

DECISION INTEGRITY AND SECOND ORDER CYBERNETICS

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ABSTRACT

The rational worldview of management science has come to dominate decision methods. This chapter proposes that, despite its evident successes, this metatheoretical view of decision making is decreasingly effective in a global world which turns out to be unruly and unpredictable in critical areas. The result is an escalation of unintended consequences in business, public affairs and human ecology. Our decision processes have fallen a long way behind our understanding of the nature of the decision field because we have become enamored of the success in simpler times of the rational view which disconnects the observer from the observed. Decision integrity is the quest for a theory of decision making that is better matched to the unruliness of the real world and the need for incorporation of personal responsibility. It requires stepping out of the observer/object paradigm of classical science and into the new paradigm of reflexivity and second order cybernetics. In this metatheory we bring forth worlds through enactive cognition and, faced with undecidable questions, discover real ethics and choice as core attributes of decision integrity.

Key Words: decision process, decision field, decision integrity, conceptual emergency, second order cybernetics, ethics, induction, learning, enactive cognition, holarchy, scenario planning