

Call for Papers – Special Issue of the *European Management Review*

Expanding the boundaries of rationality: Towards new models of decision making for radical uncertainty

The special issue is intended to address the following question: which decision making models, procedures, or heuristics would our community of experts suggest to follow, for solving problems that evade the conditions manageable by established decision making approaches? The Covid crisis is one example of such a problem, epitomizing issues that are more challenging, important, risky and radically uncertain than those classically considered in the decision making literature.

There has in fact been growing recognition of the need for elaboration on novel decision making models for highly uncertain problems, exemplified by the 2020 SI of AMR (Alvarez and Porac 2020), and various contributions on the features and challenges posed by situations of uncertainty variously qualified as ‘epistemic’, ‘Knightian’ ‘Black Swan’-like and ‘unknown’ (Faulkner et al 2017, Foss 2020, Runde 2009, Feduzi et al forth, Packard et al 2017, Le Masson, et al. 2019). However, methods and models that are both realistically applicable and logically sound for deciding under radically uncertain conditions are not abundant.

The present SI calls for advances on models, tools, methods, and heuristics that can master those types of uncertainty effectively, especially when consequences of decisions are critically important. We expect that tools of that type would need to expand the ‘boundaries of rationality’ and may be redefining our concept of decision and rationality, thereby contributing to the emergence of new models of decision making. The potential areas of application of such tools in management and organization can be very extensive, as the most important decision tend to be also the most uncertain and to call for approaches going beyond both the economic and behavioral classic ones (Grandori 2010) - as also emerging from studies on technological innovation (Thagardt and Croft 1999), product innovation (Ben-Menahem et al 2016); entrepreneurial decision making (Felin and Zenger 2009), strategic thinking (Eisenhardt 1989; Gavetti and Levinthal 2000), design theory (Hatchuel 2001), high reliability organizations (Weick and Sutcliff 2007).

We open up for submission of theoretical as well as empirical papers drawing on qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Studies relevant to the advancement of new decision making models in management and organization, also drawing within or across a broad range of disciplines that have been concerned with the theme (e.g. philosophy, sociology, economics, psychology, political science, engineering) are welcome.

Relevant issues that potential contributions may address, include but are not limited to the following:

- Are there methods for the ‘rational imagination’ (Byrne 2005) of new solutions, projects and artifacts, for generating good rather than bad hypotheses when engaging in analogic, abductive, counterfactual and effectual reasoning?
- What logics can sustain an effective definition of problems and preferences where they are not ‘given’, are unknown at the outset of a process? – an issue early put on the decisionmaking research agenda by both Simon and March, but still waiting for robust answers
- Which heuristics can master the simultaneous presence of uncertainty and ‘hazard’ (downside risk) and may make notions as ‘mindfulness’, ‘acceptable risk’, or the ‘precautionary principle’ more actionable?
- How ‘augmented brains’ and decision systems can build upon the interplay between different actors, and the interplay between generative forms of Artificial and Natural Intelligence?
- Are there new formal logics in contemporary epistemology that could offer to management richer frameworks for decision making?

In case the worth-publishing response to this Call is going to be wider than a single issue hosting capacity, a “forum” across issues will be opened.

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