CYBERNETICS AND SYSTEMS '90

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Proceedings of the Tenth European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research,
organized by the Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies,
held at the University of Vienna, Austria, 17 – 20 April 1990

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World Scientific
Singapore • New Jersey • London • Hong Kong

Published by
World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd.
P O Box 128, Farrer Road, Singapore 9128
USA office: 687 Hartwell Street, Teaneck, NJ 07666
UK office: 73 Lynton Mead, Totteridge, London N20 8DH

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ISBN 981-02-0222-9

Printed in Singapore by JBW Printers and Binders Pte. Ltd.

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PREFACE

I am writing this preface at a moment when the world around Austria is changing at a pace and in a direction we never dared to dream of. The iron curtain which has been dividing Europe for more than 40 years is torn down, the establishing of democratic governments is on its hopefully successful way. Contacts to colleagues, which were often only possible through delayed and censored mail, e.g. when travel permissions were denied unexpectedly and deliberately, can now take place on a face-to-face basis, whenever and wherever desired.

I am happy and proud to say that, even in times of severe travel restrictions, the European Meetings on Cybernetics and Systems Research have – since their inception in 1972 – also served as a forum for scientists from countries with different political systems, freely chosen or not. In addition to Austria's state neutrality, a major reason may have been our traditional practice of supporting, whenever possible, colleagues from countries with hard currency problems. Though the deadline for the draft papers was before the beautiful "Eastern Spring", many papers were submitted by authors from (then) socialist countries, and thus, papers from 33 authors from these countries are to be found in this volume.

This volume contains all papers presented at the Tenth European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research. 189 draft papers were submitted for evaluation, careful reviewing led to the 138 final papers which are printed in these proceedings. The 208 authors of the papers stem from 30 countries from 4 continents: 146 from Europe (only 19 from Austria!), 34 from the Americas, 26 from Asia, and 2 authors from Australia. This volume therefore gives a broad spectrum of the ongoing research worldwide.

Everybody tried hard to make this conference and its proceedings a true representation of state-of-the-art research. The members of the Programme Committee and the Chairmen of the Symposia were selected among the internationally leading scientists. Great care was taken not to make this conference an only "European" or even "Austrian" event: The regional distribution of the authors

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clearly indicates that we have reached this goal. We are happy and proud to hear that these "European Meetings" (the name is a purely traditional one) are recognized as *the* internationally leading conferences in cybernetics and systems research. Important scientists from all over the world, representing countries with different cultural, social, and economic structures, carefully prepare their papers, containing their most recent research findings, and then enjoy the discussions with their colleagues.

A conference and one of its results, the Proceedings, only become a reality as the result of the concerted efforts of many persons: First of all, I would like to thank the contributors who undertook so many important and interesting research projects, then were forced to condense their results to eight pages, and to submit them rapidly to make the Proceedings available already at the Meeting. Second, I thank the chairmen – regretfully, there is no woman among them – of the Symposia of the Meeting: they helped in the selection of the topics, often invited scientists to contribute, helped in the evaluation of the papers, and finally chaired their sessions. They joined me in the Editorial Board of this volume.

Third, I would like to especially thank – ladies first! – Ms.Gaby Bröckner and Mag.Gerda Helscher for their great organizational help: Our efficient *and* charming secretarial staff not only handled hundreds of letters, drafts, final papers, phone requests, etc. with care and diligence – I hope the contributors share my impression! – but also did most of the preparatory work for this conference with great initiative and independence, for which I am especially grateful to them. Furthermore, Dozent Dr.Werner Horn, assisted by Dipl.-Ing.John Matiasek, provided the professional "computer-background" of both the Meeting and the Proceedings, based on his valuable experience through many conferences, making even possible – for the first time – a comprehensive subject index in only three days. And fourth, the World Scientific Publishing Company, and especially Ms.Faridah Shahab in its London and Mr.K.L.Choy in its Singapore offices, were very cooperative during all stages of the preparation of this volume.

I think you will enjoy studying "Cybernetics and Systems '90". Perhaps you are even persuaded to join our group at its Eleventh Meeting in 1992 in charming Vienna. See you then.

Vienna, January 1990 Robert Trappl

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