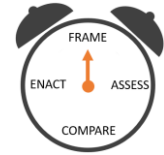


Characterising diversity in 'real-world' decision making



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This presentation will present for discussion a first draft of a framework to characterise the diversity of 'real-world' decision making. It classifies the diversity under the four main processes involved: Framing, Assessing, Comparing, and Enacting (FACE). **The framework will form part of a forthcoming book on decision making, 'Reflect: The Science of Real-World Decision making'.**

Human behaviour often involves people stopping, however briefly, and actively thinking about what to do. This process of 'decision making' can go beyond just thinking to activities such as seeking out information and using decision aids.

There is huge diversity in the way that decision making is undertaken in the 'real world'.

Framing of decisions can:

- involve opportunities, threats, tasks or goals.
- involve whether or not to go for a particular option, which out of two or more alternatives to go for, or finding the optimum value of something.
- involve different courses of action, or differences in the timing or way that actions are taken.
- involve fixed options or the opportunity to add or modify options.
- be in isolation or in clusters that are linked together.
- involve information presented all at once or over a period of time.
- vary in timescale.
- be individual or collective.
- vary in how far the decision maker(s) take(s) responsibility.
- vary in terms of how far there is a preconceived outcome.
- vary in how far it they are routine.
- vary in how far trial and error is involved.
- vary in how far the options are irrevocable once decided on.

Assessment of the options can:

- involve a cost-benefit analysis of the options or follow a rules-based approach.

- involve judgements about the likelihood of events in the future, or evaluation of current attributes of the options under consideration.
- vary in how uncertainty is treated.
- vary in how far it is undertaken in a systematic and structured way.
- vary in how far and in what way advice is sought and followed.
- vary in how far others seek to influence it.
- vary in the degree of effort involved.
- vary in the involvement of emotions, desires and impulses.
- vary in how far moral judgements are involved.
- vary in the extent and type of reasoning processes involved.
- vary in the use of introspection about preferences.

Comparison between the options can:

- vary in the 'decision rules' (e.g., satisficing, optimising) used.
- vary in terms of the degree of risk acceptance.
- vary in extent to which multiple shortlisting stages are used.
- sometimes involve continual updating until a criterion is reached ('random walk').

Enactment of decisions can:

- vary in the extent of disconnect between decision processes and what is decided.
- sometimes involve curtailment of the decision process.
- be delayed, forgotten about, suspended, reconsidered or abandoned.
- vary in the degree of commitment to the selection option(s).

With such diversity and complexity, arriving at a model of 'real-world' decision making is challenging. But it is worth attempting because the more a model can accommodate this complexity and diversity, the more accurate will be predictions of the outcomes of decision and therefore human behaviour.