Multicriteria decision-aid:
Two applications in education management

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J. MOSCAROLA
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RÉSUMÉ

Dans la première section les conditions et la formalisation du choix trichotomique sont établies sur la base des concepts de relation de surclassement et d'ensembles de références. Ils permettent la modélisation des préférences dans le contexte décisionnel étudié.

Deux applications suivent. La première appliquée à la décision du jury de sélection des candidats à une institution d'enseignement commercial, permet, grâce à un exemple numérique de préciser l'utilisation du modèle.

La seconde décrit une application faite à la répartition de subventions aux écoles d'une académie. Nous montrons que le type d'aide à la décision choisi répond au contexte organisationnel en ce qui concerne la gestion du système d'information et de relations.
SUMMARY

In the first section the conditions for and formalism of trichotomic choice problem formulation are stated on the basis of the fundamental concepts of outranking relations and reference sets, used to the modelling of global preferences within the given context. Two applications follow. The first one, applied to the decision of the admission committee of a business school, makes the explanation of the procedure more concrete. The second one is the description of an implementation for resource allocations to schools of an academic region. It is shown that the approach to decision aid we propose fits to the organizational background regarding the management of information systems as well as the human relations and organizational development.

Introduction ........................................... p. 2

I The methodology of multicriteria segmentation .............................. p. 4

II The selection of candidates for a business school admission ............. p. 13

III Resource allocation to the school of an academic region ................. p. 21

Conclusion ............................................. p. 31

Annexe: outranking relation ................................ p. 32
INTRODUCTION

The procedures resulting from the operational research are usually concerned to show up, in consideration of a given criteria, an optimal solution out of a set of possible solutions which is given beforehand. The procedure for decision aid dealt with in this paper does not come within this traditional problematic. In fact this one does not seem to be suitable to aid a decision maker who, out of documents or conversations, proceeding from multiple applicants, has to answer to the same type of question (eventually spread over time). The demand may regard a credit or a diploma grant, the attribution of a promotion by selection, an increase of wages, the launching of a new product, of a research project, the processing of a damage, or a claim file a.s.o.

In that kind of problems each demand, and consequently each decision, is in competition with the others only in the range of a rather fuzzy or elastic constraint which limits (for physical, financial, technical human reasons) the global capacity of acceptance for a given period. In such conditions the optimisation problematic leads to the implementation of quite artificial or difficult solutions [1].

Furthermore the criteria upon which the decision maker bases his judgment to give to each demand a favorable or unfavorable answer may involve quite various factors which are not necessarily quantifiable. The available information may be inexact or vague. The particular influence of each criteria and more generally the way in which the combination of their values influences the judgment of the decision maker (in terms of "better and worse" or "bad and good") may only be partially known according to the decision maker's good will.

In such conditions the decision maker may wish to rely on a procedure which out of the only information available during each processing, helps him to choose in terms of acceptance, refuse, or postponement for further information.

[1] B. ROY. A conceptual frame work for a normative theory of "decision aid" Management Science Special Issue on Multiple Criteria Decision Making 1976
How can we conceive such a procedure of trichotomic choice? That is the problem we are studying there (section one). Can such a procedure be implemented in the context of administrative organisation? That is what we are trying to show by describing two applications in the field of education management (section two and three).

The first application will enable us to make the explanation of the procedure and of the model used more concrete by studying the well known case of the decision in an admission committee in a business school.

The second application regarding a decision procedure for resource allocations to schools takes place in a large and rather bureaucratic administration. By describing how the procedure has been implemented we shall try to show that such an approach to decision aid particularly fits to the organisational background regarding the management of information system as well as of the human relations and organisational development.
I. THE METHODOLOGY OF MULTICRITERIA TRICHOTOMIC SEGMENTATION

1. Type of aid intended

Given, actions, objects or candidates (we are now going to speak of objects), which are not fundamentally in competition, we want to help an identified decision maker by saying whether such or such object is compatible with his requirement.

We have thus to define and model a referential system which will allow us to establish by comparison (on the basis of criteria) the intrinsic value of each object. Thanks to this particular modelling effort we don’t need to consider the whole objects at once to be able to come to a conclusion on each of them.

The procedure lends itself to a sequential examination of the objects. Nevertheless to insure a sufficient reliability we shall admit that in some cases the intrinsic value of the object can not be defined.

More precisely, on the base of just the initial information introduced in the model, the main point of the trichotomic segmentation is, to:

- accept all the objects declared without the intervention of the decision maker as sufficiently good (category A₁);
- refuse all the objects declared without the intervention of the decision maker as too bad (category A₃);
- demand a further examination by the decision maker for the others (category A₂).

By assigning each object to one of these categories we discriminate between

- those for which initial information is sufficient to found a solid assumption about the intrinsic value of the object (category A₁ and A₃);
- those for which initial information does not allow us to come to a conclusion.

For these objects we must have recourse to the decision maker; a search for new information and a deeper reflexion are necessary.
When the initial information allows us to build a discriminating trichotomy (population of \( A_1 \) and \( A_3 \) not too small), the implementation of these principles leads to a better organisation of the decision maker's reflections and effort by directing, in a selective way, his reflection, the mobilisation of his experience and of all diffuse information he can have, toward the examination of the most difficult cases.

To implement such a trichotomic segmentation we have to model in three stages [1]:

1- In the first stage we have to represent and consider each object \( a \), the set \( A \) (\( a \in A \)), and the consequences or main attributes of each \( a \), evaluated on \( n \) scales \( E_i \) and represented by the vectors \( y_i(a) = y_1(a) \ldots y_n(a) \in E_i \).

