

EVOLUTIONARY GUIDANCE SYSTEMS FOR THE SYSTEMS DESIGN OF A JUST SOCIETY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

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Abstract

This symposium is to demonstrate the concept of the Evolutionary Guidance System (EGS). The panel members have been part of an EGS at Saybrook Institute. They will report on their progress, and with the participation of and in dialog with the audience, make use of Banathy's Systems Design Architecture to self-organize and consider further selected aspects of the conference theme.

Introduction

The purpose of this symposium is to demonstrate the concept of the Evolutionary Guidance System (EGS) and its relevance to the conference theme.

An EGS is a self-organizing group engaged in activities which direct the group toward its common goal [1]. These activities are the heart of the process giving direction to its evolution. In an EGS, each individual brings a perspective or dimension, which is acknowledged by the group and is contributory to its evolution. Perspectives are decided by the group in relation to the goal and purpose of the EGS. The perspectives chosen can be determined by areas of expertise in an academic discipline, corporate function, minority group, geographical location, sphere of life experience, or some other meaningful basis of categorization. However, there does appear to be a critical set of interactive dimensions, which may be necessary for a human activity system to become an EGS [3]. To evolve, an EGS must include aesthetic, economic, educational, moral, political, scientific, social action, technological, and wellness dimensions.

An EGS Comes to Saybrook

The members of the Systems Inquiry Focus Group at Saybrook, in January 1990, formed an EGS for the purpose of working with Banathy's conception of the EGS [3]. Over the past several months, we have met as an EGS for three day sessions at two Saybrook National meetings and communicated over the Saybrook Electronic Network in order to gain more experience with the concepts and principles of an EGS. Further, we have used our EGS as an approach to address the conference theme.

In our discussions of several systems concepts and subthemes for the ISSS conference we have been exploring the self-organizing, value-clarifying, and purpose-seeking aspects of an EGS. We have found very useful in our process the notion of EGS as an ideal-seeking human activity system, guided by images of a future that is embedded in an evolutionary view of human and societal development. Equally important, we have found

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a systems methodology, the Systems Design Architecture [2], central to our own self-organizing activities and progress toward our goal of conducting this symposium. Finally, our interests have turned increasingly in the direction of applying the EGS concept to the future development of ISSS.

The perspectives, or dimensions, we have considered important in our process overlap substantially with Banathy's set of critical dimensions. So far, our EGS contains nine dimensions which model evolutionary values. They are:

- **AESTHETICS** in the pursuit of beauty, cultural values, the arts and humanities, for the enrichment of our inner lives.
- **ECONOMICS** in the just use of resources and in the development of resources, integrated yet just for indigenous groups.
- **EDUCATION** in regard to the development of evolutionary competence and the design of just systems for current and future generations.
- **ETHICS** in regard to our self-realization and integrity on personal and social levels in all dealings with others.
- **GOVERNANCE** to encourage self-determination, peace development, and global cooperation.
- **SCIENCE** to provide a better understanding of conscious evolution, the evolution of society, and the promotion of human and societal betterment.
- **SOCIAL ACTION** in our activities of cooperation and collaboration.
- **TECHNOLOGY** in the service of the design of just systems for the improvement of the quality of life for human beings, and for life forms and habitats to ensure preservation and coevolution on the planet.
- **WELLNESS** for physical, mental, and spiritual health of individuals, groups, and the communities.

In most human activity systems, the above dimensions are not sufficiently valued and integrated for the system to converge toward internal coherence. In many cases, some of the critical dimensions are absent altogether. We believe such value-related considerations represent an important area of attention for the greater humanization of all human activity systems. However, in an EGS as young as ours, we do not expect it to be sufficiently developed to represent a complete set of dimensions. But we do expect that our continuation of this process at Saybrook Institute and at future ISSS meetings will be of potential value to ISSS.

Designing ISSS for Future Generations

One of the subthemes for this conference, which emerged from discussions at the end of the 1979 conference in Edinburgh, was "the design of ISSS for future generations." This symposium is an opportunity to participate in applying the EGS concept to the topic of the development of ISSS.

There are systems concepts we have found useful for EGS, and the essentials of our process of systems design inquiry have been guided by Banathy's generic Systems Design Architecture. Following the brief report of our group process and progress as an EGS at Saybrook, the group discussion is to focus on ISSS as an EGS and the directions the organization might take for future generations. The conferencees are invited to join us in the experience of working as an EGS as applied to ISSS. This group process is intended to yield some organizing perspectives and a guiding image for ISSS. With some reflection and evaluation as the last part of the program, we hope to integrate what we have experienced and accomplished during the symposium period.

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Conclusion

The membership and chief officers of the organization can make use of available knowledge and experience in systems design and evolutionary guidance systems to develop ISSS in the spirit of the conference theme. A symposium devoted to the development of ISSS as an EGS can be an integral part of our annual meeting.

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