

**Center for Technology in Government
MIII Justice Modeling Project**

Focus Group Meeting Minutes

Date: May 21, 2004
Place: CTG Meeting Room
Time: 9:00
By: Luis Luna

List of Attendees:

David Andersen	(DA)
Tamas Bodor	(TB)
Brian Burke	(BB)
Donna Canestraro	(DC)
Anthony Cresswell	(AC)
Fikret Demircivi	(FD)
Theresa Pardo	(TP)
George Richardson	(GR)
Carrie Schneider	(CS)
Fiona Thompson	(FT)
Yi-Jung Wu	(YW)
Luis Luna	(LL)

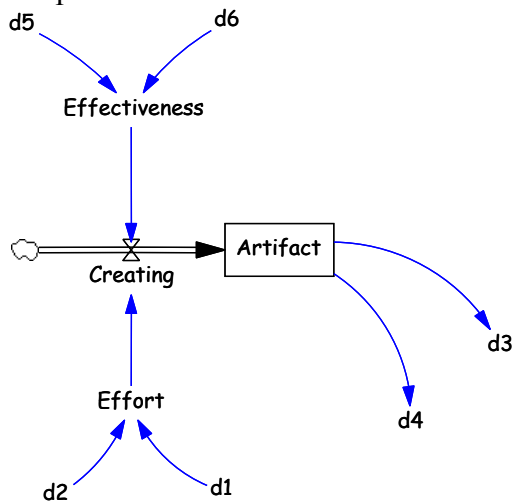
DA Introduced the work for the day, explaining some important differences among the stocks of technical artifacts (issues) in the central part of the model conceptualization, and the stocks of social artifacts around the chain of issues. He explained that if MIB could come to a group and “flash” out their memories, all the social artifacts would be erased, but the technical artifacts would remain.

He also commented that the model that GR and LL presented during the meeting had little changes compared to the model discussed in the previous session. He stressed the importance of having a model representing a controlled world in which actually we could experiment “flashing out” memories or changing initial conditions to represent different realities, and to explore how to manage them.

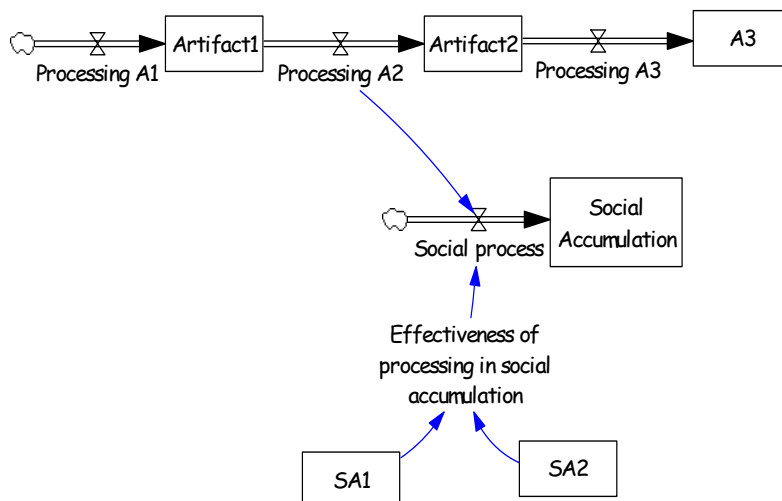
GR Presented three basic building blocks present several times in the model, which are presented in the following pictures:

The following figure shows the simplest of them, implying that group activity *created* several kinds of *artifacts* along the process. Moreover, the activity of *creating* artifacts was the result of certain amount of *effort*, and some *effectiveness* associated to that effort.

This common structure used in system dynamics practice helped the group to differentiate among different variables affecting the *creating* capacity of CJIT. Some of them could increase (or decrease) this capacity through motivating an increase (or decrease) in the amount of *effort*, and others could improve (or limit) the group *effectiveness*. The accumulation of artifacts could in turn affect some other variables in the process.

