



Newsletter

Official Newsletter of the International Federation for Systems Research

Editor-in-Chief: Gerhard Chroust

Volume 29, no. 2 (December 2012)



*Lofer (Salzburg) in Winter
Janie Chroust 2011*

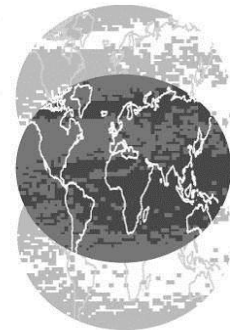
Dear Members!

2012 was an exciting year for the IFSR. We were involved in many activities: the IFSR-Conversation 2012 in Linz, the EMCSR-Conference in Vienna, the Meetings of the IASCYS and several talks with sister federations.

In this Newsletter we will report about some of the follow-up activities of the IFSR-Conversation 2012. You find a note on the start of the first e-voting call for the IFSR and – as usual report about activities of some of our member societies. In 2013 our primary task will be to improving the interactive communication with our members beyond e-voting.

With this Newsletter we would like to convey our Seasons Greetings and our best Wishes for the upcoming New Year!

*With my best wishes
Yours sincerely
Gerhard Chroust*



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The IFSR Conversation continued moving on in 2012!

The IFSR Conversation in St. Magdalena, Linz, was in our opinion one of the most fruitful in the history of IFSR Conversations. In many ways, the teams returned to the early principles of the Conversations, exchanging papers and ideas in advance of the week together, and continuing their collaboration afterwards as papers were written for the proceedings. The 4 teams worked hard, supported by the environment of the excellent meeting facilities in St. Magdalena, Linz. Team members continued to work together by email and conference calls, following the Conversation itself, refining the ideas which had been generated. Especially Team 3 and Team 4 were very active in this respect.

You will find some of the 'next steps' described in the sections below.

In the meantime Gary and Gerhard managed to publish the proceedings¹. Like the proceedings from the Conversation in 1998² it contains 118 pages, making it one of the two most voluminous reports in our 29 year of history.

This time, though, there was considerably more material from Team 3 and 4 than we could fit into the proceedings. So we created a 'supplement'³ where additional material was included pertinent to the deliberations of the teams but not of prime interest, including several participants' reports.

A few printed copies of the proceedings were produced to be archived, but electronic versions of both the proceedings and the supplement are freely available on the IFSR website, for viewing and downloading.

The plan for now is to hold the 2014 Conversation once again at St. Magdalena, in Linz. Yoshi Horiuchi is the point person on the Executive Committee preparing for the next event.

Find below the cover page and the table of contents of the IFSR Conversation 2012.

Gary Metcalf, Gerhard Chroust

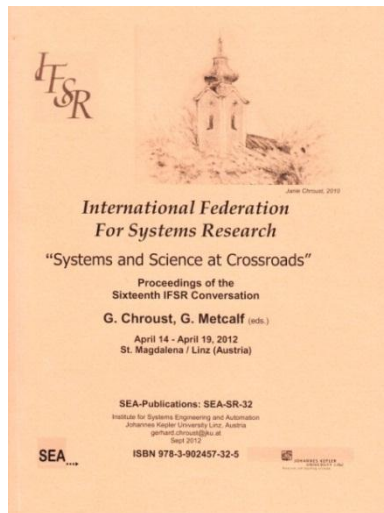


Figure 1: Listening to the results

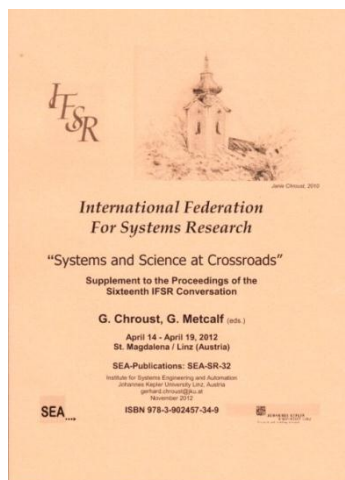
¹ Chroust, G. & Metcalf, G., editors (2012). Systems and Science at Crossroads - Sixteenth IFSR Conversation. Inst. f. Systems Engineering and Automation, Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria, SEA-SR-32, Sept. 2012 and [[http://ifsr.ocg.at/world/files/\\$12m\\$Magdalena-2012-proc.pdf](http://ifsr.ocg.at/world/files/$12m$Magdalena-2012-proc.pdf)], 118pp

² BENEDER, M. , G. CHROUST, (eds.) Designing Social Systems in a Changing World (The Ninth Fuschl Conversation 1998) ÖSGK, Reports of the Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies, Vienna, September 1998, 118 pp.

