



Newsletter

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Contents

2006 Executive Board	2
Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting	3
President's column: Normative, descriptive, and prescriptive	5
What is Love (from a decision-making perspective)?	7
What's <i>Your</i> Number?	9
While Rome Burns	10
Conferences, Workshops & Summer Institutes	11
Information requests	16
Jobs, jobs, jobs...	16
Recent Publications	19
Interest Groups and Mailing Lists	21
An editor's farewell	22
Scenes from a Conference: SJDM, Houston, November 2006	23
And finally...	24
2006 Dues and Address Corrections	25



Pakenham, Ontario. Restaurateur lists outcomes of entry decision

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Address Corrections: Please keep your mailing and/or email address current. We often have no way of knowing if you are not receiving the newsletter. Address changes or corrections should be sent Bud Fennema. Reports of problems in receiving or opening the pdf file should be sent to the editor.

Society membership: Requests for information concerning membership in the Society for Judgment and Decision Making should be sent to Bud Fennema.

The *JDM Newsletter*, published electronically four times a year (March, June, September, and December), welcomes submissions from individuals and groups. However, we do not publish substantive papers. Book reviews will be published. If you are interested in reviewing books and related materials, please write to or email the editor.

There are few ground rules for submissions. The best way to send your contribution is via e-mail, or as an MS Word e-mail attachment.

Advertising Rates: Advertising can be submitted to the editor. Inclusion of the ad and the space given to the ad is at the editor's discretion. The current charge is \$100 per page (\$50 per 1/2 page). Contact Warren Thorngate for details.

Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting
Society for Judgment and Decision Making
November 17, 2006
Houston, Texas

Attendees

Jon Baron, Terry Connolly, Bud Fennema, Craig Fox, Derek Koehler, Ellen Peters, Alan Schwartz, and George Wu.

Announcements – Jon Baron

In John Payne's absence, Jon agreed to chair the meeting and he called it to order at 7:30 p.m. Jon announced the election of Michael Birnbaum as the new President Elect and Barb Mellers as the new Board member. Unfortunately, neither was able to attend the Board meeting.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report – Bud Fennema

The 2005 minutes were approved and the Treasurer's Report was given. It was noted that the Society was in sound financial shape. Last year's conference had nearly equal receipts and expenditures and overall cash increased about \$3,000 for the year. It was agreed that next year's report would contain a breakdown of meeting attendance between regular and student members. A motion to cease production of the hard copy directory passed. Starting in 2007 Bud will produce the report in electronic form and send it to Alan who will make it available on the website for members to print.

Conference Coordinator's Report – Derek Koehler

It was reported that we were using an audio/visual company for the first time, as agreed at the last meeting. This was estimated to result in a much smoother meeting and about \$8,000 in charges. It was also noted that the welcome reception was put on by the Society at the hotel instead of a local university. There were 262 pre-registered members, which was about the same as last year.

It was reported that the book auction was in jeopardy as Sandy Schneider no longer would conduct the auction. It was proposed that a sub-group of the society, such as students or the women's group, conduct the auction and use the proceeds for their functions. As part of this discussion, a motion was passed to have a student member of the Board. Society members would be solicited to nominate students, and Jon would look into changing the by-laws as part of a larger review of that document.

Derek reminded the board that he would be stepping down as Conference Coordinator after this conference. He has written about ten pages of instructions for the person who will assume the position next. The Board discussed the position, hoping that someone who could commit to at least three years could be identified. It was agreed that the Society would be willing to pay for assistant support for someone willing to coordinate the meeting. Jon agreed to solicit members to fill the position.

Webmaster's Report – Alan Schwartz

Alan reported that there were 955 mailing list subscribers, which was an increase of 64 from 2003. Also, there were 51,375 hits on the home page, and about 127 sites that have links pointing to our website. This was the fourth year of online nominations and elections, with 26 members nominating 46 distinct candidates. Twenty candidates accepted nomination and 246 members voted. The website received a new logo which matches that on the JDM journal site. Future plans include the possibility of member maintained contact information. Alan reported that he would not need the \$500 Webmaster's budget for 2007.

Newsletter Report

In his absence, Warren Thorngate sent the Board an email outlining the newsletter update and reminding the Board that his tenure as editor would end with the December 15, 2006 issue. It was noted that it had become difficult to convince members to submit articles. Warren questioned the value of the newsletter given other outlets for its content and he suggested that the Board consider terminating its production. After some deliberation, the Board agreed to continue the newsletter. Jon will solicit a new editor.

Ongoing Committee Reports

Program – Ellen reported that there were 11 symposia submitted with 4 accepted and that there were 224 talks submitted with 80 accepted. Although she also noted that reviewers had a heavy workload, no changes in the review process were recommended. Dan Ariely and Rachel Croson are rolling off the program committees so two new members are needed. Suggestions were discussed, with Jon to solicit members and get back to the Board with those who accept. Alan reported that there were 63 student and 81 non-student posters accepted. Craig agreed to ask members to be on the Einhorn Award Committee and he will advise the Board with the results of that search.

Publications – Terry distributed a list of titles with their sales figures from the Publications Committee. He noted that the new publisher (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates) has one publication so far and that more books were needed for the pipeline. Jon reported that the new JDM journal was doing very well.

Federation News

The Federation has asked JDM to increase dues by \$.25 per member per year. A motion was passed to pay this increase.

Other Business

Jon agreed to review the by-laws to make sure they were up to date. Alan discussed the possibility of increasing the involvement of medical decision making in the annual meeting. It might be possible to have some sessions funded externally. Craig agreed to continue to solicit journalists to attend the conference in 2007.