2- In a second stage we have to model the decision maker's preference : choice of a consistent family of criterion \( Z \) \( z_1 \ldots z_n \) adapted to the discriminating power on each scale \( E_i \), formal definition of the global preference to be able to establish on the basis of the \( n \) criteria the decision maker's preference : \( a \) is best or worst than \( a' \), or \( a \) can't be compared to \( a' \).

3- In the last stage we have to build the rules to decide whether an object \( a \) must be assigned to \( A_1 \), \( A_2 \) or \( A_3 \). We shall see that this assignment is chosen on the basis of \( a \)'s comparison to particular objects of reference.

2. Fuzzy out ranking relation

Let us assume that for the objects we consider the study of the relevant consequences and attributes has been made and formalised so that we can sum them through a consistent family of \( n \) criteria [2]. So let us assume that to each object \( a \) is associated a vector:

\[ g(a) = g_1(a) \ldots g_n(a) \]

Let us agree that \( a \) is better as \( g_1(a) \) is greater.


[2] B. ROY Outranking and fuzzy outranking a concept making partial order analysis - Decision Making with Multiple objectives IIASA Vienna 1976
This vector represents the initial information. Each component $g_1(a)$ grasps more or less precisely an aspect of the intrinsic value of "a." To compare two objects on the basis of that initial information we use the concept of fuzzy outranking.

It can be introduced in a quite natural way if we accept that the modelling of preferences is not complete and only depends on the part of preferences which we are able to know with sufficient objectivity and confidence (see Table 1).

The term outranking refers to those of the preferences thus modelled: given two potential actions $a$ and $a'$:

- $a'$ outranks $a$ signifies that the scientist has good reasons to admit that in the eyes of the decision-maker $a'$ is at least as good as $a$ (consequently $a'$ is indifferent from or preferred to $a$);
- $a$ does not outrank $a'$ signifies that the arguments in favour of proposition "$a'$ is at least as good as $a$", are judged insufficient, that there exists or not militant arguments in favour of the proposition "$a'$ is at least as good as $a'$" (consequently $a$ is incomparable or preferred to $a'$).

Within the framework of such a conceived modelling, the scientist may be more or less exigent (take more or less risks) to accept the outranking, whence the concept of fuzzy outranking.

A fuzzy outranking relation $S$ can be characterised by the definition of a degree of outranking $d$ associating with each couple $(a', a)$ a number $d(a', a)$: $d$ being a criterion destined to fix the more or less high credibility of the outranking of $a'$ by $a$. More precisely, the degree of credibility must possess the following properties:

1°) The number $d(a', a)$ only calls into play $a'$ and $a$ through their evaluations on the consistent criterion family, otherwise:

$$d(a', a) = d\left[\frac{g(a')}{g(a)}\right]$$

2°) $d(a', a)$ increases with the reliability of the outranking of $a$ by $a'$, thus in particular:

$$d(a', a)$$

is a non-decreasing function of $g_1(a')$ and non-increasing of $g_1(a')$. 

and non-increasing of $g_1(a')$. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indifference</td>
<td>The two actions are indifferent in the sense that there exist clear and positive reasons to choose equivalence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four fundamental</td>
<td>strict preference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exculsive large preference</td>
<td>One of the two actions (which one being known) is not strictly preferred to the other but it is impossible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3°) $d(a', a) = 1$ implies a certain outranking of $a'$ by $a$ whereas $d(a', a) = 0$ implies either a certain non-outranking of $a$ by $a'$, or the total absence of arguments in favour of such an outranking; it follows that:

$$0 \leq d(a', a) \leq 1.$$

Given a fuzzy outranking relation $S$. It is interesting to introduce the outranking relation (non-fuzzy) defined by:

$$a \leq a' \iff d(a, a') \geq \lambda$$

$\lambda$ can be interpreted as a threshold generally near 1 and which is in all cases at least equal to 1/2. The outranking through $S^\lambda$ can be stated as soon as the credibility degree has reached this threshold. To take into consideration a decreasing sequence of values $\lambda$ comes down to introducing a nested family of outranking relations (non-fuzzy) more and more richer but more and more risky. The scientist can in this way test the behavior of the model, in function of requirements of variable security and severity.

In the Annex we describe a way to build such an outranking relation.

3. The references sets

Given two particular objects (real or fictitious) $b \in B$ and $c \in C$ called reference objects and characterized by the vectors $\xi(b)$ and $\xi(c)$.

These vectors indicate on the set of criteria the "combined limits" of what we consider sufficiently good and sufficiently bad.

$B$ and $C$ must lead to the following properties:

- if an object is such that for $a \in B$, the credibility degree $d(a, b)$ is sufficient to guarantee (without too much risk) the preference of $a$ compared to $b$, then $a$ is presumed to be "sufficiently" good and merits acceptance on the basis of initial information.

- if an object $a$ is such that for $a \in C$, the credibility degree $d(c, a)$ is sufficient to guarantee (without too much risk) the preference of $c$ on $a$, then $a$ is presumed to be "for too" bad and merits rejection on the basis of initial information.
The elements of the set \( R = B \cup C \) may be real objects, if not they are introduced as combinations of limits on the \( n \) criterions.

4. Segmentation procedure

\( \lambda \) is the minimum threshold which indicates the limit above which we have a right to garanttee through the model the preference of \( a' \) compared to \( a' \) \( (a \ S^\lambda \ a') \). This threshold is fixed by the decision maker.