³ Chroust, G. , and Metcalf, G. (eds.) (2102c) Systems and Science at Crossroads – Sixteenth IFSR Conversation - Supplement Inst. f. Systems Engineering and Automation, Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria, SEA-SR-32, Nov.2012 and [[http://ifsr.ocg.at/world/files/\\$12n\\$Magdalena-2012-supp.pdf](http://ifsr.ocg.at/world/files/$12n$Magdalena-2012-supp.pdf)]., 138pp.



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Team 3: Curating the Conditions for a Thrivable Planet:

Systemic Leverage Points for Emerging a Global Eco-Civilization

(IFSR Conversation 2013 – continued)

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Team 3 of the IFSR Conversation 2012⁴ has used the design platform created during our week of intense work at St. Magdalena, Linz in April of 2012 to structure the design of the 57th Meeting and Conference of the ISSS (International Society for the Systems Sciences). We have used the frameworks created in Linz as a template for the overall organization of the conference, and the team, itself, has formed into the EGS – Evolutionary Guidance System – of the Organizing Committee for the 2013 ISSS event (refer to <http://iss.org/world/Committees> to see how we have organized ourselves).



The main systems design outcomes of this process are:

1. The design of a process for curating the emergence of the thematic elements of the conference through the use of collective intelligence in a holarchic organizational structure. Using the Four Domains of Knowing identified in Linz (experiential knowing, presentational knowing, propositional knowing, and practical knowing, cf. Heron and Reason in 1997⁵), we are operating according to Generative Action Research, and in doing so, we are modeling the processes of relational intelligence we wish to bring alive at the ISSS Conference, itself.
2. The prototyping of the Collective Intelligence Enhancement Laboratory (CIEL) which is to serve as the operational infrastructure that undergirds the entire ISSS conference. The reason it would be a prototype is that this would be the first functional implementation of this socio-technical systems design.
3. The objective of prototyping the CIEL is to then use it full strength in the Global Evolutionary Learning Laboratory (GELL) beyond the conference. The GELL is the standing network of intertwined systemic sustainability initiatives around the world that, when established, will comprise a key leverage point in the emergence of a global eco-civilization and, as such, will contribute to conditions that favor a thrivable planet.

⁴ See IFSR Newsletter vol. 29, no 1, p.19 and Chroust, G. & Metcalf, G., editors (2012). Systems and Science at Crossroads - Sixteenth IFSR Conversation. Inst. f. Systems Engineering and Automation, Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria, SEA-SR-32, Sept. 2012 and [[http://ifsr.ocg.at/world/files/\\$12m\\$Magdalena-2012-proc.pdf](http://ifsr.ocg.at/world/files/$12m$Magdalena-2012-proc.pdf)] pp. 41-74.

⁵ Heron, John and Reason, Peter (1997). A participatory inquiry paradigm. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(3), p. 274-294.



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The culmination of the Team 4 effort at the IFSR Conversation 2012⁶ last April was a diagram titled "Unifying Systems Praxis." After the conclusion of the IFSR Conversation, some team members continued developing the diagram to resolve issues not fully addressed during the week and further realize the integrative potential revealed in the original. The resulting "Systems Praxis Framework" was included in International Council on Systems Engineering (INCOSE) Guide to the Systems Engineering Body of Knowledge (SEBoK) at <http://www.sebokwiki.org>. The diagram and accompanying explanatory text is also available as a standalone brochure under a Creative Commons license at <http://systemspraxis.org>.