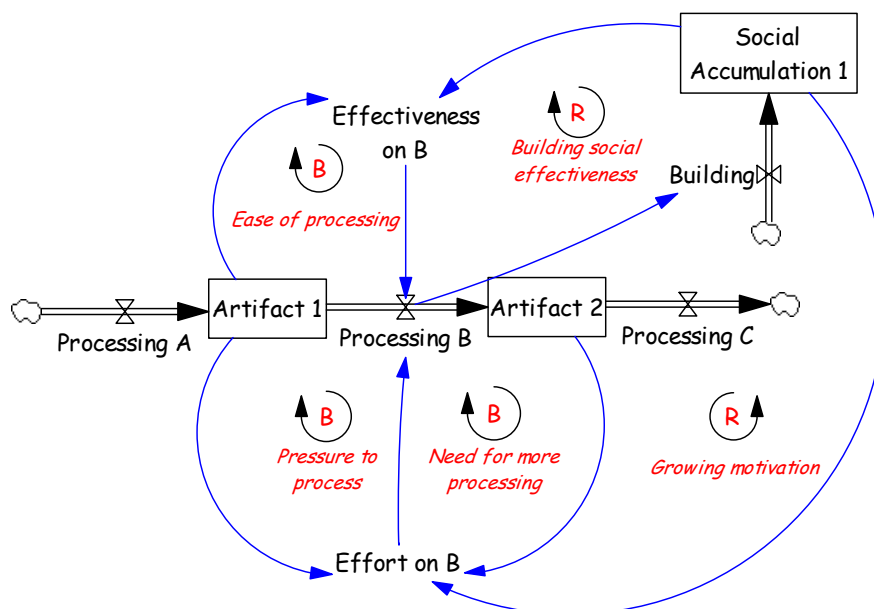


A second set of generic insights about the process of defining Integrated Justice NY was associated with the idea that CJIT produced not only one kind of artifact, but several of them. Furthermore, these artifacts could be conceptualized as a chain of different group processes that “transformed” artifacts during the project. Along the creation of tangible artifacts, group processes also yielded the creation of several social accumulations such as understanding, trust, or engagement. The effectiveness in the creation of a social accumulation could also depend upon the current state of some other accumulations (i.e. the creation of engagement inside the group could be a function of the level of understanding).



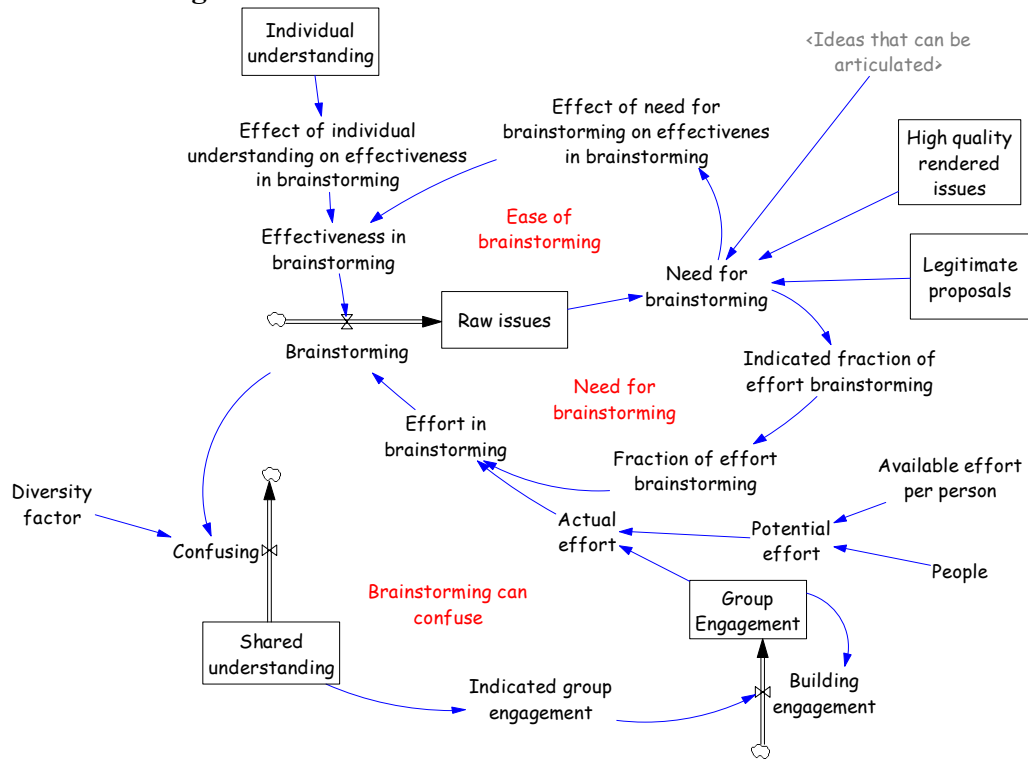
Overlapping the basic stock-and-flow structures of previous figures creates a series of reinforcing and counterbalancing feedback processes associated with each activity or group process in the project. The three balancing loops in the figure could be considered control feedback processes. The two balancing loops in the bottom of the picture represent increases either in pressure or need to increase effort in a specific process in the project because of the accumulation of tangible artifacts. Increases in the quantity of artifacts 1, for example, create pressure to increase effort in process B. This process exists in many project models, in which accumulation of *work to do* create pressure to process that work, reducing the amount of tasks to be done, “pushing” them to the next process. Being a chain of processes, the lack of artifacts 2 creates the need of more effort in process B to create more artifacts for the next process, “pulling” artifacts to the next process. The counterbalancing loop in the upper part of the figure is another control loop representing reductions (or increases) in effectiveness as the group ran out (or accumulates) work to do, assuming processing is easier when the group has a lot of artifacts to work with.

