farming and agroecology, climate change and sustainable rural development. The last Congress was held in Foz do Iguaçu, in May 2014, having as theme “The Systems Approach and Family Farming in Building Sustainable Rural Development”.



Now SBSP is preparing its 11th congress, which will be held at the Universidade Católica de Pelotas – UCPel, from 6 to 8 July 2016, under the presidency of Prof. Dr. Lovoís de Andrade Miguel, from the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul – UFRGS. The main theme of this Congress will be “Systems approach and sustainability: agricultural production, consumption and health”. The congress will be organized around four major working groups: theoretical-methodological principles of the systems approach applied to

agriculture; markets and institutional arrangements for the products of family farming; processes of formation, innovation, knowledge systems and local social-technical networks, and systems approach applied to sustainable rural development.

For more info: <http://www.sbsp.org.br/Inicial>

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PERU - Lima

IAS - Andean Institute of Systems

Instituto Andino de Sistemas

IFSR Member

Ricardo Rodríguez-Ulloa



IAS, based in Lima, was founded in 1989 as a private scientific and cultural organization for study, research, disseminating, teaching and application of concepts, techniques, methods and methodologies related to the systems and cybernetics approach and related

branches (Computing, Informatics, Telematics) in the Andean and Latin American context.

IAS's work is based on General Theory of Systems (TGS), Systems Engineering, Operational Research, System Dynamics, Cybernetics and Systemic Methodologies developed at diverse systemic centers and universities around the world as well as at IAS. Its staff is composed by well trained professionals coming from academic institutions from Peru, Latin America, USA, Europe and Asia, with proven experience in the management and/or applied research in Peruvian and/or international organizations. Furthermore, IAS has established agreements on academic cooperation and development of joint research projects with several agencies, universities and academic centers around the world. Thus, it belongs to a network of experts on a wide range of subjects. IAS is a member of the International Federation for Systems Research (IFSR), and founder member of the Latin American Association of Systemics (ALAS).

Since 1992, IAS organizes international working conferences, seminars and workshops with participants from Latin America and other areas of the world, and over the years IAS has published numerous books and articles (printed and e-books), particularly SISTEMICA, an international journal on systems thinking, published in [Spanish](#) and [English](#) versions.

One of the main research outcomes, accomplished at IAS, in the past 20 years has been the creation of [Soft System Dynamics Methodology \(SSDM\)](#), which arose after a long action-research concentrated during the period 1993-2000 and continues to improve. SSDM integrates two very well-known systemic methodologies: System Dynamics (SD) developed by Prof. Jay W. Forrester and Soft Systems Methodology (SSM), developed by Prof. Peter B. Checkland.

SSDM has 10 stages and conveniently combines soft and hard variables in three working worlds: (a) The Real World; (b) The Problem Oriented World; (c) The Solution Oriented World, including as well, a Learning Stage for collective reflection on these three worlds, for future applications in a particular issue.

One of the outstanding features that SSDM brings to the modelling process is its capability to consider the worldviews and power of diverse stakeholders, human and non-human, interacting in complex problem situations: government and private agencies, citizens, business organizations, clubs, nongovernmental agencies, political parties, communities, corrupted networks, etc., as well as, the flora, fauna, water, land and air. To consider the non-human stakeholders, the SSDM's approach uses Synectics, a technique for creative problem-solving thinking, developed by G.M. Prince and W.J. Gordon, to "interview" the non-human stakeholders.

The consideration on non-human stakeholders came to SSDM from the ancient traditional thinking of the Peruvian Andean culture, that considers natural elements as land, air, water and the sun as "living" systems, and that it is necessary to maintain a harmonious and respectful relationship with them. In this same direction, SSDM also refers to the recent anticipatory work, on 21st Century legal rights for non-human living systems, by the eminent Argentinean and international well-known jurist Eugenio Raúl Zaffaroni, in his book *The Pachamama* (Land, in Quechua language) and the Human.