Adjourn at 10:00

President's column: Normative, descriptive, and prescriptive

Jon Baron

The SJDM web page says that we are "dedicated to the study of normative, descriptive, and prescriptive theories of decision." I may thus be excused for defending this useful set of distinctions, despite the persisting controversy about it.

I searched for the origin of the ideas and the terms. Evidently several different people thought of them in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In my book "Rationality and intelligence" (1985, pp. 8-11), I introduced the distinctions among the three terms and claimed that it was my idea. I did not know that a conference had already been held at Harvard in 1983, which led to the 1988 publication of "Decision making: Descriptive, normative, and prescriptive interactions" (edited by Bell, Raiffa, and Tversky), where the terms were used pretty much as I used them.

Thanks to Google Scholar, I think I have found the earliest clear published explication of the distinction as we know it today, a paper by Anthony Freeling, "A philosophical basis for decision aiding," in *Theory and Decision*, 1984 (vol. 16, pp. 179-206). Freeling's paper is deep and still of interest. It shows how we can draw on Dennett's idea of intentional systems (systems that can be described in terms of beliefs and desires), and the assumption of two levels of thought, to understand the nature of decision aiding as a kind of therapy (my term), bringing values fully into the intentional system. Freeling said (p. 189) that a descriptive theory "describes how a person acts," a normative theory "describes how a perfectly rational, super-being would act," and a prescriptive theory "prescribes how a person should act."

This is almost exactly the distinction I made myself in 1985, although in later writing I have also used "normative" to mean something like "whatever standard we are using, as researchers, to evaluate what our subjects do." This requires a distinction between good normative models and those that are used for convenience, such as the "delta p" rule in the study of contingency judgment. Presumably the best normative standards are those that a rational super-being would follow.

I also used the term "prescriptive" more broadly, to include education as well as decision aids, and later to include policy changes. An example of a prescriptive policy is "libertarian paternalism," as recommended by Thaler and Sunstein. One idea is to make use of a bias toward defaults to encourage people to make what are probably good decisions. Bell et al. (1988), in their introduction, also use "prescriptive" more broadly than Freeling did, so as to include education.

Freeling does cite one precedent. In the preface to their 1976 book "Decisions with multiple objectives: Preferences and value tradeoffs," Keeney and Raiffa say that their approach "is not descriptive, because most people do not attempt to think systematically about hard choices ... It is also not normative since it is not an idealized theory designed for the superrational being with an all-powering intellect. It is, instead, a

prescriptive approach designed for normally intelligent people who want to think hard and systematically about some important real problems." But they say no more.

Keeney and Raiffa's way of saying it draws attention to a problem with taking normative models as prescriptive: they are self-defeating. The effort to calculate undercuts the very goals that the calculation is designed to promote. This problem leads naturally to the normative/prescriptive distinction, because we can still use normative models to evaluate the decisions of subjects, even if we cannot expect the subjects to apply the normative models directly in their decision making.

The self-defeating status of normative models was also the problem that I think Herbert Simon hit on, and it led me to the distinction that I made in 1985. But Simon did not clearly distinguish prescriptive from descriptive, and that non-distinction persists to this day, even in our field. It is as if, once we have decided that normative models are impossible to use as prescriptions, we conclude that departures from the normative standards are benign, the result of adaptation, or the best we can do given our limitations. Some of these biases surely are benign in these ways, but the prescriptive/descriptive distinction leads us to ask whether all of them are. The existence of wide individual differences in biases suggests that these biases are not part of the human condition, as optical illusions are. We may sometimes benefit from prescriptive methods, and some of us may benefit more than others. Surely many writers have now argued that biases are responsible for undesirable outcomes, and that these biases can be overcome.

I think our field (JDM) is unique in distinguishing all three approaches. Several textbooks emphasize this distinction, such as that by Kleindorfer, Kunreuther and Schoemaker, "Decision sciences: An integrative perspective," as well as my own. Journal articles frequently use these terms in standard ways.

Part of the uniqueness of JDM is that we reflect about normative theories without simply assuming that we can derive them from observation of what people do. Economists, for a long time, made that assumption, and some still do, thus conflating normative and descriptive. Of course, our reflection about normative theories is not finished. We debate them, and thus part of our field overlaps with philosophy.

By comparing descriptive models to normative models, we can find out where potential improvement is possible. Because we attend to the philosophical basis of normative models, we don't go off half cocked like many fields of psychology, trying to fix things that "ain't broke." An example of the latter is, I think, the work on training divergent thinking, which seems not to do any good (except in producing more divergent thinking, as opposed to better solutions to problems).

Other part of psychology make some of the distinctions. Research in perception is progressing by comparing actual perception to ideal-observer (normative) theories. In a simple sense, perception has prescriptive theories, too: such as eyeglasses. But we do not try to correct optical illusions.

Clinical psychology makes a clear distinction between prescriptive and descriptive. Indeed, psychotherapy is an example of a prescriptive approach. And the normative questions are most of the time sufficiently obvious as not to need attention ... but not all the time, as in the debate about whether the current epidemic of attention-deficit disorder is a problem with children or with schools.

Social psychology largely neglects normative theory. Many of the classic demonstrations of apparently irrational behavior, such as the conformity effect, the bystander effect, and even the Milgram obedience effect, suffer from the lack of clear normative models. (If the subjects in Milgram's experiment had a Bayesian prior so strong as to imply that the disturbing evidence that they were torturing another subject was misleading, they were actually correct. They were in fact deceived.) The subjects in these social psychology experiments seem irrational, but the irrationality has usually not been shown to be a departure from a clear normative model.

