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0521831598 - 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.

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