Thanks to natural graphic convention we may represent \( S^\lambda \) with an outranking graph (1). The analysis of such a graph (fig. 2) built on the objects of \( a' \cup R \) is useless for the scientist to locate in the context of the decision maker’s preferences, the object which is being studied.

\[ \text{Figure 2} \]

Thus on the example of figure 2

- \( a \) is at least as good as \( b^1 \) and \( c^1 \)
- \( a \) is less good as \( b^2 \)
- \( a \) can’t be compared to \( c^2 \)
- \( a \) is equivalent to \( b^3 \)

To analyse this outranking graph let us define the subsets

\( B^+ , B^- , B^0 , C^+ , C^- , C^0 \):

- \( b \in B^+ \) if \( d (a, b) \geq \lambda \) thus \( a \ S^\lambda \ b \)
- \( b \in B^- \) if \( d (b, a) \geq \lambda \) thus \( b \ S^\lambda \ a \)
- \( b \in B^0 \) if \( d (a, b) \leq \lambda \) and \( d (b, a) \leq \lambda \) thus non \( a \ S^\lambda \ b \) and non \( b \ S^\lambda \ a \)

c \in C^+ \text{ if } d(c, a) \not\leq \lambda \text{ thus } c \not\in S^A \text{ and } e

c \in C^- \text{ if } d(a, c) \not\leq \lambda \text{ thus } e \not\in S^A 

c \in C^0 \text{ if } d(a, c) \not< \lambda \text{ and } d(c, a) \not< \lambda \text{ thus } non \ e \in S^A \text{ and } non \ c \in S^A 

Figure 3 is an illustration of these definitions.

Figure 3

When the relation $S^\lambda$ is antisymmetric these subsets form a partition of $B$ and a partition of $C$:

$B^+ \cap B^- = \emptyset$, $C^+ \cap C^- = \emptyset$

This partition (to which it is always possible to refer (1)) characterizes the situation of a and the scientist uses it to work out the rules which are necessary to assign a to $A_1$, $A_2$ or $A_3$.

Given a partition of $B$ and $C$, it can be characterized by

$x^+ = |B^+|$, $x^- = |B^-|

y^+ = |C^+|$, $y^- = |C^-|

To each $a \in A$, we can therefore associate the vector $E_A(a) = (x^+, x^-, y^-, y^+)$, following the configuration of this vector we shall assign "a" to $A_1$, $A_2$ or $A_3$. The tree in figure 4 shows an example of decision rules.

The combination of the four basic exclusive situations (Table 1) on the set of the pairs $(a, c)$ and $(a, b)$ and the non-necessary transitivity of $S^A$, leads to quite complex configurations, some of which may appear as surprising.

So on figure 5 a appears both as less good and better than two different elements of B, and at the same time less good than one of the references which is a limit of the "far too" bad.

Although particular conditions imposed on the preference modelling allows us to reduce such incoherencies (1) it is nevertheless necessary to build assignment rules (1) which are able to take such incoherencies into account. So in the case of figure 5, if we apply the decision tree figure 4, a" will be assigned to $A_2$.

\[ E_A(a) = (4, 4, 0, 4) \]

**Figure 5**

(1) J. MOSCAROLI-B. ROY Procédure automatique d'examen de dossiers fondée sur une segmentation trichotomique en présence de critères multiples - RAIRO Operations Research Vol 11 no 2 Mai 1977
Figure 4: Assignment rules built out of the configuration analysis of

$$E_{\lambda}(a) = (x^+, x^-, y^+, y^-)$$

$$x^+ > 0 \Rightarrow \exists b \in B : aS^\lambda b$$
$$x^- > 0 \Rightarrow \exists b' \in B : b'S^\lambda a$$
$$y^+ > 0 \Rightarrow \exists c \in C : cS^\lambda a$$
$$y^- > 0 \Rightarrow \exists c' \in C : aS^\lambda c'$$

This 0 can be replaced by $x^+$.

This 0 can be replaced by $y^+$. 
II. THE SELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR A BUSINESS SCHOOL ADMISSION

1. The problem of selection

The admission to the school is pronounced by an admission committee of about 6 members (professors and professionals). The number of candidates is superior than the admissions offered. The selection rate is about 1/3.

For each candidate the admission committee has got a dossier including information about his curriculum, his past school results and his psychological profile.

The committee's task is made quite difficult for the following reasons: the dossiers are quite numerous, the quality of information regarding each candidate is not very good and the decision criteria to take into account are various. As a consequence we can observe that

- there is an implicit tendency to privilege some criteria such as school results, although everybody doubts the pertinency of this information
- the behavior of the committee is not always the same: some criteria only play an incidental part
- sometimes exceptional information not included in the dossier are brought in by a member.

This distortions within the procedure mainly appear during the examination of the candidates who are just at the limit of admission conditions.

The following solution can be considered

1/ selection from dossier: we try to get a partition of the candidates set A in three groups
A_1 official admission from dossier
A_2 convolution to a selection interview
A_3 officially refusal from dossier

2/ Final selection during an interview of the candidates affected to the group A_2, and eventually ranking on a complementary list.
2. The modelling

To affect a candidate to one of the three groups $A_1$, $A_2$ or $A_3$ we use the model which has been described before.

2.1. The consistent family of criteria

The admission committee is looking for candidates who will be able to succeed in their studies as well as in their future professional integration. The candidate should therefore be able to adapt himself both to quantitative and relatively literary matters, but his own human qualities and motivations are considered as important to his future professional integration. This initial and quite confused perception can be precised by the definition of dimensions considered as useful to value as well as possible the consequences of the admission. By defining a scale $E_i$ upon each dimension $i$, we can build a state indicator $Y_i(a)$ which is the formal information taken into account. According to the variation of the decision maker's preference along $E_i$, we can build $g_i$ out of $Y_i$.

