

## ■ Introduction

This issue of *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* is dedicated to a celebration of the work of Gerard de Zeeuw.

For readers of this journal, de Zeeuw should be not only familiar (he currently is associate editor), but he should also be a focus of our gratitude. He was foremost amongst those who brought the IFSR into being, and also nursed and sustained this, its journal (acting, after John Warfield, as its second editor in chief). That we have the journal in its present form, that we have such an accommodating and agreeable place to publish, is in many ways due to him.

But, of course, that is not why we publish a festschrift in his honour. De Zeeuw has a lifetime of major work in areas central to cybernetics and systems—in both published form and in his activities as a teacher (and other forms of social activism)—which has been influential and important, probably more than is realized. This work is undoubtedly worth celebration, especially in this year of his ‘mandatory’ (though scarcely actual) ‘retirement’ from the University of Amsterdam, where he has been Professor of Complex Social Systems, in particular the mathematical modelling of their innovation.

Part of any unfamiliarity we may have with his work results from a certain retiring modesty which reflects the position de Zeeuw takes. Part may be because he has insistently not stayed with just one field of study (he has worked in mathematics and econometrics, mathematical psychology, psychological research, and that peculiarly Dutch field, andragological research, where he created new ways of social thinking and doing which increasingly are finding their way into common practice). Part may be because his notion of supporting and helping is to disappear (I once compared him to the Cheshire Cat). Part may be because some of the work he has carried out in the Netherlands is, naturally, published in Dutch and therefore only available to the select few. Who knows?

However, a good part is undoubtedly due to de Zeeuw’s feeling that writing is an occasional

act, reflecting both the moment and the circumstances of writing: so that much of his writing is not easily available to his (academic) colleagues. For this reason, I have pressed him to allow some of his papers to be reproduced on the web. I prevailed: these papers have been collected by Martha Vahl and may be addressed through the url:

<http://www.cict.demon.co.uk>.

The papers that make up this festschrift are varied. We start with a biographical interview between Martha Vahl and Gerard de Zeeuw. This leads to my attempt to open the doors to de Zeeuw’s world. There follow six papers by close colleagues and former students: D. P. Dash, Jan Kooistra, Loet Leydesdorf, Ton Notten, Karel Soudijn and Dimitris Tsagdis. Johan Verbeke’s paper recounts the experience of working with de Zeeuw in developing a research agenda. David Garcia writes of his support for artists. We conclude with a personal story reflecting involvement in de Zeeuw’s ‘Problems of...’ conferences by James Ozinga, and the valediction given by Richard Jung in front of de Zeeuw’s retirement congregation in April 2001 (after which many of us celebrated his farewell party not as an adieu, but as marking the progression of his work and life to a new stage).

At the end of the volume appear a list of de Zeeuw’s main publications and biographical sketches of the authors.

The work of commissioning and editing a festschrift is onerous. One problem is that of space. In the case of this festschrift, the generous efforts of our authors has meant that we ran out of space. I therefore had to take the undesired decision to postpone publication of Raul Espejo’s paper, which will be published shortly in *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*. The reasons were entirely pragmatic: this was the only paper of such length that its removal from this issue would solve our space problem. Espejo’s paper should be understood as an integral part of this collection.

Another problem is administration. When I began to assemble the festschrift, I invited Drs Martha Vahl, long-time colleague and partner of Gerard de Zeeuw, to act as a co-editor. She declined, opting instead to act as co-ordinator: in my terms, co-editor by any other name. Without her work this volume would not exist. Both myself and the authors, and de Zeeuw, owe her a special debt of gratitude. Nor should we omit the expert and professional help given by Mary Mochrie and her team at Wileys: always helpful, always accommodating.

For me, it is doubly delightful to be able to say, in doubles and on behalf of all the contributors, that we celebrate Gerard de Zeeuw. He is academic and activist, he is friend and colleague, he is teacher and student, creator and maintainer of workgroups and work environments—including this journal.

Happy retirement, Gerard: we look forward to many more years of your constructive and supportive contributions!

Ranulph Glanville