

# Concept for the Research Seminar "Complex Systems and Co-Operative Action"

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## 1 Aim and methodology of the seminar

The concept of a *system* plays a prominent role in computer science when it comes to database systems, software systems, hardware systems, accounting systems, access systems, etc. In general, computer science is regarded by a majority as the "science of the *systematic* representation, storage, processing and transmission of information, especially their automatic processing using digital computers" (German Wikipedia). Also certain relevant professions such as the *system architect* are in high esteem by IT users.

However, the significance of the concept of system extends far beyond the field of computer science – it is fundamental for all engineering sciences and as *Systems Engineering* with the ISO/IEC/IEEE-15288 standard "Systems and Software Engineering", it is also the subject of international standardisation processes. Even more, the concept of systems also plays an important role in the description of complex natural and cultural processes – for instance in the concept of an *ecosystem*.

While classical TRIZ focuses strongly on instrumentally feasible engineering solutions, Systems Engineering "is an interdisciplinary field of engineering and engineering management that focuses on how to design, integrate, and manage complex systems over their life cycles. At its core, systems engineering utilizes systems thinking principles to organize this body of knowledge. The individual outcome of such efforts, an engineered system, can be defined as a combination of components that work in synergy to collectively perform a useful function." (English Wikipedia).

In the winter semester 2019/20, we had already studied more intensively different system concepts and, in particular, examined their application in complex socio-ecological, socio-economic and socio-technical contexts, see [2]. We observed that the central concepts of *transition management* and *activity management* addressed two different perspectives on structural change processes. In the transition management approach, the structural-transitional challenges are in the foreground, the activity management approach studies the implementation of structural changes via the actions and co-actions of actors and stakeholders.

In both approaches, however, the focus was on a holistic-structural and analytical view of a *decision preparation* rather than on practical procedural management approaches of *decision-making* and decision implementation in complex and contradictory real-world situations.

The WUMM project<sup>1</sup> aims at a better understanding of such management processes. Our starting point is TRIZ as a systematic innovation methodology derived from engineering experience in contradictory requirement situations. Today, similar demands for an experience-based *systematic* approach are also addressed in the field of management, which means that engineering approaches and admissions are also there on the agenda.

With the field of "Business TRIZ", which has been unfolding for about 20 years, this transfer of experience is being actively promoted, embedded in older management cultures and approaches. In recent years, co-operative action by differently specialised experts has become increasingly important. In such interdisciplinary work contexts, the development of *common conceptual systems* of sufficient performance proves to be a difficult problem that can be supported by digital semantic technologies. Parallel to these challenges *agile approaches* play a major role in recent years, not only in the field of management, but also increasingly in the solution of socio-technical and engineering problems concerning ongoing co-operative actions in multi-stakeholder contexts – for example with the concept of *technical ecosystems*.

**In the seminar**, we want to learn more about traditional approaches to management theories (F. Taylor, R. Ackoff, P. Drucker, H. Mintzberg) and relate this to developments in the area of Business TRIZ. We are particularly interested in the connection between the dialectical resolution of contradictory requirement situations in the sense of TRIZ methodology and the emergence of common conceptual and notational worlds as a result of the application of suitable semantic web technologies. A special emphasis will be put on the work of the *Methodological School of Management* and the Moscow Methodological Circle around G.P. Shchedrovitsky.

The seminar is a **research seminar** in which we jointly explore different aspects of co-operative action in different management concepts. With this seminar, we are approaching a topic that is new to us, which offers the opportunity to participate in a joint academic explorative process on a basis of equals. This bears opportunities, but also challenges. The students are expected to actively participate in the seminar through seminar discussions, presentations and last but not least by reading the relevant materials. For the successful completion of the seminar, a topic has to be presented as discussion leader and a paper of 2-3 pages on the topic has to be submitted in advance.