The table 6 gives an example of that modelling work.

2.2. The references

The admission committee chooses two references for the "good" candidates $b_1$ and $b_2$. The vertices $g_i(b_1)$ and $g_i(b_2)$ mark the combined limits from which the candidate can be considered as sufficiently "good" to be officially admitted on dossier.

These two references are useful to express in a formal way the fact that the committee considers that good pupil without any particular personality ($b_1$), should be admitted as well as a hard working candidate whose personality seems to be particularly suitable, but whose school results are rather mediocre ($b_2$).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cloud of attributes</th>
<th>Dimension i</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
<th>$E_i$</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School level</td>
<td>1. A level subjects</td>
<td>The committee ranks the A Level subjects according to 5 levels of increasing value</td>
<td>$1$ to $5$</td>
<td>$\gamma_1(a) = \gamma_1(a)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>former school curricula</td>
<td>2. Marks of the past school year in math</td>
<td>These matters enable us to value the quality of the candidate's knowledge in general subjects</td>
<td>$0$ to $20$</td>
<td>$\gamma_2(a) = \gamma_2(a)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level in general subjects</td>
<td>3. Marks of the past school year in French</td>
<td></td>
<td>$0$ to $20$</td>
<td>$\gamma_3(a) = \gamma_3(a)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Marks of the past school year in English</td>
<td></td>
<td>$0$ to $20$</td>
<td>$\gamma_4(a) = \gamma_4(a)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>5. Improvement abilities of the candidate during the past school years</td>
<td>Based on the variation of the past marks in the 3 former matters. 9 cases of increasing improvement are defined</td>
<td>$1$ to $9$</td>
<td>$\gamma_5(a) = \gamma_5(a)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school integration</td>
<td>6. Appraisal of the head of the school attended last year</td>
<td>This global appraisal included in the candidate's dossier. It is evaluated on a 5 levels scale (bad... excellent)</td>
<td>$1$ to $5$</td>
<td>$\gamma_6(a) = \gamma_6(a)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>7. Further experiences</td>
<td>Experienced candidates in professional or social activities are looked for a 3 level evaluation</td>
<td>$1$ to $3$</td>
<td>$\gamma_7(a) = \gamma_7(a)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Motivation</td>
<td>Evaluation based on results of psychometric tests</td>
<td>$1$ to $4$</td>
<td>$\gamma_8(a) = \gamma_8(a)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Professional interest</td>
<td>Evaluation based on results of psychometric tests</td>
<td>$1$ to $3$</td>
<td>$\gamma_9(a) = \gamma_9(a)$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This choice enables us to give a chance to candidates whose personality is considered as very positive for a good professional integration.

One reference only is defined for the "bad" candidate. Not to penalize candidates on the base of psychological tests which may be contested, \( g_8 \) (c) and \( g_9 \) (c) are fixed at the lowest grade of the scales \( E_8 \) and \( E_9 \).

The Table 7 gives an example for possible values to give to \( g(b_1) \), \( g(b_2) \) and \( g(c) \).

2.3. Fuzzy, outranking relation

This relation can be built using nested outranking relations as shown in the Annex at the end of this paper.

The Table 7 indicates:
- an example of weights for each criteria: \( p_i \)
- an example of admissible discordance intervals: \( D_i \)

2.4. Segmentation procedure

On the base the outranking graph which \( S^\Lambda \) defined on the set \( \{a, b_1, b_2, c\} \) we shall try to affect "a" to one of the three categories:
- \( A_1 \) : to be admitted
- \( A_3 \) : to be rejected
- \( A_2 \) : to be invited to a selection interview

Let us assume that we may apply the decision tree of the figure 4 and that, to come to a partition \( B^+ \), \( B^- \) of \( B \) and \( C^+ \), \( C^- \) of \( C \) we decide:
- to affect c to \( C^- \) when both \( d(a, c) \geq \Lambda \) and \( d(c, a) \geq \Lambda \)
- to affect b to \( B^+ \) when both \( d(a, b) \geq \Lambda \) and \( d(b, a) \geq \Lambda \)

which means (1) that the admission committee prefers to be mistaken in admitting a candidate rather than in rejecting him.

(1) J. MOSCAROLA  Aide à la décision en présence de critères multiples fondée sur une trichotomie - Thèse Paris IX Dauphine 1977
### TABLE 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>A.LEV</th>
<th>Meth</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Appraisal</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Profession int.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale E₁</td>
<td>1 to 5</td>
<td>1 to 20</td>
<td>1 to 20</td>
<td>1 to 20</td>
<td>1 to 9</td>
<td>1 to 5</td>
<td>1 to 3</td>
<td>1 to 4</td>
<td>1 to 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference : ( g_1 (b_1) )</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( g_2 (b_2) )</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( g (c) )</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight ( p_i )</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discordance interval ( D_i )</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 8

**Concordance Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( b_1 )</th>
<th>( b_2 )</th>
<th>( c )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( b_1 )</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( b_2 )</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( c )</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discordance Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( b_1 )</th>
<th>( b_2 )</th>
<th>( c )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( b_1 )</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( b_2 )</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( c )</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Numerical application

Applying the rules defined in annexes and referring ourselves to concordance and discordance tables (Table 8) we get

\[
\begin{align*}
\delta(b_1, b_2) &= 0.58 & \delta(b_2, b_1) &= 0 & \delta(c, b_1) &= 0 \\
\delta(b_1, c) &= 1 & \delta(b_2, c) &= 1 & \delta(c, b_2) &= 0
\end{align*}
\]

Then the outranking graph associated to \( S^A \) is the following:

\[
\lambda_1 = 0.9, \lambda_2 = 0.7, \lambda_3 = 0.6
\]

\[
\lambda_4 = 0.55
\]

We can see that the good pupil \( b_1 \) is preferred with a quite a low degree of credibility to the candidate with a high individual value \( b_2 \). So if we are exacting in establishing the preference between \( b_1 \) and \( b_2 \) these two types of candidate appear as non comparable which correctly expresses the committee's opinion.