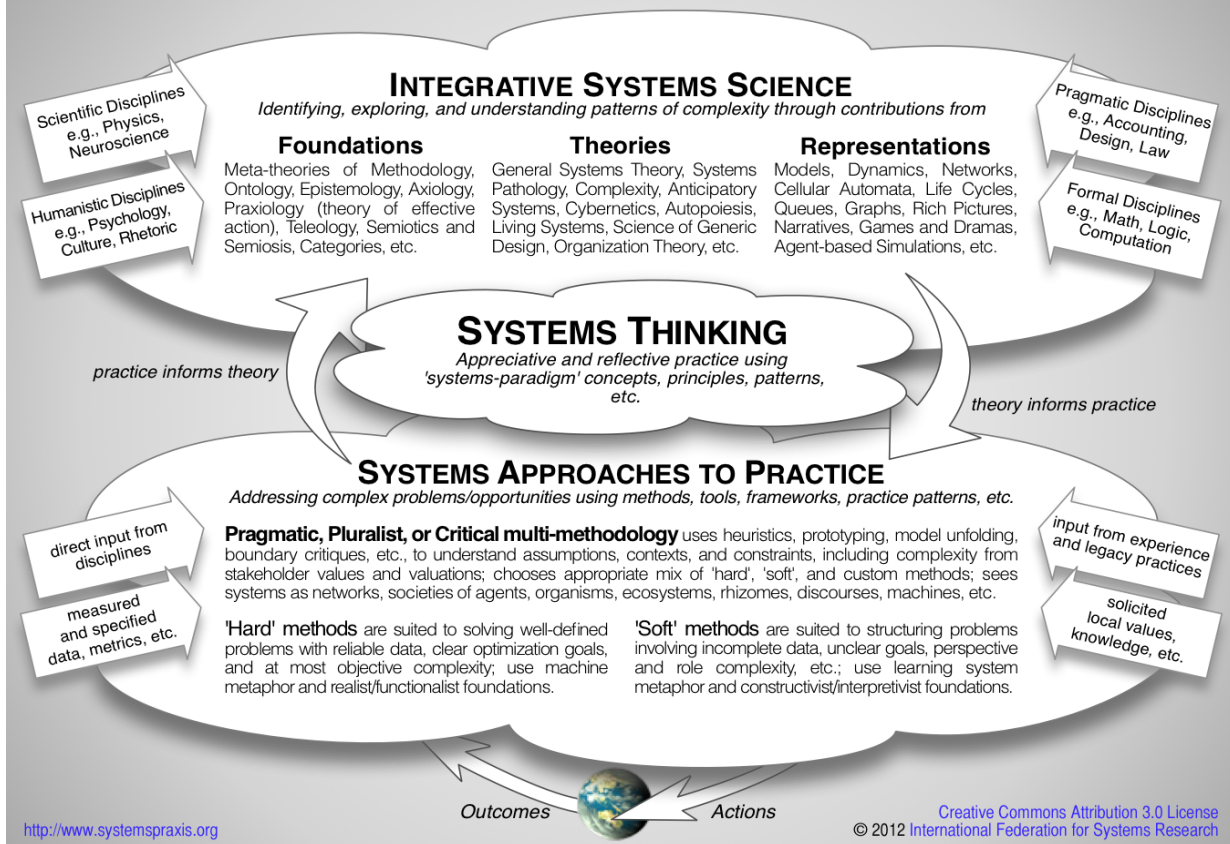


Figure 2: Team leader after the Conversation:
James Martin

⁶ See IFSR Newsletter vol. 29, no 1, p. 21 and Chroust, G. & Metcalf, G., editors (2012). Systems and Science at Crossroads - Sixteenth IFSR Conversation. Inst. f. Systems Engineering and Automation, Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria, SEA-SR-32, Sept. 2012 and [[http://ifsr.ocg.at/world/files/\\$12m\\$Magdalena-2012-proc.pdf](http://ifsr.ocg.at/world/files/$12m$Magdalena-2012-proc.pdf)] pp. 75-108.

The Systems Praxis Framework

The Systems Praxis Framework, a joint project of the International Council on Systems Engineering and the International Society for the Systems Sciences



Conversations of the Extreme South

Enrique Herrscher

The first "Conversations of the Extreme South" were organized by the National Universities of Tierra del Fuego and of Patagonia and sponsored by The International Academy for Systems and Cybernetic Sciences (through the presence of its President Matjaz Mulej of Maribor University) and by several Systems Organizations of the region (GESI – Buenos Aires; FundArlIngenio – Santiago del Estero; CESDES – Patagonia, all from Argentina; and the Systems Group of Universidade de Sao

Paulo, Brazil). As a result, the "Ushuaia Initiative"⁷ has been hereby shown to the Latin American community in general and specially to interested parties at Tierra del Fuego.

The Initiative was well received also outside of Latin America.

⁷ See IFSR Newsletter vol. 29, no 1, p. 26



IFSR Systems Design Conversations

Yoshihide Horiuchi

Bela H. Banathy and others organized the first design conversation in 1982 in Fuschl am See in Austria near Salzburg. It was soon called the IFSR Fuschl Conversation. It has been held biannually until 2008. In 2010 for various reasons the Conversation was moved to Pernegg, near Vienna, a former monastery and in 2012 we held the Conversation in St. Magdalena on the outskirts of Linz, Austria. We now call it the 'IFSR Conversation' for not being associated with a specific location. There have been other Conversations held in Asilomar in Pacific Grove, California, and other places, in total some 40 Conversations have been held.