In the past 12 months, IAS research group was dedicated to a real-world consulting and research on the application of Soft System Dynamics Methodology (SSDM) in analysing the future of natural gas for Peru. Having in mind a long term view (2015-2040) the project served to develop an integrated system dynamics model for the analysis of potential scenarios and to propose policies to include: the use of natural gas as an energy platform to support the Peruvian economy development by the replacement of traditional sources of energy, the massive use of natural gas by Peruvian population, the

generation of electric power and the development of the Peruvian petrochemical and manufacturing industry based on natural gas. The study identified 55 stakeholders around the natural gas business value chain in the Peruvian context. Among them the air, water, land, fauna and flora were included. Acting as representatives of the fauna and the flora respectively, were the [Red Dolphin](#) from the Amazon River ecosystem, and the [Caoba \(Mahogany\) Tree](#), one of the world's biggest trees that grows in the Peruvian jungle. Both species are in extinction.

Another IAS's key area of applied research during the last 18 years has been to combine systems approaches with artificial intelligence. The goal was achieved in the 90ies, through a collaborative agreement established with the Jozef Stefan Institute of The University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, for joint applied research, carried out through consulting project for one of the main Peruvian Business Groups.



Photo: Prof Ricardo Rodríguez-Ulloa (the fifth from left to right) with the Project's Technical Working Committee members.

At that time, SSM was applied to develop a primary task model and root definition to cover diverse stakeholder's interests and power, in a culturally feasible way, to define viable present and future activities for the Group. Then an intelligent shell for multi attribute decision making was applied to elucidate in the computer, the decision rules used by the Group's managers to handle strategic and operational activities and indicators according to the primary task model obtained using the SSM approach. After that, a Decision Room for dealing with complexity in strategic issues was conceived and implemented, as an experience for providing an intelligent corporate collective decision making environment for the managers of the group.

The experience was revisited in 2014 on the light of new developments in the two areas of knowledge (SSM and AI) and presented at the [EMCSR 2014](#). Further research on the issue and possible opportunities to applying the approach in Peruvian organizations and elsewhere are included in current IAS activities.

IAS also runs virtual courses on systems thinking and cybernetics. In that line, on February 2016, begins the second version of its International Virtual Diploma in Organizational Systemics and Cybernetics—[DISCO](#) (Diplomado Virtual Internacional en Sistemica y Cibernética Organizacional). It is a 10th months Professional Learning Programme aimed to prepare systemic strategists able to cope with complex strategic management problems in the public and private sectors of organizations around the world. It is composed of 9 Seminars plus a real world small project involving the topics and methodologies taught in the program.

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LATIN AMERICAN SYSTEMS COMMUNITIES

Latin-American Chapter of the System Dynamics Society

Gloria Pérez Salazar

The Latin-American Chapter was created in 2003 with the mission to support the Spanish speaking SD-community in the spreading of System Dynamics. At present, members of this growing community are from Latin-American countries, Spain and other non-Spanish speaking countries. Its annual meeting allows practitioners to gather and newcomers to get in touch. So far, events were held in Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil and Costa Rica. These conferences foster a positive loop: each year the number of papers submitted and presented increases.



Since 2005, twice per year, the community publishes the Revista de Dinámica de Sistemas, in Spanish.

Last October 2015, the 13th Latin American Conference took place in Cartagena, Colombia, organized by Universidad Tadeo Lozano and Universidad de Cartagena.

The upcoming conference will take place at Sao Paulo, Brazil, November 2016.



At present, Board members are: President, Gloria Pérez Salazar; Past President, Isaac Dyrer; Academic Committee: Hugo Hernando Andrade and Jorge Andrick Parra Valencia.

More info: <https://www.facebook.com/sdslatam>

<http://dinamica-sistemas.mty.itesm.mx/>

ELAPDIS - The Latin American School of Systems Thinking and Design

Escuela Latinoamericana de Diseño y Pensamiento sistémico

Hernán López Garay

ELAPDIS—Latin American School of systems thinking and design (Escuela Latinoamericana de Diseño y Pensamiento sistémico) was founded in the year 2006 by a group of systems thinkers and designers, deeply concerned with the Latin American complex problems, convinced of the need to begin to understand the complex problems of the region in their own terms and with their own theories and systemic methods. Based on this knowledge they deemed appropriate to design interventions that contribute to *dissolve* (i.e. reframing the problem situation as to see it from novel and enriching ways to deal with its complexity) complex problems Latin American people are facing today.

ELAPDIS was conceived as a *school* in a double sense:

On the one hand, *school* in this context means a group of thinkers and designers who share a holistic conception of our time: Convinced that systems thinking needs to be gradually recovered (that means to re-integrate reflection and action, aiming to unfold the thinking-designing recursiveness which is essential), and that such a recovery calls for a real understanding of one's own complex social and cultural issues, one's own logic, language, idiosyncrasies, and fragmentation.

