Too busy to improve

Webinar
12.11.2024

Florian Schmitt

Why would you?

[I-1]

# Agenda

- Root Cause Analysis

- Effects

- Conclusions

Parkinson's Law (1955)

> "Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion." [1]
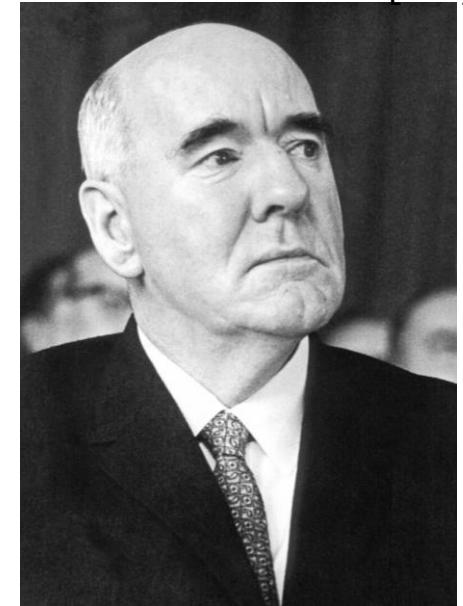
Cyril Northcote Parkinson
(1909 – 1993)

➢ The longer you have time for a task, the longer you will need to complete it.

➢ **Keeping the team under pressure is a good idea** (up to a certain degree), as it will rise productivity.

The Theory of Goal Setting (Locke & Latham)

- **Goals must be challenging**: Ambitious, but achievable ((Locke & Latham, 2002)

Long term goals
- Common **vision** of everyone
- Typically, not achieveable within several years
- Not defined based on realism but on ambition

Mid term goals
- Often **yearly** goals
- Typically formulated as **OKRs (Objectives & Key Results)**

Short term goals
- Goals for **next quarter**
- „concrete subject of current activities"

OKRs in real life
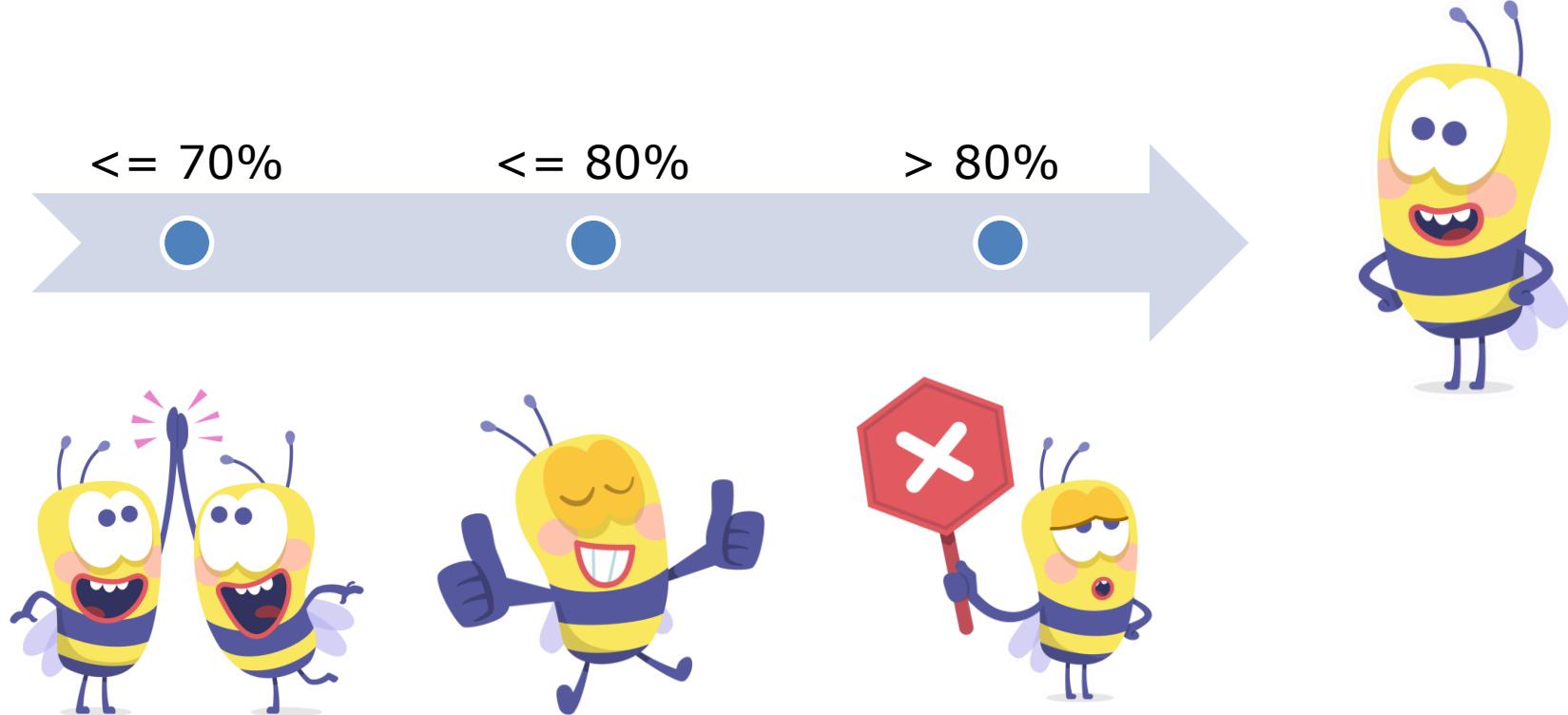
<= 70%   <= 80%   > 80%