It is a six-day long systems design conversation to answer the question: "How can we use the insights gained from systems science for the improvement of the human conditions?" (Banathy, 1996, p. 219). According to Banathy, the two purposes of the design conversation are the specific knowledge it generates and the participation in the design conversation. "(Dialogue) aims to create a common frame of reference, a shared worldview among the parties of the dialogue." (Banathy, 1996, p. 214)

Banathy summarizes findings of Ditterle et al. at the Fifth Asilomar Design conversation about the power a design conversation has, with its collective intelligence and shared meaning: "Does design conversation need a goal? Is the design conversation journey directed to a specific result or is it an adventure that has as its goal the adventure itself? Does design conversation aim at discovering attributes/manifestations of the group's shared view of the world? Or should it create a practical, action-oriented plan? ... (I)n a design-oriented design conversation instead of an either/or choice, both aims should be chosen." (Banathy, 1996, p. 221)

Reference: Banathy, B.H.: Designing Social Systems in a Changing World, Plenum Press, New York, 1996, pp. 372, ISBN 0 306 45251 0,

The four Fuschl locations (below): Hotel Seewinkel in Fuschl, 1982 – 2002, Hotel Schlick, 2004 – 2008, Kloster Pernegg, Pernegg, 2010, St. Magdalena, Linz, 2012





IFSR e-voting on the acceptance of a new Member

On Dec 18 the IFSR started the first e-voting in its history. As decided by the IFSR Board on April 13, e-voting will be acceptable for the IFSR. Thus we started the election process to decide on the acceptance of a new membership application of a new society. For each member society of the IFSR there is one individual to whom this voting e-mail was sent. The accompanying letter read (with the name of the society eliminated for privacy reasons):

VOTE on MOTION: Should XXXX become a member of the IFSR?

Dear members of the IFSR!

With this e-mail a premiere starts: the first electronic voting in the IFSR. You have to vote on the acceptance of the above mentioned organisation as new member of the IFSR. As an initial step we will use e-mail as the voting vehicle, later on we envision an interactive, automatic tool. From the constitution (article 8A) the following provisions are important:

Article 8A:

... The deadline for returning the vote on motions is 30 working days after transmittal. Each Full Member Organization of the Federation has ONE vote.

1. *The valid votes on a motion are: YES, NO or ABSTAIN. Questions for clarification and discussion amongst member organizations about motions must be completed within the 30 working-day time limit. At the end of that time, votes on the motion will be final.*
2. *.... the quorum is one half of the Full Members.*
3. *All regular motions will be decided by a simple majority of the votes returned.*

You find attached a form filled in by the applying organisation (XXXX). Note that most of the information is confidential to the Board Members and should not be divulged to other persons. I also attach some further supporting documents which give more details about the organisation.

With respect to the voting process please keep the following points in mind:

1. The deadline for your vote is January 26, 2013, 12 am (Austrian Time)
2. When returning your vote by e-mail, use the same subject as on this e-mail
3. Your votes may be : YES, NO, ABSTAIN.
4. For the vote to be valid we need 18 votes to be returned (50% of 35 full members). Only FULL MEMBERS may cast a vote – Affiliate members receive this e-mail 'for information only'.
5. Feel free to consult with other IFSR member organizations on this question!



Reports from IFSR member societies



Hellenic Society for Systemic Studies (HSSS)

8th HSSS National & International Conference of the HSSS

in collaboration with the University of Macedonia

05 - 07 July, 2012, Thessaloniki, Greece.

The 8th National & International Conference of the HSSS was held on 05-07 July 2012, in collaboration with the Department of Applied Informatics of the University of Macedonia. The HSSS's conferences are held annually in different cities in Greece. This year's conference was held in Thessaloniki, a city renowned through the ages for its Byzantine history, culture and wisdom. The conference focused on a **Systems Approach to Strategic Management**, bringing together colleagues from all over the world to promote and exchange ideas, knowledge and experience for the benefit of organizations in the public and private sectors, in effectively meeting the needs of a challenging international community.

The goal of the conference was to create a global framework that will bridge the gap between scientific advances and practices in Strategic Management and the needs for decision-makers to better cope with the dynamic complexity of a turbulent world economy.



Figure 3: (from left) Mr. Dimitrios Varsos, Dr. Stergiana Giannakou, Prof. Nikitas Assimakopoulos

The prominent speakers, the exciting professional panels, the professional round



table, and the Strategic Management workshop, attracted the attention of a large number of our colleagues from academia as well as professional associations engaged in strategic thinking, planning and action, and eminent consultancy firms of a national and international stature.