It was, however, two social psychologists, Nisbett and Ross, who, in their 1980 book, "Human inference: Strategies and shortcomings of social judgment," forcefully raised the question of normative models in social psychology. It was this book that was largely responsible for my own interest in the topic. They did not raise the idea of prescriptive theories, however. I think I did pull that one out of the air, where it had been floating around for some time. Or maybe I heard it and forgot.

I expect, or at least hope, that the value of this three-way distinction will spread to other fields, especially in psychology. Perhaps this is already happening in experimental economics, which is, arguably, now part of JDM exactly because it is taking this sort of approach.

[Editor's note: Our newsletter has been improved in no small way by the whimsical and thoughtful articles of our colleague David Weiss. David wrote two articles for future newsletters; Jie Weiss and David together wrote one more. In order to give our new editor a clean slate, I have decided to include all three below. Enjoy!]

What is Love (from a decision-making perspective)?

Jie W. Weiss

California State University, Fullerton

David J. Weiss

California State University, Los Angeles

When two parties are stakeholders in a decision, frequently their interests coincide. The agent makes more money when the client makes more money. The decision is more difficult when there is conflict, when one option favors one stakeholder and another option favors the other stakeholder. In cases where the environment does not allow for a compromise option that will satisfy both, the relationship between the parties may dictate how the conflict is resolved. Their roles take precedence over negotiating skill.

During the course of preparing a forthcoming book featuring the work of the late Ward Edwards, we re-coined the phrase “vicarious utilities” to describe the responsibility engendered by certain relationships. In choosing among conflicting courses of action, health practitioners and financial advisers are expected to place the utilities of clients above their own utilities. Professional ethics codes reinforce that expectation. Similarly, parents are urged by social, and perhaps biological, imperatives to favor the utilities of their children over their own. Political leaders are supposed to honor the utilities of their constituents, and perhaps some do. Although we had been unfamiliar with the specific phrase, Google returned several hits for “vicarious utility” dating back more than twenty years.

Are role-determined choices that favor others altruistic? That is, are they selfless? Choosing virtuously can have its own rewards. Subsuming personal utilities can enhance one’s professional or familial reputation, which can bring about subsequent financial or social rewards in the future. Economists explain a deliberate action that benefits another at one’s expense by positing a accompanying “warm glow”, an emotional utility component that has sufficient value to justify the choice. So the sacrificer may expect compensatory utility from secondary consequences of the noble decision. Accounting for other-favoring choices via utilities allows us to avoid imputing personality characteristics to the stakeholder.

As one of only a few JDM couples, we feel a special responsibility to connect our research passion with our personal passion. Thinking about vicarious utility and emotional utility led us to think about love. While there has been a considerable amount of research on sexual decisions and some on mate choice, we are not aware of JDM research on the construct of love. Perhaps that is because love is difficult to measure. Although love is known to be multidimensional – love is a many-splendored thing – it may be strategically sound to initiate the research by focusing on a single important aspect.

In the late 1960’s, Zick Rubin proposed to quantify romantic love as the difference between a person’s stated affection and respect for their romantic partner and that for their closest same-sex friend. Using differences rather than mere ratings is a good start; but Rubin did not do a functional measurement or conjoint analysis, and it is hard to see why the relationship with the friend is relevant. Admittedly, we have not kept close eyes on the subsequent literature; but it seems likely that if a more satisfactory solution to the measurement problem had emerged, it would have received wide attention (NBC’s Today show is extremely interested in such matters). So we presume that the scientific study of love remains in its infancy.

The idea of vicarious utility may point the way toward progress. The pledges of love we made during our marriage ceremony were concerned with each other’s utilities, although at the time, we were not thinking in those terms. **Love may be construed as the extent to which a person favors their partner’s utilities above their own when making important couple decisions.** For example, after Jie took the position at CSU Fullerton, David demonstrated love by agreeing to move to a house five minutes from her campus, but one hour from his.

Because the JDM community does have established technologies for assessing utilities, we above other scientists may be well-positioned to resolve the age-old question. E. B. Browning’s “How do I love thee? Let me count the ways” has not led to a useful

quantification, but vicarious utility may provide a key to doing so. The methodology of Messick and McClintock (1968), in which preferences are decomposed to classify the subject's social value orientation¹, may serve as a laboratory model to launch this research. One day, we may be able to license the use of the official SJDM vows for weddings and domestic partnerships.

1. We are grateful to Warren Thorngate for calling to our attention the relevance of this work to the measurement issue.

What's *Your* Number?

David J. Weiss

California State University, Los Angeles

We're not the only ones who construct useless indices. Mathematicians achieve personal status via their Erdős numbers. Paul Erdős (1913-1996) was an itinerant Hungarian-born mathematician, with no permanent job, who traveled around the world and wrote papers with his more stable colleagues. He was probably the most prolific mathematician ever, with more than 1500 publications. Erdős was widely regarded as brilliant, and it was an honor to be his co-author. Lots of folks claimed that honor. He worked with more than 500 co-authors, among them many of the eminent mathematicians of his time. But what of those who were not fortunate enough to publish with Erdős? Can they bask in his glory too?

The Erdős number was invented to solve this problem. It is the degree of separation between a published author and Erdős. If you published a paper with Erdős at some point in your life, your Erdős number is 1. If you never published with Erdős, but did publish with someone who published with Erdős, your Erdős number is 2, and so on. A person's claim consists of the string of authors leading back to Erdős. The chain of papers must consist of published articles or chapters; no technical reports, introductory chapters, or elementary texts are permitted.