The two reinforcing processes in the figure represent virtuous cycles or potential traps in the development of the project. On the upper side of the figure, the group builds effectiveness on the task as they build social capabilities or gets trapped in the process because of the lack of such capability. Additionally, increases on the social accumulation also have the potential of increasing motivation for devoting more effort to the project. Lack of such accumulation, however, is an additional trap for the group. For example, lack of understanding of the project objectives could prevent group members of investing time on task preventing further development of understanding.

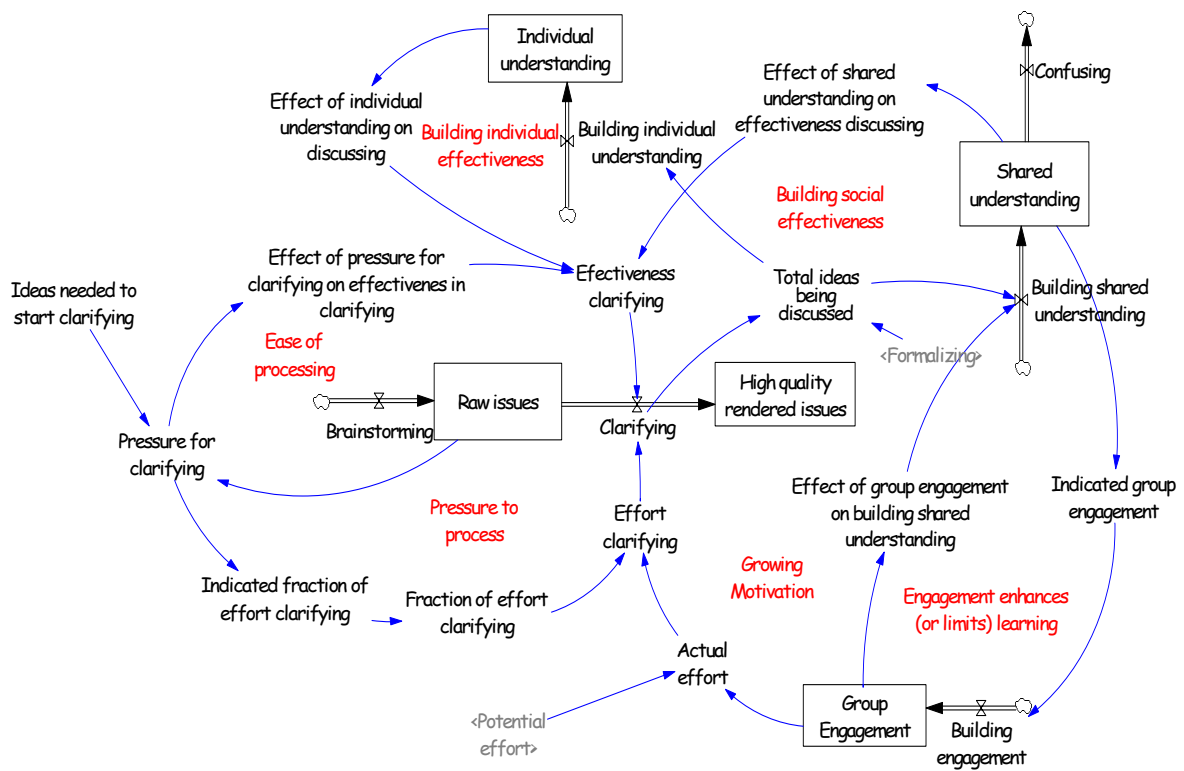


After presenting the basic building blocks of the theory, GR presented the basic blocks as they were present in the different parts of the model produced from the previous sessions (see the following figures).

Brainstorming



Clarifying

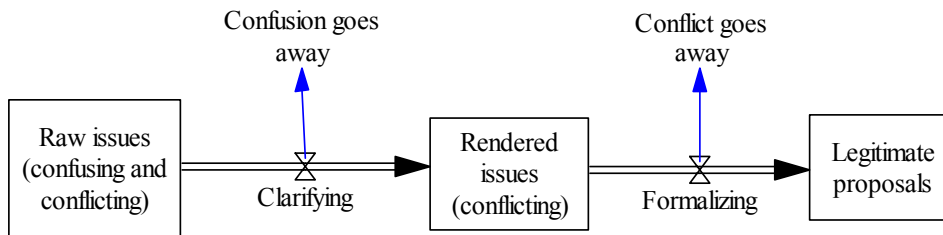


Formalizing

After presenting the model structure, the team experimented with some changes in parameters of the model, according to some experiments suggested by the modeling team, and the group added an extra experiment (see table on the next page).

During the presentation, the group continuously shared ideas to enrich the model, point out weaknesses of the model or to clarify the conceptualization. The following are the ideas discussed by the group:

- All socio-technical processes are described as recursive processes, thus involving feedback loops.
- Memories of previous experiences and efforts have an important effect in the current effort (this previous experiences can be embedded in the initial conditions or parameters of the model or in the time that takes to build social accumulations).
- Agreement and disagreement are two social processes interacting that also affect in the formalizing stage.
- Issues and ideas are synonyms in the model, thus it is needed to change all the references to ideas into issues in the model.
- Different boxes contain different things. A participant proposed the following picture:



Scenario Matrix

Scenario Parameter	Base	Not neutral facilitation	Innovative technology	Small tolerance ambiguity	OMRDD
Initial group engagement [0,1]	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.5