Scenario: New project request incoming

Sarah Sales

Donnie Developer

Donnie Developer

Sarah Sales

Goal of Sales:
Sell as many projects as possible

Scenario: New project request incoming

Sarah Sales

Donnie Developer

Goal of R&D:
Be able to serve as many requests
as possible, as fast as possible

Decision factors

Motivations

Parkinson's Law

Measure of success: Number of parallel projects

Make the customer happy

„Sugarcoating" & Purposeful optimism

Goals rising each year

Challenges

Estimating is hard

Steering is hard

Scaling is hard

Rejection is hard

Causal Loop Diagram

[3]
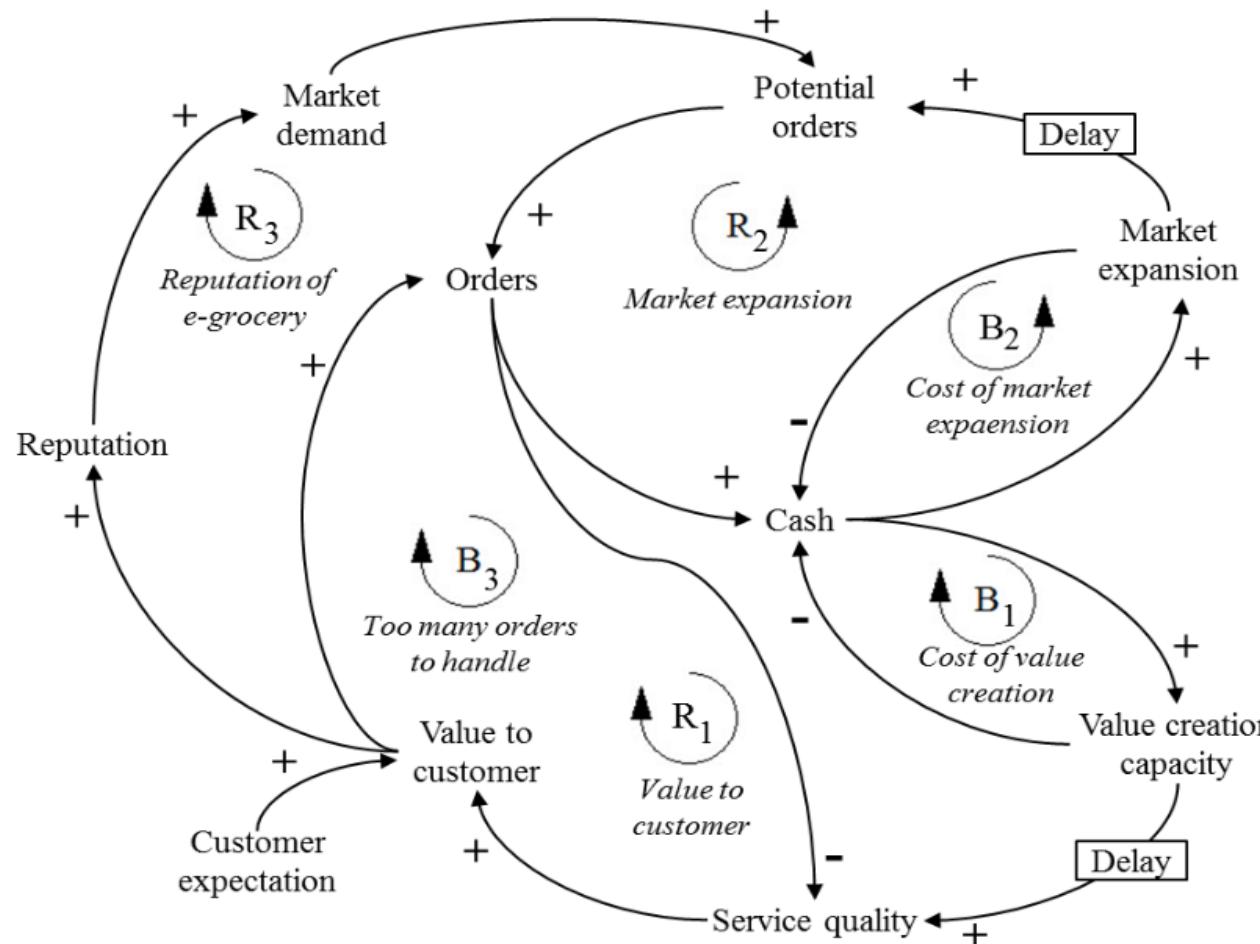
Examplary Causal Loop Diagram for a business context (Webvan)