The mean Erdős number for mathematicians is 4.65. I discussed this with a mathematician colleague, who of course knew his number (4). I annoyed him with the news that my number is 3; you may recognize the names of the two intermediate links (Edwards-Fishburn-Erdős). There's lots of information on the web site devoted to this bit of arcana (www.oakland.edu/enp/). There are 268,000 mathematicians with finite Erdős numbers, which range between 1 and 13. There are 50,000 more who have published collaboratively but have an infinite Erdős number, and 84,000 lone wolves who have published but never co-authored a mathematics paper.

The Erdős numbers of some famous people are interesting: Einstein's is 2, and Bill Gates's is 4. Herbert Simon and John von Neumann's share Erdős numbers of 3, along with Enrico Fermi and Jean Piaget, and as I mentioned previously, me. Noam Chomsky, Stephen Hawking, and Linus Pauling have Erdős numbers of 4. James D. Watson's is 6, and Reinhard Selten's is 7.

A person's number need not remain static, of course, as a publication by any one of a number of people may shorten the span. It is not necessarily true that publishing a lot guarantees a low number; Drumi Bainov, a mathematician with more than 800 publications, has Erdős number 4. The number captures professional connectedness rather than talent or impact.

We are used to cribbing from the mathematicians, but Erdős numbers don't mean much to most of us. Instead, we can calculate our numbers around famous JDM folks. A number can be defined for anyone, but a low number affords status only if the focal person has high status. You may not be impressed that my Shanteau number is 1, but I expect fawning when I tell you that my Luce number is 2 (Edwards-Luce) and my Tversky number is 2 (Edwards-Tversky). (It really helps to have had a co-author who has published with the stars).

The mean of one's numbers, averaged over a group of people famous enough to merit having numbers named for them, must reflect something fundamental. We could maintain a proper pecking order at the SJDM meeting if that mean were displayed on our convention badges. Or perhaps these numbers are as useless as bridge masterpoints, of which I dare say I have more than anyone else in the Society.

While Rome Burns

David J. Weiss

California State University, Los Angeles

In our classrooms and in our grant proposals, we trumpet the importance of decision making in peoples' lives. What kinds of examples do we use to inspire our students? Our textbooks feature analyses of decisions in such weighty arenas as war, nuclear policy, and medicine.

But what do we actually study? For more than 50 years, much of JDM research has examined some aspect of gambling. Although a few real economic decisions, such as the purchase of insurance, are structurally like those explored in a gambling study, for most researchers the gambling studies are a metaphor. But they are a poor metaphor. Money is unique because of its fungibility. More money is always preferable to less. However, the monotone relation between amount and utility does not apply to most goods or services. More food is not always preferable to less, and more sugar in one's coffee is not always preferable to less. Goldilocks knew that single-peaked preference functions of the sort studied by Clyde Coombs are the pertinent ones for most of the things we want.

Are decisions that affect one's life, whether mundane ones such as choosing lunch or rare ones such as selecting a mate, governed by SEU or Prospects? Models based on gambling will not lead us to understand why people usually do not select the food option to which they assign the highest value, nor do they marry the most desirable mate. Although the proof will have to be in the pudding, it seems likely that we will have to study those decisions directly rather than metaphorically if we are to understand them.

Will such studies get published? Only if the participants choose foolishly. I hope my impressionistic evaluation is wrong, but it looks to me like journals are biased to select for oddity. The counter-intuitive theory or result gets published, while the plausible is treated with disdain. That's a good recipe for trivializing a field.

And make no mistake about it, our field is perceived as irrelevant. When President Bill Clinton created the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS in 1995, its 35-person membership included medical practitioners, community and religious leaders, and people living with AIDS. By that time, it was already known that behavioral choices were largely responsible for transmission of the disease. However, there were no JDM folks, or even psychologists, on the panel! That situation has not changed of late as President George W. Bush has replaced members.

The perception of our field as having little to say about real-world problems is also fueled by our devotion to fanciful laboratory tasks. It's fine to inaugurate a line of research by studying, say, one's ability to choose the larger of two unfamiliar cities or to decide whether a stranger is more likely to be a bank teller or a feminist bank teller. Let us not lose sight of the fact that there is little reason for anyone other than a JDM researcher to care about those particular judgments. If there are connections between laboratory tasks and judgments or decisions that affect people's lives, then those connections need to be made explicit and empirically demonstrated. Only when we establish our credibility by elucidating important decisions will we be invited to sit at the adult table.

I am not advocating that we abandon theoretical work in favor of a strictly applied focus. A model developed to explicate a particular phenomenon may eventually provide a valuable spark that helps to resolve a different problem. We all realize the two orientations go hand in hand. The historical examples of physics informing engineering and biology informing medicine are too compelling to ignore. Perhaps what we need are a catchy label for the applied end of our discipline, and sessions in our convention that accommodate that kind of research.

Conferences, Workshops & Summer Institutes

The Edwards Bayesian Research Conference is a small, high-quality conference for people interested in judgment and decision making. It includes work on empirical, theoretical, normative, descriptive, and applied work in the general area of decision making. Deadline for submission of papers has been extended to Dec. 17, 2006.

Conference Web site:

<http://psych.fullerton.edu/mbirnbaum/bayes/>

We hope to see you in Sunny California in January,

Michael H. Birnbaum, Ph.D.
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Every day, millions of people make choices about their health, especially in light of news that they have a disease, illness, or disorder that could be treated. I am coordinating a summer institute on decision making, the idea behind which is promote cross-collaboration between basic decision scientists and those focused on improving patient decisions.

Ten basic decision scientists will join 10 experts in the area of patient choice to interact with early junior faculty/postdocs/graduate students for a two-week meeting of the minds at Dartmouth College. We have a stellar cast of speakers lined up: Tim Wilson, Gerd Gigerenzer, Craig McKenzie, Valerie Reyna, Maya Bar-Hillel, Frank Yates, Roy Baumeister, George Wolford, and Mary Frances Luce.