3.1. Illustration of the evaluation of candidates.

The three following examples (Tables 9, 10, 11) illustrate how the method works.
### Table 9

Table of criteria values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A. Lev</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>IMP.</th>
<th>APP.</th>
<th>EXP.</th>
<th>MOT.</th>
<th>INP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

: concordance : discordance

- $a_1, b_1 : 0.83 : 1.2$ (English)
- $a_1, b_2 : 0.66 :$ 
- $a_1, c : 0.83 :$
- $b_1, a_1 : 0.25 :$
- $b_2, a_1 : 0.58 : 1.2$ (math)
- $c, a_1 : 0.16 :$

**Outranking graphs**

\[
\begin{align*}
\lambda &= 0.9 \\
& a \rightarrow b_1 \\
\lambda &= 0.7 \\
& a \rightarrow b_2 \\
\lambda &= 0.6 \\
& a \rightarrow b_2
\end{align*}
\]

\[
E_{0.9}(a_1) = (0, 0, 0, 0) \rightarrow A_2
\]

\[
E_{0.7}(a_1) = (0, 0, 1, 0) \rightarrow A_2
\]

\[
E_{0.6}(a_1) = (4, 0, 4, 0) \rightarrow A_1
\]

**Notice:** This candidate is too bad in English to be considered as a good pupil (discordance effect). With a quite low credibility degree he could be considered as better than the reference $b_2$ which might allow to admit him.

* In table 9, 10, 11 the discordance indicate is notice only when it is superior to 1
TABLE 10
Table of criteria values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A. LEV</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>IMP.</th>
<th>APP.</th>
<th>EXP.</th>
<th>MOT.</th>
<th>INP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a₁</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b₁</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b₂</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

: concordance : discordance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>combination</th>
<th>concordance</th>
<th>discordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a₁, b₁</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a₁, b₂</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a₁, c</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b₁, a₂</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b₂, a₂</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c, a₂</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

outranking graphs

\[ \lambda = 0.9 \]

\[ \lambda = 0.7 \]

Notice: This candidate can be rejected. The outranking of a₁ by c is obtained with a high credibility degree.
### Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A.LEV</th>
<th>MAT</th>
<th>FREN</th>
<th>ENG</th>
<th>IMP.</th>
<th>APP.</th>
<th>EXP.</th>
<th>MOT.</th>
<th>INP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a₁</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b₁</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b₂</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

: concordance : discordance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ab₁</th>
<th>0.41</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ab₂</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ac</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

: concordance : discordance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>b₁, a</th>
<th>0.58</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b₂, a</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c, a</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outranking graphs**

\[ \lambda = 0.9 \]

\[ E_{0.9} = (A, 0, 4, 0) \rightarrow A_3 \]

\[ \lambda = 0.55 \]

\[ E_{0.55} = (A, 4, 4, 0) \rightarrow A_2 \]

**Notice:** As for candidate a₁, this example reveals the advantage of the use of two non-comparable references. Here although he obtains middle school results, the candidate has a personality which justify his admission. With a lower credibility degree this candidate appears as less good than the good pupils, which explains that, if we apply the decision tree of figure 4, (based on a majority rule) he will be affected to A₂ unless with a higher credibility degree he would be admitted. This may suggest to apply an other decision tree based on the most significant elements of B on C [1]

4. The use of the procedure by the committee

The choice of criteria as well as other elements of the model (the vectors of references $g_1$, $g_2$, $g_3$, the weight $p_1$, the threshold $\ldots$) explicitly expresses the policy of the committee (during a first meeting), which is certainly one of the most important contributions of the procedure. With respect to this formal elicitation let us point out that the use of the model may bring out some underlying dissensions among the members of the committee regarding the admission policy. Nevertheless, thanks to the modelling effort, the consensus to which the committee debate must necessarily leads become clearer and more transmissible.

In this way the model is also a report of the decisions taken by the committee.

During the second meeting, the committee members have a look at the results of the procedure and decide whether the resulting partition $A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$ can in all cases be applied.

Let us notice that at this stage the committee remains entirely free of taking the final decision.

Thus if during the first meeting the members of committee have not come to any agreement regarding the admission policy, the scientist may
III. RESOURCE ALLOCATION TO THE SCHOOLS OF AN ACADEMIC REGION

1. The distribution procedure

1.1. The financing of the schools of an academic region: the initial situation

The French administration of the national educational system is centralized and mainly financed by public subsidies.

It is centralized; at the top, the central administration controls about 20 academic regions, each of which administers about 300 colleges. The colleges receive their resources (teachers and money) from the academic regional authority, which itself receives its resources from the central authority.

We are interested here in the allocation of funds from the academic authority to the school. These subsidies are necessary to the schools to balance its budget (1) (figure 2) and result from a division of the total subsidy allocated by the central authority to the academic region. This division is made by the financial department of the regional authority and should take into account the situation and needs of each school.

