Cambridge Series on Judgment and Decision Making

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This volume offers answers by a top group of experts to the question “Where is judgment and decision research heading as we forge into the 21st century?” The chapters represent state-of-the-art perspectives developed by some of the most innovative thinkers in the field. The book is organized around five themes: fortifying traditional models of decision making – looking at traditional topics in new ways; elaborating cognitive processes in decision making – exploring the interplay between decision research and cognitive psychology; integrating affect and motivation in decision making – relating how affect and motivation interact with decision making; understanding social and cultural influences on decision making – recognizing the importance of social and cultural contexts for decisions; and facing the challenge of real-world complexity in decision research – seeing the challenges and rewards of research outside the laboratory. The book concludes with a commentary based on an analysis and synthesis of the new ideas presented here.

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Emerging Perspectives on Judgment and Decision Research

Edited by
Sandra L. Schneider
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James Shanteau
Kansas State University
To Charles Gettys, N. John Castellan,
and Hillel Einhorn
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Preface

We dedicate this book to three now-deceased “giants” in the history and development of the Society for Judgment and Decision Making (SJDM). Each of these individuals contributed his time, effort, and even money to help the society succeed in the formative years. Without their collective efforts, SJDM would not exist today. Had they not become involved when they did, there would have been no annual JDM meetings, no forums to discuss questions such as “What is new in JDM?” no SJDM publication outlet, and ultimately no Emerging Perspectives book. We owe it all to these three.

The first is Charles Gettys (University of Oklahoma), who, along with James Shanteau, organized the first few JDM meetings. Chuck’s view of what a good meeting should be established precedents that are reflected in JDM meetings today. For example, he always wanted one or two major figures from outside JDM to speak at every meeting. He also emphasized that sessions should provide extensive opportunities for feedback and discussion. Chuck’s name will always be tied to the founding of JDM.

The second is N. John Castellan (Indiana University), who was not only an early supporter of the meetings, but also the “organizational brains” behind the group. He edited the Newsletter for many years, helped organize several of the meetings, and was the first secretary/treasurer. John’s most lasting contribution may be the establishment of SJDM as a legal entity; for example, he wrote the original bylaws and drew up the incorporation papers. In large part, John’s forward-looking efforts made the Society what it is today.

The third is Hillel Einhorn (University of Chicago), whose enthusiastic support of early JDM meetings ensured the success of a fledgling effort. Hilly spoke at most of the early meetings, either as a presenter or as a discussant. His presence on the program, as well as that of others
Preface

from the Center for Decision Research at the University of Chicago, provided both intellectual substance and visibility to the early meetings. Hilly also recognized the importance of including international speakers and helped make JDM into a worldwide presence.

We dedicate the present volume to the memory of these three founders of SJDM; their contributions will be with us always.

The Genesis

It is not always easy to tell how a project will start or where (or when) it will end. In the case of the Emerging Perspectives project, we can trace the origin to a conversation overheard between two attendees at the 1996 meeting of SJDM in Chicago. The gist of the comment by the first person was that “JDM is in a crisis.” And the reason for a crisis? “A lack of new ideas” came the reply from the second.

This conversation struck a nerve with J. S. (James Shanteau); he had been one of the founders of SJDM, along with Chuck Gettys, N. John Castellan, and Hillel Einhorn (to whom this book is dedicated). If JDM as a field is running out of new ideas, then indeed there is a crisis. So the heart of the matter is, “What is new in JDM?”

After thinking about this issue for a year, J. S. attempted a partial answer at the 1997 meeting in Philadelphia. He gave a talk on “Five New Perspectives on Judgment/Decision Making” in which he described what he thought were several new and exciting ideas for JDM. These ranged from research on affect and individual differences in decision making to incorporation of memory models and new variants of utility into decision theory. The response to the talk was immediate and vocal, with audience reactions flowing over into break time.

Sandra Schneider (S. S.) was at the presentation and approached J. S. about the possibility of jointly editing a book to highlight these emerging perspectives. At first, J. S. resisted due to prior commitments to work on two other book projects – a Festschrift to Ward Edwards (Shanteau, Mellers, & Schum, 1999) and an edited book on competence in decision making (Smith, Shanteau, & Johnson, in press). Nonetheless, S. S. persisted (it took at least 30 minutes) and ultimately persuaded J. S. to form a partnership to produce an edited volume.

S. S. and J. S. then spent considerable time formulating a plan for the book that is described in the next section. After seeing the plan, the SJDM Publications Committee, Cambridge University Press, and, most important, potential authors were enthusiastic about the prospects for a
book that would explore some exciting recent advances in JDM research. We then moved ahead with implementing the plan. In 1999, S. S. and J. S. organized a JDM symposium (“Emerging Perspectives in JDM Research”) to provide a taste of what was to come in the volume. The symposium was well attended and positively received, providing continuing momentum for the project. Although there were the inevitable unanticipated delays (e.g., added administrative responsibilities for both S. S. and J. S.), the book continued moving forward. We believe the sustaining energy behind this project goes back to the importance of that original question, “What is new in JDM?” This book offers some partial answers to that question from some of the best minds in the JDM field today.

References


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We are grateful for and would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the many individuals without whom this book could not have been completed.

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