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978-0-521-53933-3 - Information Sampling and Adaptive Cognition

Edited by Klaus Fiedler and Peter Juslin

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Information Sampling and Adaptive Cognition

A “sample” is not only a concept from statistics that has penetrated common sense but also a metaphor that has inspired much research and theorizing in current psychology. The sampling approach emphasizes the selectivity and biases inherent in the samples of information input with which judges and decision makers are fed. Because environmental samples are rarely random, or representative of the world as a whole, decision making calls for censorship and critical evaluation of the data given. However, even the most intelligent decision makers tend to behave like “naïve intuitive statisticians”: They are quite sensitive to the data given but uncritical concerning the source of the data. Thus, the vicissitudes of sampling information in the environment together with the failure to monitor and control sampling effects adequately provide a key to reinterpreting findings obtained in the past two decades of research on judgment and decision making.

Klaus Fiedler is Professor of Psychology at the University of Heidelberg in Germany. Among his main research interests are cognitive social psychology, language and communication, social memory, inductive cognitive processes in judgment and decision making, and computer modeling of the human mind. Professor Fiedler is the winner of the 2000 Leibniz Award.

Peter Juslin is Professor of Psychology at Uppsala University in Sweden. His main research interests concern judgment and decision making, categorization, and computational modeling. He received the Brunswik New Scientist Award in 1994 and the Oscar’s Award at Uppsala University in 1996 for young distinguished scientists. He has published numerous scientific papers in various journals, including many articles in the major APA journals such as *Psychological Review*.

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Edited by

KLAUS FIEDLER

University of Heidelberg

PETER JUSLIN

Uppsala University



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List of Contributors

Melissa Acevedo, Brown University

Greg Barron, Harvard Business School

David V. Budescu, University of Illinois

Nick Chater, University College, London

Robyn Dawes, Carnegie Mellon University

Ido Erev, Technion, Israel Institute of Technology

Klaus Fiedler, University of Heidelberg, Germany

Peter Freytag, University of Heidelberg, Germany

Gerd Gigerenzer, Max Planck Institute, Germany

Ralph Hertwig, University of Basel, Switzerland

Ulrich Hoffrage, Max Planck Institute, Germany

Robin M. Hogarth, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain

Peter Juslin, University of Uppsala, Sweden

Yakoov Kareev, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Joshua Klayman, University of Chicago Graduate School of Business

Derek S. Koehler, University of Waterloo, Canada

Joachim Krueger, Brown University

Thorsten Meiser, University of Jena, Germany

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List of Contributors

Andreas Mojzisch, *Universität Göttingen, Germany*

Mike Oaksford, *University of London*

Fenna Poletiek, *Leiden University, The Netherlands*

Jordan M. Robbins, *Brown University*

Stefan Schulz-Hardt, *Universität München, Germany*

Peter Sedlmeier, *Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany*

Jack B. Soll, *INSEAD Business School, France*

Elke Weber, *Columbia University*

Chris M. White, *Université de Lausanne, Switzerland*

Anders Winman, *Uppsala University, Sweden*