An initial study on the financial situation of the schools and on the division procedure showed that:

- the most important criterion upon which the financial director officially bases his decision is the number of pupils attending the school; however, that criterion does not reflect very well the operating costs (the direct charges - increasing with the number of pupils - do not represent the fourth of the subvention);

- the financial director adjusts the theoretical amount of money computed from the number of pupils. Therefore he bases his judgement on diffuse information which is not systematically taken into account and so he tends to favour some schools, more than others often due to subjective factors such as personal relations (manager of the school, financial service)

(1) the payment of teachers is not part of that budget
the very important disparities of financial exigencies between schools. These disparities can most frequently be explained by the history of the school and the principle of status quo.

The financial department was really conscious of the undue importance given to the number of pupils and of the fact that basing the adjustment of the figure calculated on diffuse informations was a very partial, too subjective, and biased method. It tried to take more systematically into consideration some elements such as the building structure, and the financial abilities of the school. However, the available information was too extensive and varied to be systematically taken into account and so to balance the very preponderant weight given to pupils number.

1.2. Objectives

The aim of the study is to build a model for decision aid. This model must be used to solve management difficulties resulting from the increasing number of schools (more than 300) and the complexity of information. The solution is based on an enrichment of the formal information system, a diagnosis aid and a selective orientation of the search for further information (regarding the school which can't be evaluated through the formal information system and the diagnosis aid).

More precisely the model must allow us:

- a) to carry out a multidimensional analysis of the school and to multiply the information elements systematically taken into consideration for the division and so to lower the importance given to the number of pupils and the appeal to badly controlled diffuse information

- b) to start from the preferences, the objectives and the policy of the decision maker, as he puts it into words; to combine this with an automatic data processing system used to compute an aggregate evaluation of the school. This diagnosis has to reveal the disparities between schools and to call into question the established situations.

- c) to implement a procedure which does not fix the division policy; and so to forbid any rigid standards. Therefore the procedure must let the decision maker entirely free of his actions, the reciprocal arrangement of which is the setting up of dialogue between the schools and the financial service; possibility for each school to defend its own case on the basis of particular information exceptionally taken into account by the financial service.
1.3. Work method

As there have been already at disposal in the financial service a lot of information which have not really been used, a study constraint has been fixed not to create new basic information from the schools, but to try to make the existing information useful. This constraint led to some difficulties in defining some particular criteria.

The decision maker of the financial service as well as the school managers have been tightly associated within a working group in the definition of the model.

To make the explicitation of objectives, preferences and criteria clearer we systematically try to interact with the decision maker and the managers on the basis of the study of well-known and reproposed cases.
Table 12

The budgetary structure of a school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charges</th>
<th>Products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructing</td>
<td>Subsidies from state and local public organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and finance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 %</td>
<td>(1) Funding from the board members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>Management from firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintenance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>Facility contribution (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Funding from the board members

Table 13

The operators of the procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t - 1</th>
<th>Modifications in activities, infrastructure, environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of past budgetary structure and results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diagnosis of financial risk or difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theoretical amount knowing the past situations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: INFORMATION SYSTEM

School

Authority of the academic region

Information Basis: Dialogue chart

Reality of the school

Decision function (calculation of theoretical subsidies)

Diagnosis indicating the correction to introduce

Specific information by exception
the financial situation and urgency of needs justify a
decrease of the theoretical amount of subsidies (the school is "rich")
- the available information (introduced in the model) do not
enable us to conclude whether the theoretical amount should be corrected.

To the proposition regarding each school is associated a number
which indicates the credibility degree of the presumption of ease or
difficulty of the school.

1.4.2. The information system (figure 14)

The theoretical amount of subsidies and the diagnosis are
elements of the decision maker's "dashboard". The table 15 shows which
information is edited. In the second column one can read the diagnosis. The
sign - (+) indicates that the theoretical amount (column 4) should be
lowered (higher). The figures indicate the credibility of the proposition(1)

The decision power of the financial director remains entire. He
may add to this date his own knowledge of the schools, or a further informa-
tion when necessary.

The information basis. The data used in the operators are
reported by the financial service to the school's managers in a document
called the "dialogue chart". To each indicator regarding each school is
associated the average level calculated from all the schools of the region
(or an objective given by the financial service).

The choice of the elements of the information basis, parameters,
the division function and the diagnosis method is made in a conference where
the school's managers may advise and give their opinions to the financial
director.

2. Modelling of the diagnosis method

We apply the methodology described in I. Given a consistent
family of n criteria we are able to associate the vector \( g(a) = g_1(a) \ldots \)
\( g_n(a) \) to each school. This vector results from the indicators of the infor-
mation basis and dialogue chart.

Following the method described in I we affect each school to
one of the categories \( A_1, A_2, A_3 \). More precisely the school \( a \) will be
assigned to:

(1) For further explanation see J. MOSCAROLA Thèse Paris IX Dauphine
Example - The "lycées polyvalent Marcel Gimond" has got the mark 2 (column 2) which indicates that the theoretical amount of subsidies (286071 Fr Col. 4) should be lowered. This proposition is established with an average degree of credibility. When in column 2 we don't get any mark that means that the school was assigned to A and that further information is necessary.
$A_1$ if the initial information introduced in the model is sufficient to fund a presumption of financial ease, which indicates that the theoretical subsidies should be lowered.

$A_2$ if the initial information introduced in the model is sufficient to fund a presumption of difficulty which indicates that the theoretical subsidies should be highered.

$A_3$ if the initial information introduced in the model does not allow to any conclusion than a further information is necessary.

Throughout the 300 schools the diagnosis leads in this way the attention of the decision makers toward a further examination of the less clear cases.