On the other hand ELAPDIS is a *school* of thought in the sense that it aims at forming new generations of Latin American systems thinkers and designers, by bringing them together every year in a Latin American country.

The encounter gathers the most experienced Latin American systems practitioners and beginners around one/more systemic projects of intervention in the region: all of them propelled by the aspiration to improve the quality of life and participatory democratic formation of citizens.

In a three-day period, projects are discussed in workshops which then give rise to forums, seminars, and informal environments of co-creation, seeking to expand knowledge on the central issues involved in the activity. The idea is to place the local issues of the host country in the wider Latin American context and derive possible joint projects that the Elapdianos and Elapdianas can start at the end of the third day of the annual meeting. This is also a way of knitting a Latin American network of systems thinkers and designers.

Undergrads, master and doctoral students are invited to participate in the three-day meetings to be exposed to the complex problems and the systemic approaches on the subjects. M.Sc. and Ph.D theses and several projects emerge at each ELAPDIS and may be raw material for the realization of future schools. In this way ELAPDIS contributes to the formation of the new generations of systems thinkers.

The encounters also contribute to draw a map of the central issues of Latin American societies and ways to deal with them from a systemic perspective.



Photo: 1 Ricardo Barrera (Argentina); 2 Sandro Schlindwein (Brazil); 3 Ramsés Fuenmayor (Venezuela); 4 José Luis Rocés (Argentina); 5 Alfonso Reyes (Colombia); 6 Eva Sarka (Argentina); 7 Pedro Narvarte (Chile); 8 Dante Pinheiro (Brazil); 9 Jowel Cabrera (Peru); 10 Fernando Galindo (Bolivia); Germán Lenin Dugarte (Venezuela).

In recent years, ELAPDIS evolved into the format of a school of thinking/design to reveal, more and more, the essential recursion between system thinking and design. Understanding the nature of this recursion will help to understand the fragmentation and *defuturing* (term coined by Tony Fry) of our times.

In the ELAPDIS view, the main epochal call to systems thinking is helping to comprehend the current fragmentation of our time, the mechanisms of its sustainability and device, and accordingly, ways to uncover such mechanisms, hence to de-fragment our view of reality. This conception of our own reality gradually unfolds and embodies in theories, methodologies and designs, as new knowledge is created by Latin American thinkers/designers in an attempt to transform the region's reality.

More info at: <http://www.elapdis.org/>

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EVENTS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST IN LATIN AMERICA

The Conversations of the Extreme South – 3rd Edition

The 3rd edition of The Conversations of the Extreme South (Las Conversaciones del Extremo Sur) were held at Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, from September 15 to 18. The event was organized by the IDEI - Institute of Economic Development and Innovation of the National University of Tierra del Fuego with the institutional auspiciousness of CESDES - Patagonic Center for Development Strategies), GESI – Integrated Systems Study Group) and the International Federation for Systems Research (IFSR).

These Conversations are inspired in the design of the traditional IFSR Conversations held in Austria: They are in Spanish, flavored by a cultural disposition of camaraderie and a tendency to mix the formal themes with explorations of other areas of mutual interest that facilitates bonding, sharing and nurturing a common ground.



Photo: *From left to right Tina Chisleanschi, Eva Sarka, Josefa García, Mey Silva, Rodolfo Porley, Ricardo Frías, Sandro Schlindwein, Dante Martinelli, Silvia Zweifel, Valeria Delgado, Alexander Laszlo. Sitting: Maia Gessaga with her daughter Lara, Lilian Burlando and behind Ricardo Barrera.*

It is worthy to mention that these Conversations are oriented to listen and respond to queries of the surrounding community and/or the society in general: On that occasion the overarching theme was “Aspects of a Regional Plan”, and the subthemes for each team were “Integration of Nature”; “Integration of the minorities”; “Respect for the Identity”; and “Sustainable Dimension”. The subject was chosen by the hosting University’s Rector and accepted by the participants of the former encounter held in 2013.

Immersed in a snowy landscape, unusual at this time of the year, participants engaged in long hours of intense inquiry. They actively questioned concepts and acknowledged reductionist patterns, still very present in the language used to address complex issues, as it was the case of the Conversations subject. On the other hand, participants recalled concepts and methodologies of native communities in South America and also from the Quakers in North America. The process

resulted in a rich and profound exploration of cultural endowments, highly valuable to be considered for any regional plan from a systems perspective. The University's press captured outstanding flashes of the Encounter in a short video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sy6bh211AI&feature=em-share_video_user.