Independent silos vs. Joint Evaluation

How to measure (and to incentivize) global success?

Order Backlog

Turnover per year

Ebit per year

Delays in running projects

Faulty returns from the field

Employee happiness histogram

What is a good work load?

- 100% Load: Jam

- 50% Load: Inefficiency

- 70-80% Load: Flow

[I-4, 5, 6]

Overload effects

Overload

Technical
debt

Milestones
shifted

Micro management
by customer

„Bare
minimum"

„Special
effects"

Quality
issues

Late product

Unhappy
customer

Exhausted
team

Why „Too busy" is not an option
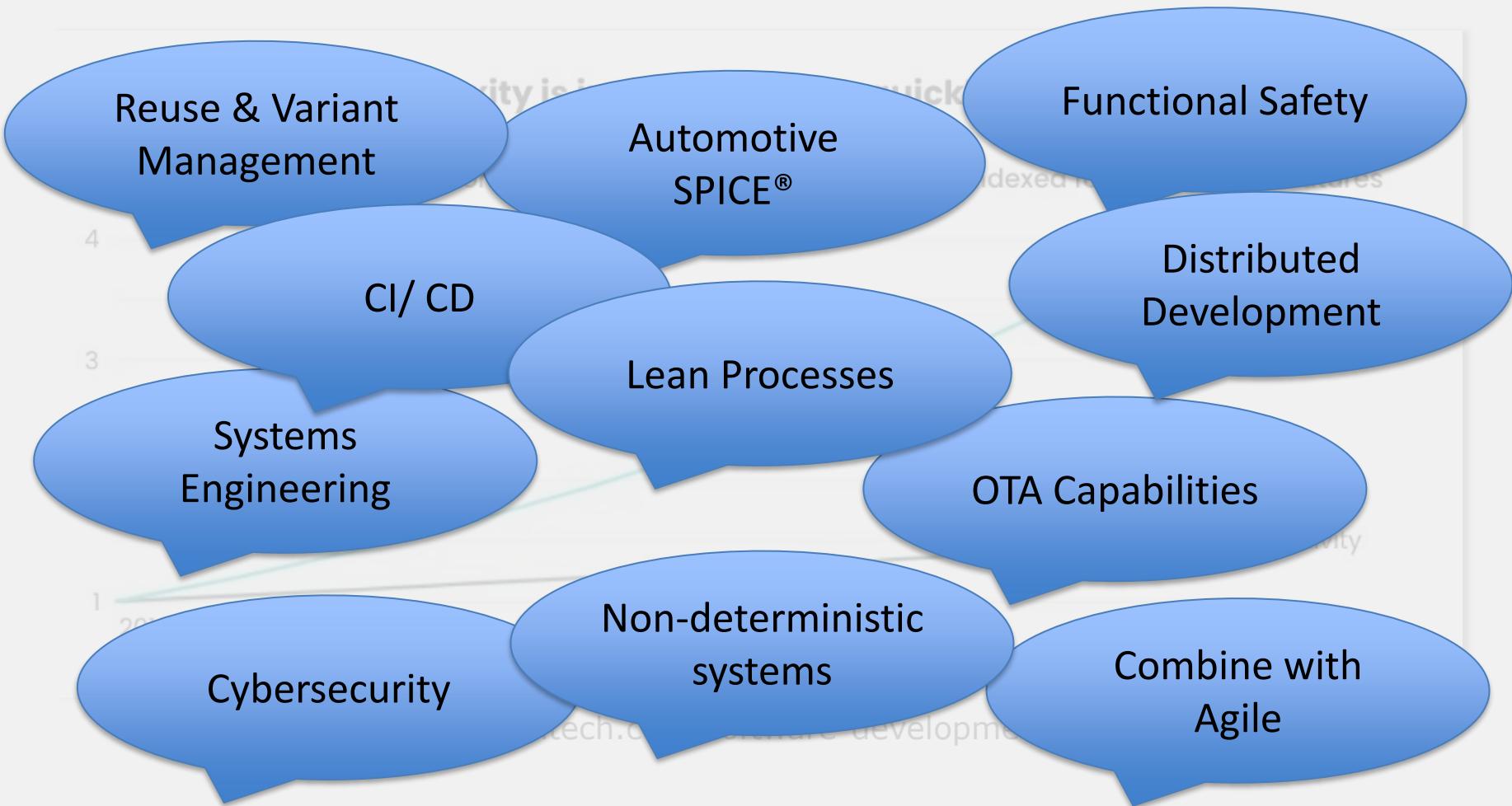
Our work gets more ambitious...

