

Negotiation Support Systems for Intercultural Negotiation Based on Evolutionary Systems Design

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Abstract

As background for an open forum on negotiation support systems (NSS) for intercultural negotiation, the topic is outlined from the viewpoint of Evolutionary Systems Design (ESD).

1. An ESD Approach to NSS for Intercultural Negotiation

Culture has been defined "as a set of shared and enduring meanings, values, and beliefs that characterize national, ethnic, or other groups and orient their behavior" (Faure and Rubin [2]). Here we are concerned with intercultural (between-culture) negotiation. In particular, we are interested in the design and use of NSS to support intercultural negotiation.

We suggest that NSS for this purpose can be based on a computer-implemented universal (culture independent) general problem solving framework (problem representation) for group processes. Shakun [4] proposes ESD as such a framework and implements it with a general purpose group support system such as MeetingWorks (Lewis and Shakun [3]) or GroupSystems. More specialized NSS capability as in NEGOTIATOR (Bui and Shakun [1]) can be added. The resulting NSS provides a universal ESD computer culture (figure 1) for intercultural negotiation. Figures 2 and 3 show the ESD universal general framework (problem representation). For detailed discussion of these figures, see [4].

In using this ESD-based NSS, process meeting scripts are written by the negotiating parties working with a facilitator. A meeting script is a detailed agenda or sequence of software tools (generate, organize, etc.) that a group chooses to use in developing an ESD negotiation problem representation. Script management is dynamic including adjustment of meeting scripts "on the fly" during meetings. These process meeting scripts are culture

dependent, as are the inputted sets of elements and their relations (content). Process and content reflect the participating individual multiple cultures and their interaction from which a new culture -- with its own process and content -- may emerge. The result is an evolving common joint culture (a situational culture) with regard to the problem at hand, and, formally, an intercultural group problem representation and potential solution.

The above background material provides points of departure for open forum discussion.

2. References

- [1] Bui, T. and Shakun, M.F., 1996, "Negotiation Processes, Evolutionary Systems Design and NEGOTIATOR," *Group Decision and Negotiation*, 5(4-6).
- [2] Faure, G.O. and Rubin, J.Z., (eds.), 1993, *Culture and Negotiation*, Sage Publishers, Newbury Park, California.
- [3] Lewis, L.F. and Shakun, M.F., 1996, "Using Meeting Works for Windows Group Support System to Implement Evolutionary Systems Design," *Group Decision and Negotiation*, 5(4-6).
- [4] Shakun, M.F., 1996, "Intercultural Group Decision and Negotiation with ESD and Computer Support," *Proceedings of the 1996 International Conference on Systems, Man and Cybernetics*, Beijing, October 14-17.

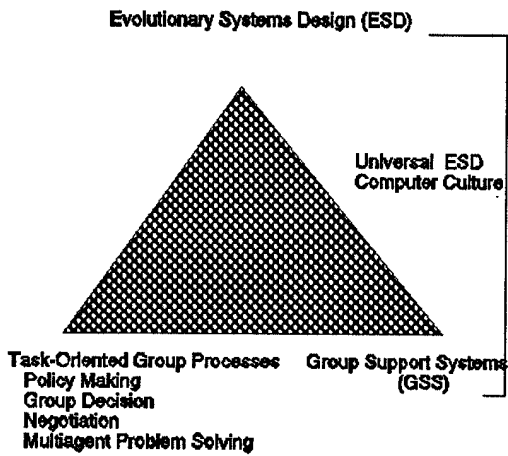


Figure 1. The Universal ESD Computer Culture: Modeling and Supporting Task-Oriented Group Processes.

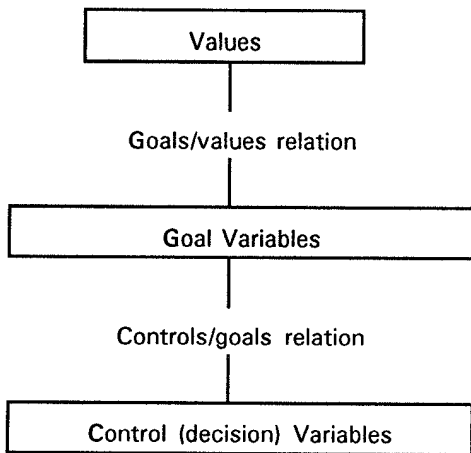


Figure 2. Hierarchy 1 relation between control variables, goal variables, and values.

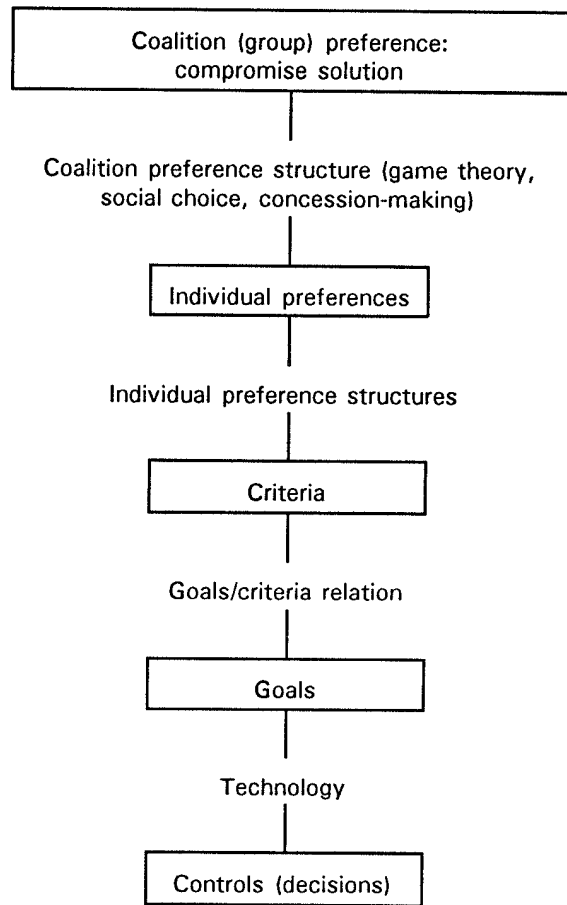


Figure 3. Hierarchy 2 relation between controls, goals, criteria, individual preferences, and coalition preference.