Diversity factor [0,1]	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.8
Initial individual understanding [0,1]	0.7	0.7	0.25	0.7	0.2
Initial individual commitment [0,1]	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.4
Initial legitimacy [0,1]	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.8
Exercise of group influence [0,1]	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1
Exercise of power on process [0,1]	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1

CTG (neutral) facilitation [0,1]	0.8	0.2	0.8	0.8	0.5
Anticipated ambiguity of products [0,1]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Tolerance to ambiguity (0,n)	10.0	10.0	10.0	3.0	10
Ideas needed to start clarifying (0,n)	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20
Ideas needed to start formalizing (0,n)	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20

- Ambiguity is different than confusion. Confusion refers to what are we doing? And Ambiguity to where are we going? Confusion is the same that lack of shared understanding, and shared understanding is a result of a combination of human capital and social capital.
- One member of the group shared the idea of using the model as a capability assessment tool, promoting the discussion about the differences of modeling to predict vs. modeling to learn. This kind of models is better to learn.
- The group said that group influence and the power exercise both were dynamical rather than external inputs.
- Tolerance to ambiguity may depend on some accumulations like shared understanding.
- CTG activity influences both, effort and effectiveness. Process facilitation helps to build legitimacy, and content facilitation helps to keep progress. We need to show CTG effort explicitly in the model
- CTG is not a neutral facilitator. It works as a buffer (compare in experiments the effects of having external vs. internal facilitation, process vs. content facilitation, and good vs. bad facilitation).
- CTG understanding is different from agency understanding.
- We need to clarify what happens to ideas as they move forward. Also some ideas get thrown out.
- Rendered ideas as well as legitimate proposals should influence ambiguity.
- Ambiguity impacts on confusion.
- What makes tipping point endogenous?