Project Goals
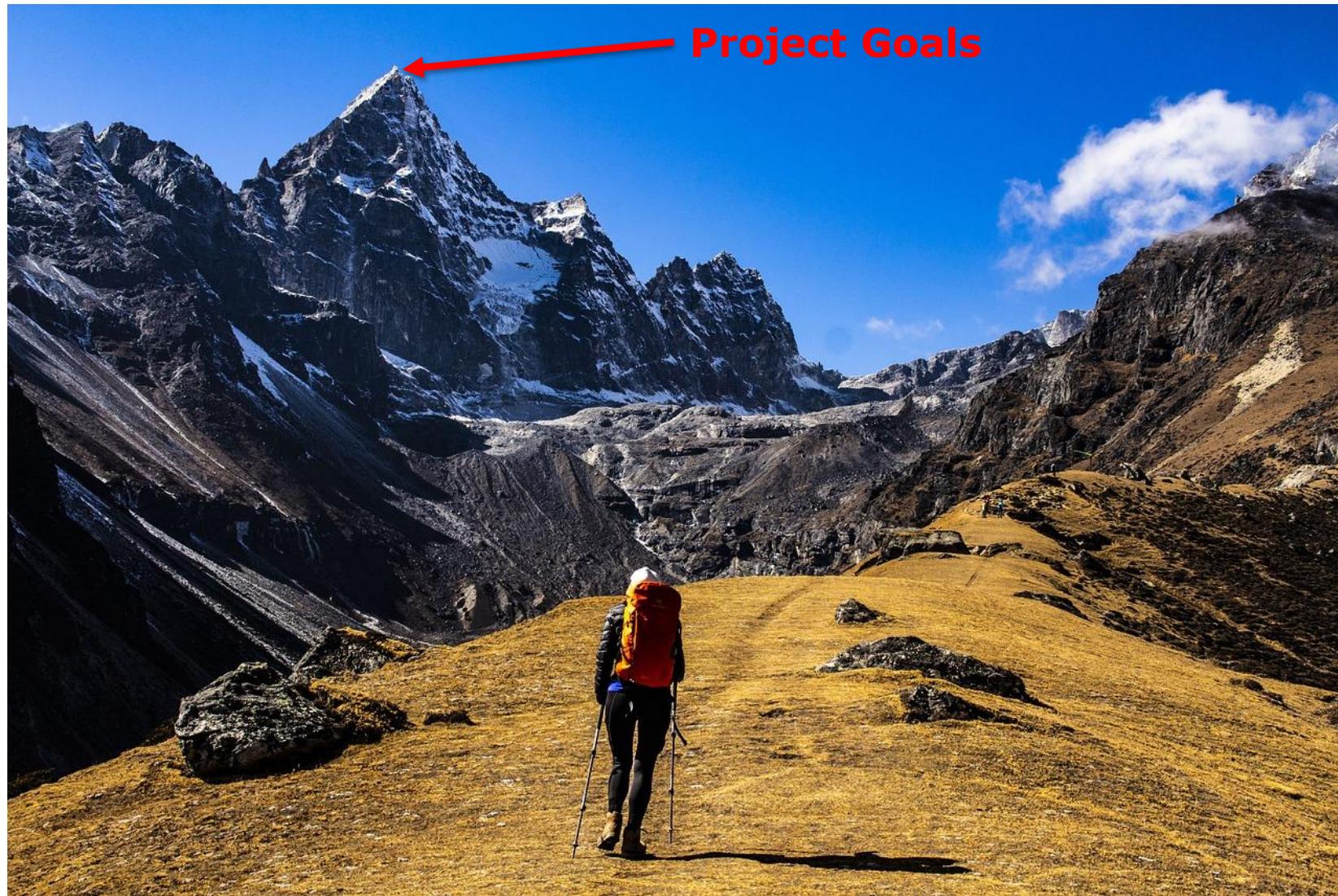
[I-7]