The seminar is accompanied by a **lecture** *Modelling Sustainable Systems and Semantic Web* (Thursdays 11-13 a.m.) in which important concepts of our previous interdisciplinary course programme such as

- technology as a whole of socially available procedural knowledge, institutionalised procedures and private procedural skills,
- sustainability requirements in systemic concepts,
- digital change and concepts of semantic web technologies,
- concept and knowledge formation processes,
- cooperative action, network economies and open culture

will be developed in more detail. The lecture and the seminar are not directly related to each other, but conceptual frameworks developed in the lecture will be heavily present in

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<sup>1</sup>WUMM stands in German for "Widersprüche und Managementmethoden" (contradictions and management methods).

the seminar. There is a set of slides<sup>2</sup> (in German) from the lecture in the previous winter semester.

All materials and seminar reports that can be made publicly available, will be published in the github repo

<https://github.com/wumm-project/Leipzig-Seminar>

in the Summerterm-2021 folder.

## 2 Seminar Organisation

The seminar will be held weekly on Tuesdays 9-11 a.m. (Leipzig time) synchronously online. Prior to each appointment participants have to study the assigned reading to be in a position to discuss the problems in the seminar. The seminar is moderated by a *discussion leader*, who prepares a short workout of 2–3 pages and makes it available to the participants in advance *before the seminar* (by Sunday evening).

Students of Leipzig University find more about the seminar in the Saxonian e-learning platform OPAL<sup>3</sup>. The platform will be used for organisational purposes only. The **primary source for the seminar plan** is the (actual version of the) file `Seminarplan.md` in the Summerterm-2021 folder of the github repository *Leipzig-Seminar*.

## 3 Examination. Topics for seminar papers

In order to be admitted to the examination, the seminar must be successfully completed, one of the seminars has to be moderated as discussion leader and for this seminar a short workout has to be prepared and made available to the participants.

Students who are enrolled in the 10-LP module "Semantic Web" must also successfully complete the TRIZ lab and then take an oral examination (30 minutes) in July 2021 about the acquired knowledge of concepts of systematic innovation methodologies and Semantic Web.

Students who are enrolled in the 5-LP seminar module "Applied Computer Science" have additionally to prepare an RDF modelling and a short paper concerning a contribution to the ontology modelling efforts [9] within the WUMM Project as examination. More details will be announced in the second half of the summer term. The work has to be completed until the end of the semester on September 30, 2021.

## 4 Privacy

We follow an Open Culture approach not only theoretically, but also practically and make course materials publicly available. This also applies to the course materials you have to produce (presentations, seminar papers) as well as to (annotated) chat sessions of the seminar

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<sup>2</sup>[http://www.informatik.uni-leipzig.de/~graebe/Lehre/Inter/2020w\\_iadw.zip](http://www.informatik.uni-leipzig.de/~graebe/Lehre/Inter/2020w_iadw.zip).

<sup>3</sup><https://bildungsportal.sachsen.de/opal/> – Course S21.BIS.SIM.

discussions, in which your names are also mentioned. We assume your consent to this procedure if you do not explicitly object. The seminar discussions themselves are **not** recorded.

To simplify the further use of the materials and texts, the papers are asked to be compiled in English using L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X. Also the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X source should be provided under the terms of the CC-0<sup>4</sup> license in order to create a corresponding corpus of texts that can be used to accompany similar efforts in the OpenDiscovery project. Of course, this cannot be "decreed". **Please inform the seminar instructor if you do not wish to make your work available for exchange under these conditions.**

## 5 Seminar plan

The exact topics and themes will be defined at the beginning of the seminar, when the number of participants can be estimated more precisely.

We assume that student participants will mainly prepare and present topics on classical and less classical management theories. A non-exhaustive list of possible topics is compiled in the *Seminar Plan*<sup>5</sup>.

In addition to these themes, interest in the following topics was expressed in advance:

- Gräbe: Methodological School of Management [3, 6]. A compact presentation of the approaches of the Moscow Methodological Circle to questions of a systematic management methodology, which had considerable influence on the shaping of the TRIZ approaches.
- Gräbe: Co-operative Action [1, 5]. From Krug's abstract: "Charles Goodwin is considered one of the pioneers of social interaction research. In his latest book he rearranges his previous publications in terms of a concept that could lead to a radical turn in anthropology, because his conception of co-operative action covers not only the practices of moment-by-moment actions in face-to-face interactions. Rather, his approach also encompasses actions with so-called absent predecessors, whose previous actions in the form of materiality or bodies of knowledge left behind have an impact on the actions of the interactants in the here and now. ..."
- Gräbe: Schematization of an inventive situation [4]. The classical systems approach of TRIZ<sup>6</sup> is not very well developed to grasp hierarchies of system abstractions. This is attempted to be tackled anew with the approach of schematisation in the context of management approaches, since in the management field especially methods of indirect control have to work with such abstractions. The basic concepts are also closely related to approaches of the Moscow Methodological Circle.
- Kleemann: Development of the concept of a philosophy of technology in the historical media discourse. Ernst Kapp, Ernst Cassirer, Marshall McLuhan, André Leroi-Gourhan.