In this occasion "Las Conversaciones del Extremo Sur" benefitted of an artscience exhibition, created by Silvia Zweifel. "The World of NAVIS UTOPIA", a prospective narrative in which all the most delicate challenges of the present don't exist anymore: a valuable contribution to consider the many aspects involved in a regional future co-creation.

Most probably the next edition will also benefit of another artscience contribution, since during this last encounter, the whole Conversation Group explored that possibility through a Skype meeting with the organizers of "The Antarctic Biennale": at least cross-contributions with "Antarctopia", a mega-project planned for early 2017 aiming to involve 50 to 100 scientists and artists in an Antarctic utopia.

ELAPDIS 2015 - Annual Meeting

Hernán López Garay

The 2015 edition of ELAPDIS was hosted and supported by the University of Ibagué, in Colombia. The event illustrates how ELAPDIS works: This year the complex problem situation on which Latin American systems thinkers and designers focused was *The future of Higher Education in our region: Sense and Non-sense*. The challenge of this edition was to co-create an idealized design of future education for Latin America and of the institutions able to realize such an education, as a technological feasible and culturally desirable educational system. Participants had to synthesize the idealized conception of design using a tridimensional logo.

The outcome of the process of co-creation, triggered and sustained by the facilitators of ELAPDIS was embodied in a stereogram, which requires from the viewer an effort to reframe his/her perspective and start thinking reality in unusual ways, i.e. ways that nobody has thought/seen before.

The logo challenges the observer to find the sense of education by presenting her with an image of fragmentation and disarray. In order to make sense of nonsense the observer must reframe his thinking. It is required to unlearn the traditional ways of looking at education, to learn to have an unfocused look in order to bring forth the hidden sense of education.

The lessons learned are:

Holistic thinking is about revealing the theme of our times; We have lost the capacity of making holistic sense of the world; To recover Systems Thinking one has to become aware of this fundamental condition of our time; Education is about recovering our capacity to make holistic sense of our present condition; equivalently, following Sir Geoffrey Vickers well-known metaphor to describe our current condition "we are trapped in a lobster pot and we are neither aware of our present condition nor of the shape of the trap". Education will show us the way out of the epochal trap.



Image: ELAPDIS 2015 Logo



IFSR Business



To all members of the IFSR!

**IFSR Board Meeting
April 8, 2016**

ATTENTION: CHANGED TIME AND PLACE

Board Meeting of the IFSR

FRIDAY, April 8, 2016, 13:00 – 17:00

Seminar-Hotel St. Magdalena ‚Bildungszentrum‘,

Schatzweg 177, 4040 Linz, Austria

Tel. 0043-(0)732-25 30 41, Fax. 0043-(0)732-25 30 41-35, www.bz-magdalena.at.

(located in the northern outskirts of Linz, easily reached by tram and/or taxi)

For Delegates of the Member Societies of the IFSR ONLY!

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- Report from the President
- Report from the Secretary General - Membership
- IASCYS (Academy of Systems and Cybernetic Sciences)
- IFSR-Events, IFSR Publications, IFSR Web Site
- IFSR Outreach
- IFSR Projects
- Financial Status and Outlook
- Formal Election of the new Executive Committee
- Changes to the Constitution
- Further Plans and Activities of the IFSR



18th IFSR-Conversation 2016 (April 3 – 8, 2016, Linz)

News Update

Preparations are underway for the 2016 IFSR Conversation in Linz. The team topics and team leaders are:

1. Systems Engineering: The Role of Systems Science in Developing a Foundational Theory –

Janet Willis Singer and Michael Singer

This theme builds upon the work around Systems Praxis developed for INCOSE and its ongoing development through the work group and other collaborative efforts in the Systems Engineering community.

2. Unity in Diversity: Making the Implicit Explicit –

Gary Smith and Brigitte Daniel Allegro

The Systems Tree, which was introduced in workshops at Berlin and for INCOSE will serve as the locus for continued development of language, metaphors, and a game to introduce systemic concepts and principles to audiences across disciplines.

