

# Seminar on Continuity in Semilattices

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## SCS 24: An Editorial

Karl Heinrich Hofmann

*Technische Universität Darmstadt, Germany, hofmann@mathematik.tu-darmstadt.de*

Klaus Keimel

*Technische Universität Darmstadt, Germany, keimel@mathematik.tu-darmstadt.de*

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NAME(S) Hofmann and Keimel	DATE	M	D	Y
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TOPIC AN EDITORIAL

REFERENCE All SCS memos on record

It all began some time in the fall of 1975. Of the extensive correspondence between Tulane and Darmstadt and between Tulane and Riverside copies were made and circulated to interested readers. Dana Scott joined in writing us from his retreats at Oberwolfach, and soon also from Oxford. It seemed natural to seek just a little bit of organisation for all of this ~~work~~ when Gierz, Keimel, Hofmann and Mislove met in June 1976 at Darmstadt, and so we founded, if this is the appropriate word, the SEMINAR ON CONTINUITY IN SEMILATTICES.

We think it has been a success. Perhaps you disagree. But more than a dozen memos were circulated since the "foundation", some of them being "pre-memos" only between two or three of us which were then elaborated for full circulation, some of them somewhat confidential warnings about mistakes in earlier memos. If one adds some circulated letters from the earlier phase one would have to admit that a considerable amount of mathematics was exchanged; the stimulation appeared to have so lively that a whole ~~x~~ interdisciplinary line of research between algebra, topology, logic analysis began to emerge just from our small group. We feel that the seminar provides the background for simply having fun in the development of this area, to go ahead and write down even raw ideas and have them exposed to scrutiny, and, of course, to enjoy knocking the other guy for his mistakes and rubbing it in with gusto. That is a fully acceptable part of it.

However, there are certain problems with our seminar which the participants have to face sooner or later. Sooner is better. We cannot do our thing in total isolation from the reality of professional life.

- West Germany: TH Darmstadt (Gierz, Keimel)  
U. Tübingen (Mislove, Visit.)
- England: U. Oxford (Scott)
- USA: U. California, Riverside (Stralka)  
LSU Baton Rouge (Lawson)  
Tulane U., New Orleans (Hofmann, Mislove)

And one of the realities of ~~prose~~ professional life is that all mathematics once it has been created and existed for a while wants to become a permanent record by being published in a journal, a memoir, a set of lecture notes (preferably yellow) or some volume of proceedings, if one happens to be around the corner. ~~R~~ For the junior members, and the ~~the~~ Ph.D. students of all of us, publication is a necessity of the real world. For the senior members it still has not lost its attraction to see a good idea in print, eventually.

Now, HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO THIS with all the mathematics which is being generated, evolved, and polished in the SEMINAR ON CONTINUITY IN SEMILATTICES? Sometimes, there is not problem at all. A memo may be based on something which is already in print, but has remained unknown for some reason, waiting time on the desk of a referee being one. Sometimes some authors of a memo will take it upon themselves to polish their thoughts and surprise the expecting world with a preprint. A slight problem begins to emerge here in the question as to how, if at all, predecessor memos of the SCS type ought to be cited as reference. Bigger problems arise, however, in the following cases (and conceivably others): Suppose, a topic has been amply discussed by four or more members of the seminar; half a dozen memos have been written on it; one of the authors thinks he has a breakthrough (which in all likelihood he has, on this level of maturity of the field and the problem). Or, suppose, that one of the members tries to nurture a Ph.D. student along with carefully dosed ideas sprinkled along his disciple's path, and this poor soul soon finds himself or herself in a race with the combined brainpower of the SCS. At this point we are no longer theorizing; these are situations which are with us now, and we summon all members of the seminar find some agreement on our stance. We feel that this is not a problem over which we should abandon the SEMINAR. It has worked too well to throw up our arms before it has had even a chance to run its due course; all seminars have been known to fade away, eventually (save Bourbaki's and some that emulate his), but there is no need bring about the demise of ours in its infancy.

We might contemplate a variety of procedures. Take e.g. Gierz' SCS memo vom elften elften elf Uhr elf. It is clear that here someone brought a relatively long drawn out affair on the coproduct to fruition with what will become eventually recognized as an important tool in the area. Even this may not be the final word he should be allowed to publish this work under his name even if the problem was enunciated by Hofmann, given the first impulses by Keimel, and even if further ideas were contributed through the seminar. Gierz was qualified through his dissertation on bundles of Banach lattices to write the first memo on bundles of CL-objects and he should write the first paper on them.

In his case, of course, the question becomes more pressing, how he should acknowledge the discussions which went into his paper? Are such ~~things~~ volatile records as SCS-memos citable in a list of references? Despite their informality, we think the answer is yes. Our colleagues in other disciplines do not hesitate to quote technical reports, for instance, even they should not be readily accessible. A.D. Wallace's lecture notes were quoted by generations of algebraic topolo-

gists without their being a matter of public record. In fact, Hofmann, Lawson, and Mislove have already proceeded on the assumption that SCS material is quotable. - Or look at Ph. D. students working with Carruth, Hofmann, Mislove, Stralka on CL or related topics. Winston Crawley at one point was competing with such a hardy veteran as Al Stralka (this was in the pre-dawn period of the SEMINAR); Bill Jones, who was delayed through the necessity of finding some gainful employment on the side at one time was competing with ATLAS and is currently up against Gierz in some questions having been fed to him. This is a more difficult question. It would be impractical if one department would usurp a certain group of questions for ~~its~~ using it on their students (of course they could try to keep a corner for themselves by trying to be secretive about it- chances are they will be scooped anyway). One might think that an advisor, given a certain state of maturity and progress of the candidate circulates a reasonably detailed program for his student and asks for a moratorium on the program for a few months. We do not feel on safe ground here, ~~so~~ we have to come to some kind of informal understanding on this question, too.

There is, finally, the question of priority. Shall we enter the ~~century~~ century old hassle and race each other on "who's first"? We honestly think that in our group, in which a generally pleasant assortment of characters unite, this should never become a problem. In spite of the little place for the date in the upper right hand corner of our memos. We created this space for identification purposes only. There are now memos on record which have the identical date, but have different authors. The two data combined suffice for the simplest kind of identification. Consecutive numbering would be out of the question for obvious reasons. We suggest that we address ourselves to the question of the ~~priority~~ priority dispute at the time when the first duel is fought in the morning fog of some nice day on the levee of the Mississippi. Not before.