Information and application information are below, and more details are available on the institute website, <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~cecs/siipc/>

Feel free to contact me with questions. best, Kathleen Vohs

- What: Summer Institute on decision making in a patient context
- For Whom: Early junior professors, postdocs, and graduate students interested in decision making, choice, framing, affective forecasting, self-regulation, visceral effects, heuristics, emotional decisions, and cross-cultural issues in decision making.
- When: Campers will arrive on Sunday June 24th and depart Saturday July 07, 2007.
- Where: Dartmouth College, Hanover NH, USA

Specifics: Twice-daily talks by theoretical decision scientists and patient decision experts, along with collaborative projects among institute attendees. We expect to have 35 basic science fellows (that is, JDM-folks, marketers, psychologists, and the like) and 35 fellows from the applied side.

Funding: A travel subsidy will be provided, as will accommodations for the two+ weeks, and some portion of meals.

Applications and more information: see attached poster or go to:
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~cecs/siipc/>

Questions? Email kvohs@carlsonschool.umn.edu or 612-325-8331

ISIPTA '07
5th International Symposium on Imprecise Probability:
Theories and Applications

Monday 16 to Thursday 19 July 2007
Charles University, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics
Prague, Czech Republic
<http://www.sipta.org/isipta07>

The ISIPTA meetings are one of the primary international forums to present and discuss new results on the theories and applications of imprecise probability. Imprecise probability is a generic term for the many mathematical or statistical models which allow us to measure chance or uncertainty without using sharp numerical probabilities. These models include belief functions, Choquet capacities, comparative probability orderings, convex sets of probability measures, fuzzy measures, interval-valued probabilities, possibility measures, plausibility measures, upper and lower expectations or previsions, and sets of desirable gambles. Imprecise probability models are needed in both inference and decision problems where the relevant information is scarce, vague or conflicting, and where preferences may therefore also be incomplete.

Symposium format

It is a tradition of the ISIPTA meetings that we try to avoid parallel sessions. Each accepted paper is to be presented both (i) in a plenary session, where we ask for a short introduction and sketch of the context and relevance of the paper; and (ii) in a poster session, where ample opportunity and time is given for detailed explanation and discussion. The actual symposium will take three days (17-19 July, 2007). It is preceded by a day devoted to tutorials (16 July 2007).

Themes of the symposium

The symposium is open to contributions on all aspects of imprecise probability. But we do emphasize a number of themes that will get special attention: (i) algorithms and real applications, (ii) links between existing models, and (iii) theoretical results that facilitate using imprecise probability models in practice. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- models of coherent imprecise assessments
- convex sets of probability measures (credal sets)
- interval-valued probabilities
- upper and lower expectations or previsions
- non-additive set functions, and in particular Choquet capacities (and Choquet integration), fuzzy measures, possibility measures, belief and plausibility measures
- random sets
- rough sets
- comparative probability orderings
- qualitative reasoning about uncertainty
- imprecision in utilities and expected utilities
- limit laws for imprecise probabilities
- physical models of imprecise probability
- philosophical foundations for imprecise probabilities
- psychological models for imprecision and indeterminacy in probability

- assessments
- elicitation techniques for imprecise probabilities
- robust statistics
- probabilistic bounding analysis
- data mining with imprecise probabilities
- dealing with missing data
- estimation and learning of imprecise probability models
- decision making with imprecise probabilities
- ambiguity aversion and economic models of imprecise probability
- uncertainty in financial markets
- algorithms for manipulating imprecise probabilities
- Dempster-Shafer theory
- information algebras and probabilistic argumentation systems
- probabilistic logic, propositional and first-order
- credal networks and other graphical models
- credal classification
- applications in statistics, economics, finance, management, engineering, computer science and artificial intelligence, psychology, philosophy and related fields.

Location

ISIPTA '07 will be held at Charles University, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, in Prague, Czech Republic.

Important dates

Paper submission deadline: 23 February 2007.

Notification of acceptance: 27 April 2007.

Deadline for revised papers: 18 May 2007.

Symposium: July 16-19 2007.

Those interested in organizing a session or giving a talk in the Decision Analysis track within the INFORMS International Puerto Rico 2007, please contact Manel Baucells mbaucells@iese.edu

The conference will take place in July 8-11 (Sun-Wed), and the idea is to concentrate the DA sessions on Mon-Tue.

An important detail is to reserve early for the main conference hotel, since the backup hotel is a 20 minute or more bus ride away from the main conference hotel. The main hotel, The Westin Rio Mar Beach Resort & Spa, is in a remote place, in a beautiful resort setting. The reservation requires payment of a one night deposit, but the deposit is refundable if cancelled more than 72 hours prior to planned arrival.

The weblink from INFORMS, including links to hotel information, is: <http://meetings.informs.org/PuertoRico2007/>

SPUDM 21, August 19-22, 2007, Warsaw, Poland. Call for papers www.SPUDM21.org

Submissions of paper abstracts, poster abstracts, and proposals for workshops are invited on any topic in basic and applied judgment and decision making research. Deadline for all submissions is March 1, 2007. All submissions must be made electronically.

Abstracts should be between 400 and 500 words and include the following: Title (maximally X characters), Names of presenting author and co-authors and their affiliations, Aim, Method, Results, and Conclusions. A short abstract of maximally 200 words should also be included. This will be posted in the program on the web page and printed in the program book. You should indicate your preferred mode of presentation (oral or poster) and for those requesting an oral presentation whether you would be willing to present the paper as a poster if the sessions are oversubscribed.