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<sup>4</sup><https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0>

<sup>5</sup><https://github.com/wumm-project/Leipzig-Seminar/blob/master/Summerterm-2021>

<sup>6</sup>A *system* is a set of elements in relationship and connection with each other, which forms a certain integrity, unity. The need to use the term «system» arises when it is necessary to emphasize that something is large, complex, not fully immediately understandable, yet whole, unified. [...] the concept of a system emphasises order, integrity, regularities of construction, functioning and development. [https://triz-summit.ru/onto\\_triz/100/](https://triz-summit.ru/onto_triz/100/)

- Laue: Goal-Models and the i\* modelling method, see <http://www.cs.toronto.edu/km/istar/> and [10]. "Much of the difficulty in creating information technology systems that truly meet people's needs lies in the problem of pinning down system requirements. This book offers a new approach to the requirements challenge, based on modeling and analyzing the relationships among stakeholders. Although the importance of the system-environment relationship has long been recognized in the requirements engineering field, most requirements modeling techniques express the relationship in mechanistic and behavioral terms." (From the summary in [10])
- Lautenschläger: Management of socio-ecological transformations.

The seminar starts on April 13 with a kick-off meeting (in German). In further seminars, we will first present various general management approaches. We plan that student's presentations start at the beginning of May. The up to date and continuously updated seminar plan can be found in the github repo of the seminar<sup>7</sup>.

## References

- [1] Charles Goodwin (2018). Co-operative Action. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-108-71477-8.  
Available as e-book <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139016735> at UB Leipzig using your shibboleth credentials at UL.
- [2] Hans-Gert Gräbe, Ken Pierre Kleemann (2020). Seminar Systemtheorie. Universität Leipzig. Wintersemester 2019/20 (in German). Rohrbacher Manuskripte, Heft 22. ISBN 9783752620023.
- [3] Viktor B. Khristenko, Andrei G. Reus, Alexander P. Zinchenko et al. (2014). Methodological School of Management. Bloomsbury Publishing. ISBN 978-1-4729-1029-5.  
Available as e-book at UB Leipzig  
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/leip/detail.action?docID=6159470>
- [4] Anton Kozhemyako (2019). Features of TRIZ applications for solving organizational and management problems: schematization of an inventive situation and working with models of contradictions (in Russian). Dissertation for application for the degree of a TRIZ Master. <https://matriz.org/kozhemyako/>  
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- [5] Maximilian Krug (2019). Review: Charles Goodwin (2018). Co-Operative Action (in German). Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung, 20(1), 1-7.  
<https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-20.1.3197>.
- [6] Georgi P. Shchedrovitsky (1981). Principles and General Scheme of the Methodological Organization of System-Structural Research and Development.  
<https://wumm-project.github.io/Texts/Principles-1981-en.pdf>

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<sup>7</sup><https://github.com/wumm-project/Leipzig-Seminar/blob/master/Summerterm-2021>

- [7] Valeri Souchkov (2010). TRIZ and Systematic Business Model Innovation. In: Proceedings TRIZ Future Conference 2010, Bergamo, Italy. Available at ResearchGate.
- [8] Vladimir I. Vernadsky (1936-38): Scientific Thought as a Planetary Phenomenon.  
<https://wumm-project.github.io/Texts/Vernadsky1938-en.pdf>
- [9] The WUMM Ontology Project. <https://wumm-project.github.io/WOP-General>
- [10] Eric Yu, Paolo Giorgini, Neil Maiden, John Mylopoulos (2010). Social Modeling for Requirements Engineering. MIT Press. ISBN 978-0262240550.  
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<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/leip/detail.action?docID=3339201>