Keynote addresses which underlined the core theme of the conference were delivered by distinguished academicians and professionals of international reputation, including Dr. Alexander (Aleco) Christakis, the founder of the Institute of 21st Century Agoras, a former President of the International Society for Systems Sciences and former faculty member of several Universities who currently serves in the Editorial Board of several journals, Dr. Yiannis Laouris, the Secretary General of the Cyprus Society for Systemic Studies, a member of the Board of the Institute for 21st Century Agoras, and Senior Scientist and Chair of the Cyprus Neuroscience and Technology Institute (also known as Future Worlds Center) and Dr. Martin Reynolds, a consultant, researcher and lecturer in Systems thinking at the Department of Communication and Systems at The Open University, UK.

For details please see: <http://www.2012.hsss.eu>



GESI (Grupo de Estudio de Sistemas Integrados)

News from the GESI (Grupo de Estudio de Sistemas Integrados) – Argentina.



In the Xth Latin American Congress of System Dynamic, IIIth Brazilian Congress of System Dynamics, 1st Argentine Congress of System Dynamics, which took place in Buenos Aires on 21, 22 and 23 November 2012, there was a special session with presentations and awards to honor our Argentine Association GESI, for its contributions to the study and dissemination of the systemic-cybernetic perspective and the system dynamics methodology, and offered a tribute dedicated to two of its members:

Charles François and Enrique Herrscher. The current GESI,

nourished by its foundational roots, is in a process of reconfiguration, according to the complex contexts of these times.

In this Congress, the GESI participated with three papers:

GESI as a self-organized ecosystem - An institutional presentation, by Eva Sarka, José Luis Rocés and Silvia Zweifel.

Abstract: GESI has undertaken a process of self organized eco system, within a generative-transformer context, in order to constitute a representative organization of the knowledge that develops and disseminates, promoting relevant and virtuous processes in its own institution. It is an organizational transforming process which values the past, with the purpose of achieving cohesion in the present and projection to the future, like a learning spiral , in a internal-external membership network. That is the description of a differential case of self–eco-learning process. Available at: <http://www.gesi.org.ar/contexto-generativo-transformador/>

System Dynamics as Comparative Language, by Enrique Herrscher.

Abstract: Frequently we have written about the “language function” the System Dynamics graphics have beyond their specific subject. On this occasion, we add another characteristic when using similar graphic representations for different themes, comparing various “influence relations”. Certain similarities appear in the dynamics of the different stages of development, that possibly would not be seen in the usual narrative mode.

MATREV language for an AMIABLE economy, by Silvia Zweifel and Federico Ferrando.

Abstract: Economical-political-social and natural crisis are more frequent and exert increases on costs

and conflicts in the human society around the world. A paradigm shift is needed, but this is not an easy task. A profound transformation at the paradigmatic level is a very demanding enterprise. It requires new languages, concepts and abilities to foster a new world: a sustainable one.

Then followed the tributes, which were particularly emotional:

First José Luis Roces read the recognition he wrote as a tribute to the career of Enrique Herrscher, then Ernesto Grün read the tribute he wrote in honor of the ninetieth anniversary of Charles François, who then expressed his thoughts about the growing appreciation and advances of the Systemic and Cybernetic methodologies, their studies and editions in the Latin American region. Finally, Edgar Maimbil, General Coordinator of the event, on behalf of the organizers, highlighted the contributions that GESI conducted and performed on the study of cybernetics, systemics, and system dynamics, from its creation within the Scientific Society of Argentina, in 1973.

The texts of these tributes and the speech are available on the website of GESI:
<http://www.gesi.org.ar/nuestras-huellas/>



**INCOSE System Science WG Project:
Interoperability of Systemists
Jack Ring**

Jack Ring, member of ISSS, INCOSE and IEEE SMC, along with Steve Krane and Richard Martin is leading an INCOSE-based effort to 'enable interoperability among systemists' where systemists are 'those who engage in knowledge exchange and choice making regarding the conceptualization, realization, utilization and evolution of systems.' Interoperability entails bridging respective languages, mental models, interpersonal styles and values as individually favored by the estimated 1 million systemists world wide.

Interoperability is not likely to be achieved by standardization of these factors. Instead we seek a unifying framework that will support the context-sensitive formulation of such bridges as necessary and a transformation engine that can assemble semantic modules to compose the actual bridge in a given situation. Once the languages bridge is established construction of the other bridges can proceed.

We intend to unify the ontic view and the transaction or flow view of systems and dissolve the differences that now prevail among those focused on natural vs. man-perceived vs. man-devised kinds of systems.

Research by John Kineman (extending Rosen) and Kent Palmer is helpful. Knowledge exchange with other researchers will be appreciated. (Contact: Jack Ring <jring7@gmail.com>)



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