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THINKING,
FAST AND SLOW



DANIEL
KAHNEMAN

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS

"[A] masterpiece . . . This is one of the greatest and most engaging collections of insights into the human mind I have read." —WILLIAM EASTERLY, *Financial Times*

Bijan Karimi reviews
Daniel Kahneman,
Thinking Fast and Slow

By Bijan Karimi

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A primary goal of Orientation and Introduction to Homeland Security courses is to expand program participants' field of view and help them see the unseen which is often hidden, not through any fault of their own but due to their cognitive conditioning. Participants need to see more broadly, analyze deeply, and make connections between elements. In *Thinking Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman, the author introduces readers to System 1 and System 2 thinking. These cognitive processes compete when an individual is faced with a novel, often high stress situation. System 1 is the automatic, quick assessment of a situation, relying on heuristic guideposts. However, it can lead to suboptimal performance -- not the ideal outcome in the Homeland Security environment. In contrast, when an individual engages in System 2 thinking, they are focusing attention on the issue, but it comes at a cost. Kahneman points out that this deep thinking creates other issues, particularly "being blinded to the obvious and we are blind to our blindness." Part I continues to describe these cognitive systems, shortcuts our brain takes to help with cognitive processing. Part II covers common heuristics and biases that serve as mental crutches across System 1 and 2 thinking, including availability, anchors, probability versus plausibility, and emotional influence on the perception of risk. Part III explains biases that lead to overconfidence in knowledge of the problem space. Part IV discusses biases associated with making choices. Other books used in the master's program - *Knowledge Illusion* and *Art of Thinking Clearly* among them - discuss similar topics but in greater detail or breadth. Kahneman has struck the right balance of identifying how our cognitive processes cloud the understanding of a situation, leading to overconfidence in knowledge and impeding clear decision making. *Thinking Fast and Slow* has been in the rotation for almost a decade, demonstrating its continued relevance. If you still have your copy, I suggest you open it up, and dedicate some System 2 resources to review its themes.

About the Author

Dr. Bijan Karimi is the Assistant Vice President of Business Continuity with the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, uniting over 15 years of emergency management and response experience with another decade in the financial services industry. Bijan received his Doctorate from the University of Southern California, focusing his research on cryptocurrency and economic security. He is also an instructor at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate school. He may be reached at bpkarimi.nps@gmail.com.

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