2.1. The criterias

To build the consistent family of criteria the working group started with the definition of 5 main aspects regarding the evaluation of a school. They refered to the different objectives of the financial department (to assure the schools with sufficient financial autonomy and quality service) and the guarantees required by the schools (incompressible charges, building infrastructure, financial autonomy). These main aspects were described more precisely by defining $n$ dimensions $E_i$ on which an evaluation score can be used to compute the state indicator $Y_i(a)$.

To build the criterion $g_1(a)$ from the state indicator $Y_1(a)$ the decision makers had to say how their preferences vary along the scale $E_1$.

For example (table 15) the higher the reserve ratio is the best is the ease of the school ($g_4(a) = Y_4(a)$) or the higher the subjective evaluation of building degradation is, the worst is the ease of the school ($g_6(a) = - Y_6(a)$).

Let us point out that for some dimensions no criteria can be defined: the differences observed along the scale are not significant for the decision makers (here member of working group) didn't come to any agreement concerning how the preference vary.

2.2. The references

The sets of reference B and C (part I) were reduced in that application to one element. Each of them marks the combined limits for each criteria from which we can say:

- for the reference c (the "poor" school) that the situation of the school regarding the criteria i justify an increase of the theoretical subsidies
- for the reference b (the "rich" school) that the situation of the school regarding the criteria i justify a decrease of the theoretical subsidies.

(1) In some cases the concept of pseudo criteria or pre criteria (ROY-JACQUET LAGREZ) may be useful to take into account the fact that, threshold for minimal significative difference may be defined.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main aspects of the problem</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Incompressible charges      | - importance of heating and energy charges  
- evolution of it           | - rate : total amount of charges  
- percent of evolution       | \( g_1(a) = - \gamma_1(a) \)  
| Financial autonomy          | - transfer of income from boarding  
- anticipation capacity      | - rate of shifting  
- evolution of anticipation capacity  
- own resources              | - reserve ratio  
- percent of evolution of reserve ratio  
- own resources ratio         | \( g_2(a) = - \gamma_2(a) \)  
| Quality of Management       | - cost of heating  
- evolution                  | - cost per m2  
- quality of budget estimates | - percent of evolution of it  
- budget estimates margin rate | \( g_3(a) = - \gamma_3(a) \)  
| Quality of service          | - building degradation  
- quality of living          | - subjective evaluation  
- quality of utilisation/maintenance | - density : pupils/m2  
- quality of administrative service | - cost per m2  
- quality of teaching service | - cost per pupil (x)  
- cost per pupil (x)         | \( g_4(a) = - \gamma_4(a) \)  
| Building infrastructure     | - sport installation  
- lawns, parks and grounds commodities  
- heat insulation            | - ranking following the importance  
- subjective evaluation      | \( g_5(a) = - \gamma_5(a) \)  

\( (x) \) lacking of other information we assess that the quality of service is proportional to the cost.
In this application the choice of these thresholds must be based upon the examination of the different situations of the school, for the following reasons.

- the concept of intrinsic value, or here of "poverty" or "wealth" must take into account the situation of the schools as a whole and the extend of their disparities

- the whole procedure is based upon the restoration of balance of the theoretical subsidies within the constraints of the regional subsidy.

To make the diagnosis operational the partition $A_1$ (school to higher) $A_2$ (school to lower) $A_3$ (indetermination) have to be balanced.

This objective can be introduced as a constraint in the model. Therefore we can change the values of references so long the reliability of the final affectation allows it. To make it a shorter trial and error procedure, the working group was given a graphic presentation of the distribution of school on each dimension.

2.3. The modelling of global preferences and the outranking relation.

The fuzzy outranking relation used to compare a school $a$ to the references $b$ and $c$ is described in the annex.

Let us notice that:

- for the first implementation and to make the understanding of the method easier the scientist did not introduce the discordance concept which was naturally introduced later at the decision maker's request.

- the choice of the weights $p_1$ was made after a discussion based upon several tests where different sets of weights were applied to well known schools.

The choice of the weights as well as those of other elements of preferences modelling (criteria, outranking threshold) is the occasion of an interactive research process which characterise the scientist-decision maker relations.[1]

2.4. The affectation procedure

Several decision trees may be built to decide, on the base of the fuzzy outranking graph on \((a, b, c)\), which proposition should be affected to a \((1)\). Through the variations of the credibility degree we can get several diagnosis of decreasing confidence, each of them is characterised by the absolute value of the number in column 2 (table 15)

3. The effects of the model upon the administrative environment

The procedure and the diagnosis model we described has been used for now 3 years to allocate subsidies to more than 300 schools evaluated on the basis of about 15 criteria. There was some evolutions: some criteria were left, new others were taken into account, the outranking relation, the references were modified, in a word the procedure is adaptative and may develop an apprenticeship process which may reveal a better control of the decision process.

In addition to the information system enrichment due to the formal multidimensionnal analysis, and the use of the diagnosis method as an automatically procedure for quick reading of dossier the main effects upon management methods are:

- a better organisation of the financial department effort to look for a selective information
- a better organisation of the human relations thanks to a better rationalisation of choice and decision, coming from the preferences modelling.