...so, whom do we need for the job?

[I-8]

[I-9]

Take aways
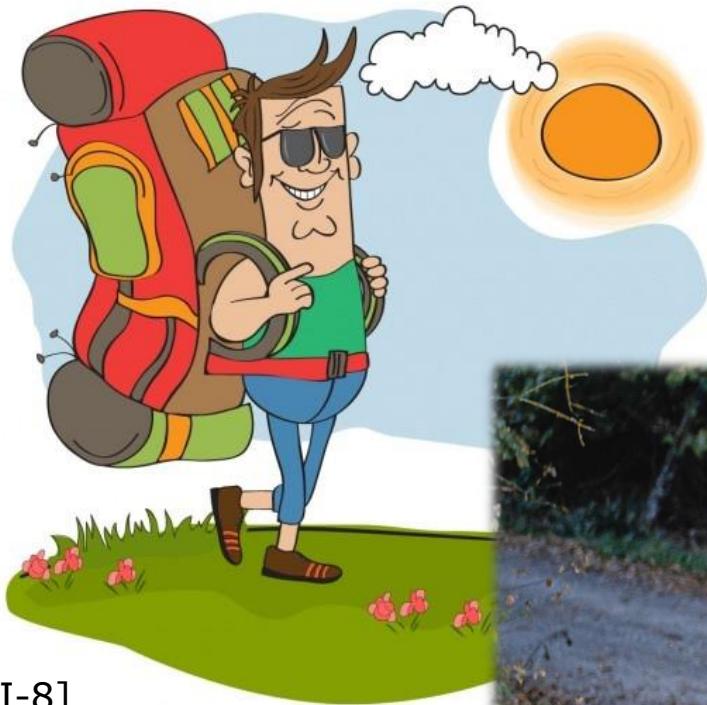
1. Blaming our manager is not the (only 😈) **answer.**
We need to understand the mechanisms behind.

Management

2. Target setting towards **global optimum,** instead of independent local targets, **<u>must</u> be implemented top down.**

3. Analyze your organization's **KPIs towards sustainable success.**

4. Use metrics to **measure what you want to avoid:**
Direct (Milestone trend analysis, sample phases with most problems)
Indirect (sick leave averages, happiness surveys)

Take aways

Project Management

5. Fight for the resources you need to **get the job done**.

6. **Escalate. But not too early.**

7. Protect yourself: **Transparency, metrics, honesty.**

8. **Keep the trust of your team alive**

Thank you !

WHICH QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

Florian Schmitt

florian.schmitt@processfellows.de

References

- References:
  - [1]: https://www.economist.com/news/1955/11/19/parkinsons-law
  - [2]: https://bigohtech.com/software-development-for-automotive-industry/
  - [3]: Täuscher, Karl / Abdelkafi, Nizar (2015): Business Model
  - Robustness: A System Dynamics Approach. Proceedings of the 15th EURAM Conference, Warsaw, 17th - 20th June 2015.

- Pictures
  - [I-1]: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/hanoi-überladen-überlast-ziehen-um-5036506/
  - [I-2]: https://www.vle.lt/straipsnis/cyril-northcote-parkinson/
  - [I-3]: https://spacenews.com/spacex-studying-landing-sites-for-mars-missions/
  - [I-4]: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/der-verkehr-stadt-straße-regen-7272520/
  - [I-5]: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/autobahn-stadt-autos-der-verkehr-7213206/
  - [I-6]: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/autobahn-straße-lkw-fahrzeuge-3392100/
  - [I-7]: https://pixabay.com/de/photos/mount-everest-berge-wandern-nepal-6395759/
  - [I-8]: https://de.freepik.com Picture from balasoiu on Freepik
  - [I-9]: https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/organisation/heer/aktuelles/die-neue-haertewoche-fuer-den-einstieg-ins-ksk-5722130