The Mathematics of Collective Action

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY ROBERT B. SMITH JAMES S. COLEMAN THE MATHEMATICS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION 105 PER JUNE 10 N 106 PER JUNE 10 N 107 PER JUNE 10 N 108 PER JUNE 10 N 109 PE

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著者:James Coleman

出版者:Routledge

出版时间:2005-1-13

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780202307909

Philosophers, social scientists, and laymen have used two perspectives in analyzing social action. One sees man's action as the result of causal forces, and the other sees action as purposive and goal directed. Mathematical treatment of social action has shown this same dichotomy. Some models of behavior describe a causal process, in which there is no place for intention or purpose. Most stochastic models of behavior, whether individual or group, are like this. Another body of work, however, employs purpose, anticipation of some future state, and action designed to maximize the proximity to some goal. Classical microeconomic theory, statistical decision theory, and game theory exemplify this direction.

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