A workshop proposal must have a Title (maximally X characters), Names of one or two conveners and their affiliations, a 200-word abstract, Names of 3-4 Presenters and a Discussant. Workshop submissions should outline the objectives of the workshop. Workshop conveners are required to submit this information independently of the presenters they wish to contact. Presenters contacted by workshop conveners are each required to submit only a short abstract (as indicated above for paper submission) along with the name of the symposium convener. Only short presentations of maximum 15 minutes should be submitted for workshops to allow a full discussion.

All abstracts will be reviewed by the Organizing Committee and decisions communicated to authors by April 10, 2007. Participants may submit more than one paper, but should indicate which they would prefer to present if limited to just one.

Joanna Sokolowska
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The Association for Consumer Research, in conjunction with the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College and the Marketing Science Institute, are sponsoring a conference next July 6 - 8 (2007) entitled "Transformative Consumer Research: Inspiring Scholarship for Collective and Personal Well-Being." Its goals are (1) to motivate increased consumer research that begins with, and directly addresses, an important challenge, problem, or opportunity in consumer behavior that has an essential role in the well-being of people and other living beings and (2) to guide consumer researchers in

designing, conducting, and communicating their scholarship to maximize the likelihood that consumers, their representatives, and/or other individuals charged with overseeing human and ecological welfare can learn about and act upon the insights. There is no registration fee, all food and refreshments are provided, and up to 60 attendees (those presenting papers) will receive free accommodations on the Dartmouth campus. The deadline for applications and submissions is January 31, 2007. For more details, please visit the following website:

<http://mba.tuck.dartmouth.edu/pages/faculty/punam.keller/conference/>

Information requests

Dear Colleagues,

George Bergus and I are writing a book on medical decision making for community physicians. The goal of the book is to translate the latest and best research in judgment and decision making into a set of conceptual (read: low-math) tools that a community physician can use to help their patients make good decisions. Cambridge University Press is our publisher.

We'd like your help. Do you have anything you've written that you think has something valuable to say to a community physician or his/her patient? If you'll send me your most important recent contribution in this area, I'll try to incorporate it into the book. This helps me (because my source memory is poor, and I'd have to spend a lot of time tracking down citations), and hopefully will help your work reach a wider or different audience.

Best thing to send me (via email: alansz@uic.edu) a PDF of the written work itself or a URL to a freely-available PDF, along with citation information. Second best is the citation information alone. Third best is hardcopy reprints (if you need my address, email me and I'll be happy to provide it).

I look forward to hearing about your work. Thanks in advance!

Alan Schwartz

Jobs, jobs, jobs...

McGill University Department of Psychology Assistant Professor Position in Quantitative Psychology. The Department of Psychology of McGill University invites applications for a tenure-track position at the Assistant Professor level in Quantitative Psychology. The position may be in any area of quantitative psychology or statistics. Candidates involved in the development of data analysis techniques appropriate to behavioural science or neuroscience are particularly encouraged to apply. Applicants are expected to have a doctorate in psychology, statistics, or a closely related field at the time of appointment. Applicants should present evidence of research productivity and the potential to obtain significant external funding. All applicants are expected to have an aptitude for undergraduate and graduate teaching.

Review of applications will begin January 15, 2007 and continue until suitable candidates have been identified. Candidates should submit a curriculum vitae, a description of research interests and academic goals, a description of their teaching interests, experience and philosophy, and some selected reprints of publications. They should also arrange for three confidential letters of recommendation to be sent to:

Chair, Quantitative Psychology Search Committee Department of Psychology McGill University 1205 Dr. Penfield Avenue Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 1B1

All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply, however Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority. McGill University is committed to equity in employment.

Postdoctoral Fellowships and Visiting Graduate Fellowships in cognition and decision making -- The Center for Adaptive Behavior and Cognition at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin, under the direction of Gerd Gigerenzer, is seeking applicants for up to 3 two-year Postdoctoral Fellowships and up to 2 one-year Visiting Graduate Fellowships beginning on or after September 1, 2007. The Visiting Graduate Fellowships are intended for students currently enrolled in graduate programs.

Candidates should be interested in studying the cognitive mechanisms underlying bounded, social, and ecological rationality in real-world domains. Current and past researchers in our group have had training in psychology, cognitive science, economics, mathematics, biology, and computer science to name but a few. The Center provides excellent resources, including support staff and equipment for conducting experiments and computer simulations, generous travel support for conferences, and, most importantly, the time to think.

For more information about our group please visit our homepage at <http://www.mpib-berlin.mpg.de/en/forschung/abc/index.htm> or write to Dr. Lael Schooler (fellowships@mpib-berlin.mpg.de). The working language of the center is English, and knowledge of German is not necessary for living in Berlin and enjoying the active life and cultural riches of this city. We strongly encourage applications from women, and members of minority groups. The Max Planck Society is committed to employing more handicapped individuals and especially encourages them to apply.