However there is a natural tendency of the financial department as well as of the school managers to substitute the model to the decision maker by trying to reduce the number of schools for which there is no diagnosis \((A_2)\). This behavior is typical of a bureaucratic behavior, where the refuse of any personal engagement, the habits of rigid scales and the attachment to the psychological security, they garanty to the decision makers, are real difficulties which must not be underestimated. Nevertheless even, if such a fuzzy procedure don't really fit to the traditional administrative management, we think that they may be useful to promote an organisational development toward more adaptative and participative management methods.

\[1\) the decision tree used in this application was more simple than the tree of fig. 4, for further information see J. MOSCAROLA These Paris IX Dauphine
CONCLUSION

This decision aid approach may be situated in the background of large administrative organisation which can be characterized by:
- the great number of files which is often a "goulot d'étranglement" for the decisional procedures
- the complexity of the problems and the multidimensionality of their consequences
- the weight of too often purely qualitative externalities
- the increasing demand of having decision open and above board

The implementation of the model and the resulting procedure, may undoubtedly in quiet numerous situations, contribute to solve some necessities of administrative work without loosing the control of the management.

This may be mainly achieved thanks to
- the increase of cognitive abilities of the decision maker involved by the implementation of the preferences modelling with multiple criteria
- the better management of information system based upon the selective ability introduced by the trichotomy

Finally these improvements involve a better investigation of the solving problems due to any modelling effort.
OUTRANKING RELATION [1]

Given $\mathcal{g}_1, \mathcal{g}_2, \ldots, \mathcal{g}_n$ a consistent family of criteria

$$\sum_{i \in \mathcal{F}} p_i = 1 \ldots n \quad \text{the weights assigned to each criteria } \mathcal{g}_i$$

$D_i$ the maximal admitted discordant margin for each criteria $\mathcal{g}_i, i \in \mathcal{F}$

For each pair $(a, a')$ we can build the following partition of $\mathcal{F}$:

$$\mathcal{F} = \mathcal{F}^+ \cup \mathcal{F}^- \cup \mathcal{F}^0$$

$$\mathcal{F}^+ = \left\{ i/\mathcal{g}_i (a) > \mathcal{g}_i (a') \right\}$$

$$\mathcal{F}^- = \left\{ i/\mathcal{g}_i (a) < \mathcal{g}_i (a') \right\}$$

$$\mathcal{F}^0 = \left\{ i/\mathcal{g}_i (a) \leq \mathcal{g}_i (a') \right\}$$

Concordance coefficient

We call concordance coefficient the number calculated as follows

$$\operatorname{Con} (a, a') = \sum_{i \in \mathcal{F}^+} p_i + \sum_{i \in \mathcal{F}^-} p_i$$

Calculating for each pair $(a, a')$ of $\mathcal{A}$ the value of the coefficients $\operatorname{Con} (a, a')$ we build a concordance table.

Discordance coefficient

Given $d_i$ the discordant margin observed on the criteria $i$:

$$\mathcal{g}_i (a') - \mathcal{g}_i (a) = d_i$$

We call discordance coefficient the number calculated as follows

$$\operatorname{Dis} (a, a') = \max_{i \in \mathcal{F}^-} \frac{d_i}{\mathcal{P}_i}$$

Calculating for each pair $(a, a')$ of $\mathcal{A}$ the value of the coefficients $\operatorname{Dis} (a, a')$ we build a discordance table.

(1) One can find similar definitions in B. ROY - E. JACQUET LAGREZE and G. HIRSCH - see Bibliography.
Making up an outranking relation

Given the thresholds of concordance and discordance C and D. For example, C = 0.6 means that we are at least exacting for the sum of the concordance criteria \( i \in F^- \) to be superior to 0.6 to make up the outranking of \( a' \) by \( a \) ("a" is preferred to \( a' \)).

\( D = 1 \) means that, if at least one observed margin \( d_i \) \( i \in F^- \) is superior to the maximal margin \( D_i \) admitted for the criteria \( i \ (i \in F) \), then the outranking of \( a' \) by \( a \) cannot be made up (we cannot say that "a" is preferred to \( a' \)).

To each pair \( (a, a') \) of \( A \), and using the tables of concordance and discordance, we may make up or not the outranking of \( a' \) by \( a \) out of the following tests.

```
Con(a, a') \geq C
\quad \text{yes}
\quad \text{no}

Con(a', a) \geq C
\quad \text{yes}
\quad \text{no}

Dis(a, a') \leq D
\quad \text{yes}
\quad \text{no}

Dis(a', a) \leq D
\quad \text{yes}
\quad \text{no}

a \text{ incomparable to } a'
\quad \text{non aSa'}
\quad \text{aSa'}
```

Fuzzy outranking relation and nested outranking relations

We can make the thresholds C and D vary. We obtain then more or less "severe" outranking relations. They are called nested relations if:

\[
S_i \subset S_j \iff a \quad S_i \quad a' \quad S_j \quad a'
\]

The relation \( S_j \) is less severe than the relation \( S_i \).
In the application regarding the selection of candidates we use 4 nested outranking relations 

\[ S_1 \sqsubseteq S_2 \sqsubseteq S_3 \sqsubseteq S_4 \] 

obtained by making vary the concordance threshold \( C \) for a fixed threshold of discordance \( D = 1 \): 

\[ C_1 = 0.9 \text{ for } S_1 \]
\[ C_2 = 0.7 \text{ for } S_2 \]
\[ C_3 = 0.6 \text{ for } S_3 \]
\[ C_4 = 0.5 \text{ for } S_4 \]

Then we are able to characterize the fuzzy outranking thus obtained taking for the degree of credibility \( d(a, a') \) the value of the coefficient of concordance \( \text{Con}(a, a') \): 

When \( \text{Dis}(a, a') \leq 1 \) 

\[ d(a, a') = \text{Con}(a, a') \]

When \( \text{Dis}(a, a') > 1 \) 

\[ d(a, a') = 0 \]
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