The Stakeholder/Social Information System

Jacques M. Chevalier

Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada

See author's review of stakeholder literature, with extensive bibliography and links

Contents

SIS Modules and Techniques

Transdisciplinarity and Conceptual Pluralism

Users and Community of Learning

Web Site and CD-ROM

Workshops and PBL Pedagogy

Authors and Workshop Instructors
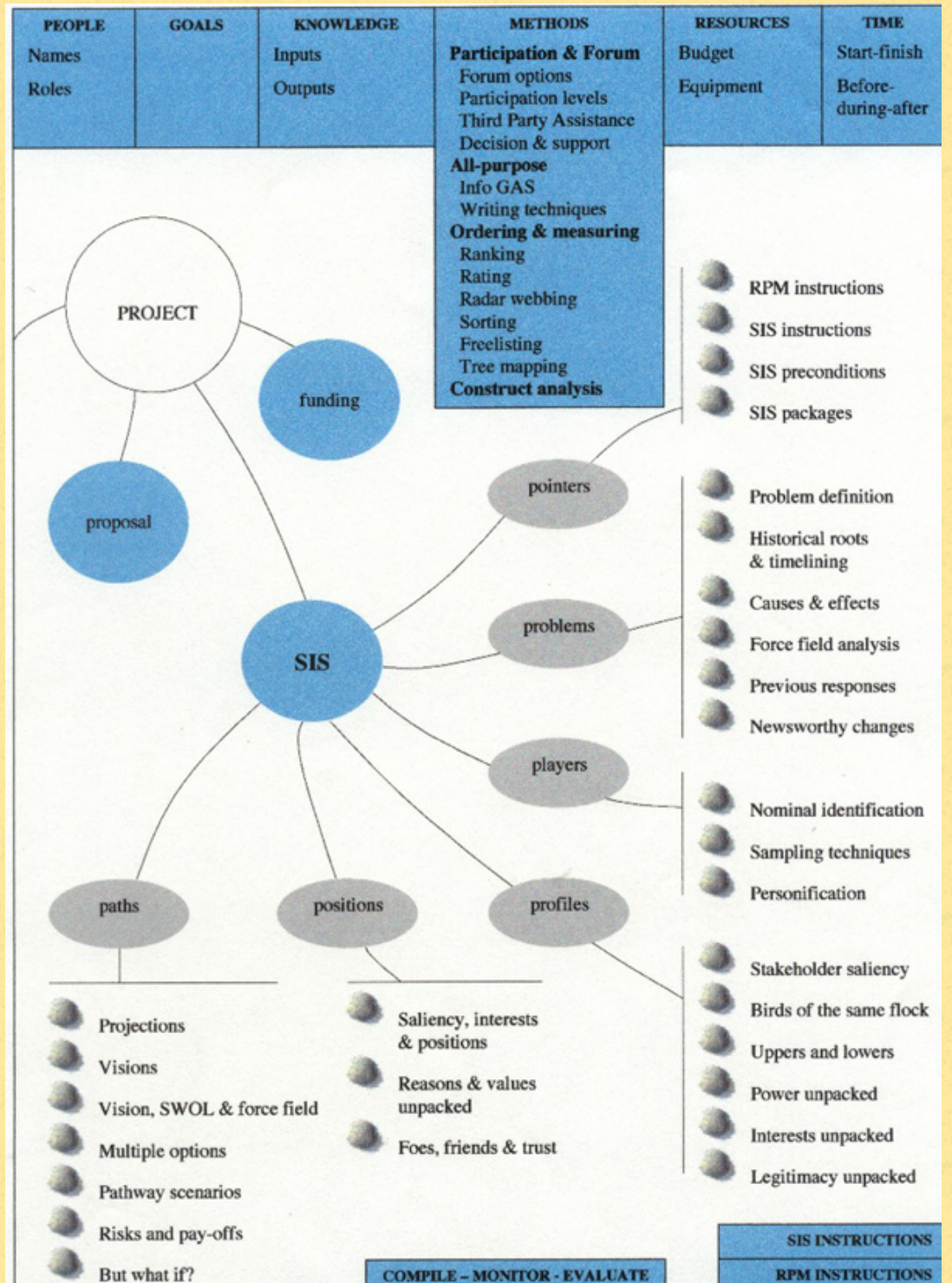
Contact (Jacques M. Chevalier)

The **Stakeholder/Social Information System** is the social counterpart of the Geographic Information System (GIS) with a participatory twist. It addresses the social aspects of conflict, problem, project or policy management activities. Social analysis is tackled through a broad menu of participatory research and actor-driven methodologies designed to be scaled up or down according to project needs.

The SIS proposes flexible techniques to analyze social reality with the active involvement of stakeholders themselves -- actors, groups, constituencies or institutions that can affect or be affected (adversely or positively) by a given set of problems or interventions.

The techniques are divided into interlocking modules (Problems, Players, Profiles, Positions, Paths) that go well beyond current techniques addressing the power relations, interests, and positions of stakeholders.

The SIS differs from commonly used stakeholder analysis methods in that it incorporates considerations of culture, the synergies of social knowledge systems, and variations in levels of complexity.