Send applications (consisting of a cover letter describing research interests, curriculum vitae, 3 letters of recommendation, and up to five reprints) by January 10th, 2007 to Ms. Wiebke Moeller, Center for Adaptive Behavior and Cognition, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Lentzeallee 94, 14195 Berlin, Germany.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. NIMH funded postdoctoral training in quantitative methods for behavioral research with research opportunities in basic and applied research. Appointment starts summer 2007. Seminars on advanced topics include: categorical data analysis, combinatorial methods for data analysis, computer adaptive

testing, decision theory, mathematical psychology, multidimensional scaling, multivariate analysis, neuroimage analysis, n-way data analysis, psychometrics and measurement, and social choice. Faculty includes: Carolyn Anderson, David Budescu, Hua-hua Chang, J. Douglas, Sungjin Hong, Lawrence Hubert, A. Klein, Jacqueline Meulman, Gregory Miller, Michel Regenwetter, Brent Roberts, Jesse Spencer-Smith, and Michelle Wang. Stipend range: \$36,996 to \$41,796. Applicants must be US citizens or permanent residents and should be no more than two years post PhD. Send curriculum vitae, statement of research interests, reprints, and three letters of recommendation to Jane Jukes, NIMH TG, Department of Psychology, University of Illinois, 603 E. Daniel, Champaign, IL 61820. Submissions must be received by February 28, 2007. For more information visit www.psych.uiuc.edu/~jboyd/quantitative_training/ or e-mail j-jukes@uiuc.edu

Department of Health Behavior and Health Education

School of Public Health - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Positions: The Department of Health Behavior and Health Education in the School of Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is seeking applications for up to three Tenure-Track positions beginning winter/summer 2007. Appointment may be made at the Assistant, Associate or Full Professor level depending upon experience and research and scholarly accomplishments.

Department Overview: In approaching prevention and disease management in diverse populations and through diverse community settings in the US and internationally, faculty of the Department have identified three areas of particular emphasis: (1) Health Communication, (2) Interpersonal and Social Processes in Health and Disease, and (3) Community Engagement. A range of quantitative and qualitative research methods cut across these, including controlled evaluations of interventions, community-based participatory approaches, and multi-level analysis and modeling. Training programs lead to M.P.H. and Ph.D. degrees and prepare students for careers in public health research, teaching, administration, and practice. Across all of these, the Department is committed to research and practice that advances social justice and especially seeks candidates who will add to the diversity of its faculty.

Responsibilities: The Department seeks faculty members who will contribute to its overall research, teaching and service programs.

Given its emphasis areas of Health Communication, Interpersonal and Social Processes, and Community Engagement, a cover letter accompanying applications should describe the pertinence of the applicant's work to one or several of these three areas and, possibly, synergies among them. Along with those whose research addresses thematic or topical aspects of these areas, individuals whose research emphasizes methodological contributions to them are also encouraged to apply.

Specific responsibilities will include funded research, teaching graduate level courses, advising graduate students, and participating in the Department's service programs.

Qualifications: An earned doctorate in behavioral or social sciences or other disciplines pertinent to health behavior and health education. Candidates should demonstrate the ability to establish and collaborate in multidisciplinary, funded research programs, as well as a clear track record of scholarly accomplishment. They should also have expertise in working with graduate students as well as a commitment to graduate-level teaching.

Dates: Applications will be reviewed until the position is filled.

To apply: send curriculum vita and cover letter summarizing qualifications to:

Edwin Fisher, Ph.D., Chair Department of Health Behavior and Health Education School of Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Rosenau Hall, CB#7440 Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7440 E-mail: searchhlthbeh@email.unc.edu

Additional information about the Department can be found at its website: www.sph.unc.edu/hbhe The School of Public Health is actively committed to diversity. We strongly encourage applications from women, minorities and individuals with disabilities. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Recent Publications

Schwarz, N., Sanna, L., Skurnik, I., & Yoon, C. (in press). Metacognitive experiences and the intricacies of setting people straight: Implications for debiasing and public information campaigns. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 2007.

We review the role of metacognitive experiences (ease of recall and thought generation and fluency of processing) in debiasing and public information campaigns. In a nutshell, we find that focal thoughts only induce bias when they come to mind easily, but attenuate or reverse bias when they are difficult to bring to mind. Conversely, "considering the opposite" only reduces bias when those thoughts come to mind easily, but increases bias when they are difficult to bring to mind. Hence, the emergence and attenuation of bias is a joint function of thought content and experienced ease of thought generation. Finally, public information campaigns that reiterate false information to debunk it run the risk to backfire because they make the false information more fluent, increasing its later acceptance. The paper is available at: http://sitemaker.umich.edu/norbert.schwarz/files/schwarz_et_al_setting_people_straight_aesp_2007_ms.pdf

Novemsky, N., Dhar, R., Schwarz, N., & Simonson, I. (in press). Preference fluency in consumer choice. *Journal of Marketing Research*.

We propose that consumer choices are often systematically influenced by preference fluency, i.e., the subjective feeling that forming a preference for a specific option is easy

or difficult. In four studies, we manipulated the fluency of preference formation by presenting descriptions in an easy or difficult to read font (Study 1) or by asking participants to think of few vs. many reasons for their choice (Studies 2 to 4). As predicted, subjective experiences of difficulty increased choice deferral (Studies 1 and 2) and the selection of a compromise option (Studies 3 and 4), unless consumers were induced to attribute the experience to an unrelated cause. Unlike studies of decision conflict, these effects were obtained without changing the attributes of the alternatives, the composition of the choice sets, or the reference points. The paper is available at: http://sitemaker.umich.edu/norbert.schwarz/files/novemsky_et_al_preference_fluency_jmr_in-press.pdf

A revised teaching guide to Rex Brown's "Rational Choice and Judgment: Decision Analysis for the Decider" is available to instructors only at rexvbrown@aol.com. It includes:

- Comments and model answers for assignments,;
- New material planned for any later edition
- Sample mid-term and final quizzes
- Alternative course outlines
- Class-by-class suggestions on teaching strategy
- Errata to first edition

(A preview of Brown's "Making Decision Research Useful—Not Just Rewarding" to appear in the Journal of Decision Making, is also available.)

