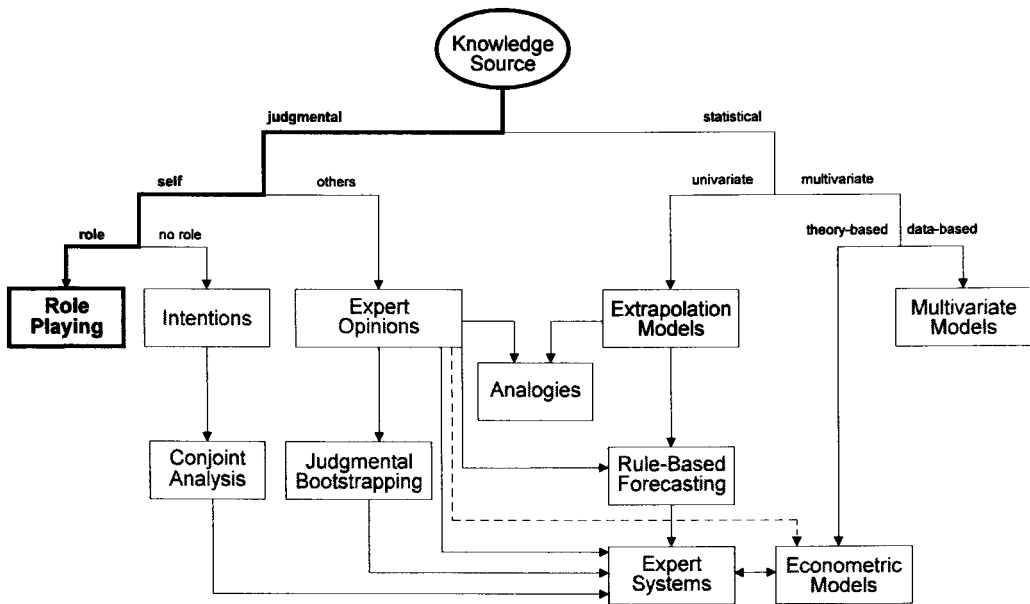


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## ROLE PLAYING

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Role playing is a way of predicting the decisions by people or groups engaged in conflicts. Roles can greatly influence a person's perception of a situation. Thus, when predicting someone's decisions, it may be useful to take his role into account. This is important when people interact (Party A's decisions influence Party B's decisions, and Party A may then react, and so on). Because of these interactions, expert opinions are not accurate for predicting what the parties will do when they encounter new situations.

Role playing is especially useful for important conflicts. For example, how would a country react to the threat of a war? How would managers respond to the threat of a strike? How would a major industrial customer react to a new pricing policy?

Role playing is an inexpensive and practical alternative to experimentation. Lawyers have used it to forecast jury reactions to various arguments. Military strategists have used it to assess the outcomes of different strategies.

The procedures for role playing are described in J. Scott Armstrong's "Role playing: A Method to Forecast Decisions." For example, one principle is to instruct role players to improvise. A series

of experiments shows that to forecast the decisions of parties in conflict, role playing is much more accurate than expert judgment.

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