3. Looking for Systemicity through Boulding's Skeleton of Science, Hierarchy Theory and Transdisciplinarity -

Jennifer Wilby

Using Boulding's framework and Hierarchy Theory, this team focus will be on systemic concepts and principles to develop understanding of the interconnections between disciplines.

4. Systems Research: Evaluation – What is “good” Systems Research? –

Mary Edson

Continuing work from the 2014 Conversation, this team will examine evaluation of systems research from multiple perspectives in order to create deeper understanding of how it is designed, conducted, reported, and applied.

In November, team leaders met to discuss the possibility of developing an overarching theme for the 2016 Conversation. Because the teams have articulating systemic concepts and principles, several ideas for a central theme were considered. Among these ideas was the topic of Systems Literacy introduced by Peter Tuddenham at the ISSS Annual Meeting in Berlin, Germany. As team leaders are developing their topics with their teams, they will also keep a focal theme of Systems Literacy in mind. Along with Brigitte Daniel Allegro and Gary Smith, Mary and Peter will be working with team leaders to further develop it during monthly meetings leading up to the Conversation in April.

Participants in the upcoming Conversation can look forward to integrating the work of their teams into a body of knowledge to be developed into modes for educating those new to systems thinking, the

systems sciences, and systems research as they begin their journeys toward Systems Literacy. Stay tuned for more details as the theme for the 2016 Conversation emerges.

Questions about the 2016 IFSR Conversation should be directed to Mary Edson at ifsr.org@gmail.com. We look forward to a vibrant Conversation in Linz this coming spring



The International Academy for Systems and Cybernetic Sciences met in Chengdu, China, October 22-26, 2015. The meeting, which was held at the School of Business of Sichuan University, was arranged by Jifa Gu, Beijing, and Jiuping Xu, Chengdu. The meeting of the Academy was titled, “Systemic Solutions for Systemic Problems.” It was held in conjunction with a larger International Conference on Energy, Environment and Commercial Civilization. The themes of the two conferences reflected the great current interest in China and the rest of the world with balancing the need for more energy with preserving the environment and designing sustainable industrial civilizations.

One of the keynote presentations was an explanation of the Chinese government’s policy of One Belt and Road. This is an initiative to expand trade overland to the west and south not just by sea to North America and Europe. The focus is on building infrastructure and developing friendly relations. The north road goes through Russia to Europe, the central road through Central Asia to the Middle East and the south road through Myanmar to India and SE Asia. As the westernmost major Chinese city, Chengdu is the hub.

Jifa Gu stated, “We supported the big conference before our academy conference on October 22 because the main theme was “OneBelt and Road”, which happens to match the IASCYS theme-- systemic solutions to systemic problems. The goal of OneBelt and Road is to solve systemic problems, and Chengdu city wishes to contribute their efforts and budget to help in solving problems. How to find systemic solutions is the task of systems people. I hope our Academy will contribute our systems knowledge to help our world find the methods to solve similar systemic problems. The problem behind OneBelt and Road is a systemic problem, which requires us to use interdisciplinary knowledge including not only natural science and management science but also social science. The OneBelt and Road project covers a lot of countries. We have to consider not only economic problems, but also political and cultural problems.”

For the combined conference titles and keynotes, see

<http://www.iascys.org/files/IASCYSchengdu2015schedule.pdf>.

For abstracts and slides of the IASCYS presentations, see

<http://www.gwu.edu/~rpsol/IASCYS2015.html>.

For the IASCYS website, see www.iascys.org.



Stuart Umpleby presenting at the Conference



Discussing IASCYS: Francisco Parra-Luna, Gary Metcalf, Xijing Tang, Pierre Bricage, Jifa Gu

During the IASCYS business meeting the main topic was a discussion of how to expand the member associations that can nominate academicians. IASCYS was created by the International Federation for Systems Research (IFSR). However, there are three international federations in the systems field, not only IFSR but also the European Union for Systemics (EUS) and the World Organization of Systems and Cybernetics (WOSC). Changes in the constitution and procedures are now underway to bring about this change.

In other business Robert Trappl retired as President of the IASCYS Executive Committee and was appointed Honorary President and a member of the Executive Committee. Stuart Umpleby moved up from Vice President to President. Ockie Bosch was chosen to fill the role of Vice President of the Executive Committee. Other members of the Executive Committee are Executive Director Pierre Bricage, Matjaz Mulej and Jifa Gu.

	<i>International Federation For Systems Research</i>
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