You may be interested in my work with Scott Armstrong on predicting the decisions people make in conflict situations. Unaided experts are no good at this, so no wonder many conflicts turn out badly! There is hope: we have developed two methods (structured analogies and simulated interaction) that can be used to make accurate predictions. Articles and working papers about this program of research are available under Papers at www.conflictforecasting.com, a special interest group on the forecastingprinciples.com site.

Regards,

Dr Kesten C Green

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Business and Economic Forecasting Unit, Monash University.

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PO Box 10800, Wellington 6143, New Zealand.

<http://www.decision.co.nz/> & <http://www.conflictforecasting.com/>

I, along with Kesten Green, recently completed a ten-year follow-up on the 1996 Journal of Marketing Research paper by Armstrong and Collopy. We found that:

- 1) additional evidence supports the original finding that competitor-oriented objectives harm profitability, and
- 2) academics and practitioners have paid little attention to the evidence.

We provide suggestions such as a) professors, papers and textbooks should not advocate competitor-oriented objectives, and b) decision aids and research should not be built around market share objectives.

Hopefully, people will pay more attention to this growing body of evidence. We are off to a good start. Although the paper is still in page proofs, our study was mentioned in The New Yorker:

http://www.newyorker.com/talk/content/articles/061204ta_talk_surowiecki

The full text of our paper is at <http://jscottarmstrong.com> under Current Research Papers.

J. Scott Armstrong Professor of Marketing, 747 Huntsman, The Wharton School, U. of PA, Phila, PA 19104 <http://www.jscottarmstrong.com> home phone 610 622 6480 Home address: 645 Harper Ave., Drexel Hill, PA 19026 Fax at school: 215 898 2534

Judgment and Decision Making, vol. 1, no. 2, is now available at the journal web site, below. We welcome submissions for the next issue, expected in Feb. 2007.

Jonathan Baron, Professor of Psychology, University of Pennsylvania

Home page: <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~baron>

Editor: Judgment and Decision Making (<http://journal.sjdm.org>)

Last June, I asked people on this list for evidence on "the conditions under which face-to-face meetings can improve forecasting or decision making . . . versus. alternatives such as nominal groups, Delphi, virtual teams, or prediction markets." I sent a similar message to other email lists and to selected researchers.

The prior evidence on face-to-face meeting was all negative so I was looking for favorable evidence. None was forthcoming, although there was no shortage of opinions. The paper has just been published (with commentary). It is

J. Scott Armstrong, (2006) "How to Make Better Forecasts and Decisions: Avoid Face-to-face Meetings," Foresight: The International Journal of Applied Forecasting, (Fall), pp.3-13

It is in full text at <http://jscottarmstrong.com> under Current Research papers on the home page.

Scott Armstrong -- J. Scott Armstrong Professor of Marketing, 747 Huntsman, The Wharton School, U. of PA, Phila, PA 19104 <http://www.jscottarmstrong.com> home phone 610 622 6480 Home address: 645 Harper Ave., Drexel Hill, PA 19026 Fax at school: 215 898 2534

Interest Groups and Mailing Lists

London Judgment and Decision Making Group

Over the past few years lecturers & researchers in and around the London area have been meeting on a regular basis to discuss judgment and decision making, judgments of likelihood, reasoning, thinking, problem solving, forecasting, risk perception/communication, and other related topics. Many of us are involved in teaching judgment and decision making and for the past three years we've held an annual student workshop. Some of us run experiments and welcome participants. And, in order to disseminate and stimulate, many of us organise and participate in conferences.

If you would like to come along to meetings or make contact with other researchers in this area then just follow the link below.

<http://www.psychol.ucl.ac.uk/ljdm/>

Risk and Decision E-mail List Archives

<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/RISK-AND-DECISION.html>

An editor's farewell

This issue of your SJDM newsletter is my last. When I began as editor in 2003, I promised to give it three years. Three became four, and other projects captured my imagination: a book on adjudicated contests called *Judging Merit* (with Robyn Dawes and Margaret Foddy), another book on the ecology of problems and the limits of time, and a series of articles on evidential statistics and ordinal pattern analysis. I decided to assign my waning years to them, and to a more sentimental project: helping young people in the Third World make and distribute documentary videos of their elders and communities. Watch for them at a YouTube near you.

We are fortunate that Dan Goldstein had volunteered to serve as the new editor, and I am sure the newsletter will improve noticeably in his capable hands. You can help. Newsletter editors are, as a rule, content deprived, so I shall guess that Dan would appreciate your content. So please send him some for the 15 March issue:
dan@dangoldstein.com

For one foolish moment, I thought of writing a farewell editorial, from my perch far removed from the central feast of SJDM activity, about what I see as some uncharted but exciting areas for future judgment and decision making research: values, priorities, morality, and the construction of lives and societies resilient to judgment and decision error. Thankfully for you, the moment passed. If it recurs, I shall join you to send content to Dan.

Kindly indulge me in two notes of gratitude. Thanks to all who took the time and effort to submit content to the newsletter in the past four years. Thanks to all who took the time and effort to read it. I end with a sample of four important decision making prescriptions, the first three from anonymous sources, the last from proudly Canadian Leonard Cohen. Not surprisingly, all were generated without benefit of the General Linear Model.

A conclusion is the place you got tired of thinking.
Far more problems are created by arrogance than by ignorance.
When all else fails, lower your standards.
There's a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.

Scenes from a Conference: SJDM, Houston, November 2006

Thanks to Namika Sagara and Stephanie Carpenter for the photos!



And finally...



Almonte, Ontario. Farmer passes judgment on duffers

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Journal Note: SJDM Members are entitled to discounts on the following journals: *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, and *Risk, Decision and Policy*. Contact the publishers for details. Links to journal websites may be found on the SJDM website (www.sjdm.org) under related links.