The SIS also offers a flexible Action Research Management (ARM) tool, i.e., a bubble mapping of project activities and related attribution of goals and resources (people, knowledge, methods, resources, time), to be scaled up or down depending on the user's needs.

PEOPLE	GOALS	KNOWLEDGE	METHODS	RESOURCES	TIME
Names		Inputs	**Participation & Forum**	Budget	Start-finish
Roles		Outputs	Forum options	Equipment	Before-during-after

METHODS:
Participation & Forum
Forum options
Participation levels
Third Party Assistance
Decision & support
All-purpose
Info GAS
Writing techniques
Ordering & measuring
Ranking
Rating
Radar webbing
Sorting
Freelisting
Tree mapping
Construct analysis

PROJECT — funding — proposal — SIS — pointers — problems — players — paths — positions — profiles

- RPM instructions
- SIS instructions
- SIS preconditions
- SIS packages

- Problem definition
- Historical roots & timelining
- Causes & effects
- Force field analysis
- Previous responses
- Newsworthy changes

- Nominal identification
- Sampling techniques
- Personification

- Stakeholder saliency
- Birds of the same flock
- Uppers and lowers
- Power unpacked
- Interests unpacked
- Legitimacy unpacked

paths:
- Projections
- Visions
- Vision, SWOL & force field
- Multiple options
- Pathway scenarios
- Risks and pay-offs
- But what if?

positions:
- Saliency, interests & positions
- Reasons & values unpacked
- Foes, friends & trust

COMPILE – MONITOR - EVALUATE

SIS INSTRUCTIONS
RPM INSTRUCTIONS

SIS modules and Action-Research Management (ARM) techniques

Preliminary versions (27.1.03), downloadable PDF files

ARM Techniques	SIS Modules 1 to 3	SIS Module 4 to 6

Participation & Forum
Forum options
Participation levels
Third party
Decision & support

Writing & info. GAS
All-purpose info. GAS
Writing for change

Ordering & measuring
Ranking
Rating
Radar webbing
Sorting
Freelisting
Tree mapping

Construct
Construct analysis

Pointers
ARM instructions
SIS instructions
SIS preconditions
SIS roadmaps

Problems
Problem definition
Historical roots & timelining
Causes & consequences
Force field analysis
Previous responses
Newsworthy changes

Players
Nominal identification
Stakeholder sampling
Personification

Profiles
Stakeholder saliency
Birds of a feather
Uppers & lowers
Power unpacked
Interests unpacked
Legitimacy unpacked

Positions
Saliency & position diagnostic
Reasons & values unpacked
Foes, friends & trust

Paths
Projections
Visions
Vision, SWOL & force field
Multiple options
Pathway scenarios
Risks & pay-offs
But what if?

Transdisciplinarity and Conceptual Pluralism

The SIS methodology draws from action-research techniques borrowed and adapted from many disciplines, including environmental studies, sociology, anthropology, political economy, psychology, and business management. Its conceptual underpinnings involve a fourfold perspective on social reality, i.e., a combination of:

Political Economy: taking issues of power, interests, and legitimacy into consideration

Formal Economics: exploring methods of rational allocation of scarce means among alternative ends

Participatory Action Research: doing research for problem-solving purposes and with the active involvement of the parties concerned

Socio-Constructivism: adapting applied research to social constructions of behavior, language, and knowledge

Users and Community of Learning

The SIS currently under construction is an interactive tool for self-study and group learning by a broad range of users, including field researchers, NGOs, institutions, university teachers, and students doing applied research in various contexts. SIS project plans are to include articles written on the subject matter and illustrative case studies (in English, French, and Spanish) that draw on experiences from workshop participants and interested researchers working in various regions of the world. Contributions documenting local experiences and adaptations of SIS methods will be considered for inclusion in future versions of the SIS web site.

Web Site and CD-ROM

The SIS will be made available through a user-friendly CD-ROM and an interactive web site, both currently under construction.

Workshops and PBL Pedagogy

Instructors are available to give 2 to 4 day workshops designed to assist institutions or groups of applied researchers in using the Stakeholder/Social Information System. In addition to exploring participatory social analysis techniques, SIS workshops propose innovative Action Research Management strategies (ARM, see bubble mapping above) that emphasize the need to constantly combine research with concrete problem-solving activities. Thus each workshop is tailored to the learning system of a particular group, encouraging participants to pursue their own project or program work while learning new techniques and training themselves at the same time. Participants use their action research experience to reflect on stakeholder theory and methods and to adapt the SIS to their own context and develop strategies to meet their own goals. This approach takes its inspiration from broader developments in Process-Problem-People-Project-Product Based Learning, PBL strategies that participants may also apply to their participatory action research plans.

Authors and Workshop Instructors

The SIS project is currently led by Jacques M. Chevalier (Principal Investigator) and Louise de la Gorgendière (Research Associate), both professors at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. It is funded and actively supported by the International Development Research Center (Ottawa) and involves close collaboration with the University for Peace (Costa Rica).

This web page page will be updated on a regular basis through ongoing research and interaction with other researchers.

Anyone interested in contributing information or material of any sort (hyperlinks, references, full articles, announcements, diagrams, etc.) can reach me by email (see below).

Jacques Chevalier (home page), Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada (last update: 27.01.03)

00485 Since Nov. 2002