

## **OUR WORLD IS MOVING FROM FRAGMENTATION TO INTEGRATION**

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Our world today is more and more moving from fragmentation to integration, becoming better unified and interactive in its economics, information sharing, travel, diplomacy, and in medical knowledge and instruments and the importance of health care and even in waging wars. There is more freedom for individuals to express themselves. It is by having a one world view that we will be able to make the best decisions. As more people express themselves, they need a way to make decisions together. Conflicts can be resolved rationally and peacefully if concessions can be traded off and with the AHP, which allows for the measurement of intangibles alongside tangibles, better decisions can be made about the tradeoffs. Tradeoffs can be balanced so that the parties can use them to offer concessions that will result in what they can consider to be a fair outcome. This method of trading off concessions has been demonstrated successfully in the 1980s conflict in South Africa, in the Northern Ireland conflict, and more recently in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in an exploratory negotiation that is still in progress.

The accuracy of the outcome is assured by making judgments directly and then performing sensitivity analysis to see if changing some judgments leads to a different outcome. Seeing the big picture and being able to combine pieces of thinking, including both positive and negative aspects of the problem, is possible because analysis and synthesis are done in a manner that makes sense to our brains.

Overall change and the acceleration of change that we are experiencing is affecting our human psychology. We, as individuals and as groups, need to be able to cope with the unpredictable changes and growing complexity in our world. Stress, uncertainty and frustration increase, minds are overloaded with information and knowledge fragments, and values erode. Negative developments are consistently overemphasized, while positive ones are ignored. The resulting climate is one of nihilism, anxiety and despair. While the wisdom gathered in the past has lost much of its validity, we don't have a clear vision of the future either. As a result, we need to look for new things to guide our actions. The AHP way of thinking, is based on an understanding of the relativeness of all

things, examined through making comparisons. Perhaps an axiom of comparison, that a thing cannot be known until it is compared with something else, should have been included by Plato and Aristotle along with their three axioms of identity, contradiction and excluded middle; to deal with complexity. Starting by making simple comparisons can help us deal with this new complexity.

According to the Swiss born French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 –1778), original (“Natural”) man had no language, no abstract thought, no moral ideas and no society. He was self-centered, but not cruel, and he felt compassion for his own kind. He was good, but not capable of moral values nor of self-sacrifice. Rousseau believed that in society man is “naturally” more evil than virtuous and that his self-interest is in constant opposition to the general interest with social life being characterized by the alienation of men from nature, from each other and from authentic selves. *The cure requires the fabrication of a new man and the proper political institutions.* It is not enough for men to obey the laws. Their minds and wills must also be engaged. The AHP with its group decision making capabilities can help individuals and groups find their best overall priorities.

By knowing our priorities perhaps we can take a longer-term perspective and be able to construct a large portfolio of solutions to the world-wide problems of the future facing us. We who work in multicriteria decision making are the best to collect and harness these diverse problems and to try to relate and unify them so that our resources, attention and energy can be appropriately distributed to give us the best yields.

We also need to identify the most threatening and serious conflicts in the world and try to get the parties from all sides to identify the issues and the concessions they expect to make and those they expect to receive. Finally, we need to teach our children and families how to systematize their decision making so they learn to think carefully about making rational choices. The most urgent task facing us, I believe, is to find honest politicians who can learn to use AHP/ANP decision making, when necessary sacrificing their self-interest in favor of those of the broader society, overriding their compulsion to be re-elected.

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