

Editorial

Ahti Salo · M. Grazia Speranza

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Operational research seeks to improve decision making. In operational research, the salient characteristics of decision problems are captured by building models which are often (but not always) quantitative. These models help understand which decision alternatives best contribute to the attainment of decision objectives. Yet, to have real impact, these models must be closely linked to the processes through which decisions are reached.

The recognition that decision processes lie at the heart of operational research is one of the reasons for why the Association of European Operational Research Societies (EURO) chose “Decision Processes” as a theme for one of the three new journals that were launched at the IFORS conference in Melbourne in 2011.

The *EURO Journal on Decision Processes* has a unique focus on the theoretical, methodological, behavioural and organizational topics that contribute to the understanding and appropriate use of operational research in supporting decision making processes. It publishes major advances on decision analysis, problem structuring, and multi-criteria decision aiding. It explores questions of process design, model validity and communication in connection with modelling approaches that inform decision making (e.g., forecasting, optimization, simulation, performance measurement). It also presents reflective accounts of decision processes that exemplify uses of operational research in areas such as energy, engineering, environment, finance, health care and operations management.

This inaugural issue of the *EURO Journal on Decision Processes* contains seven contributions by eminent scholars:

A. Salo (✉)

Systems Analysis Laboratory, Department of Mathematics and Systems Analysis, Aalto University
School of Science, P.O. Box 11100, 00076 Aalto, Finland
e-mail: euro-journal-on-decision-processes@aalto.fi

M. Grazia Speranza

Department Quantitative Methods, University of Brescia, C.da S.Chiera 50, 25122 Brescia, Italy

- In their paper, “Problem Structuring: On the Nature of, and Reaching Agreement about Goals”, Colin Eden and Frank Ackermann show how the articulation of organizational purpose underlies the identification of goals. In particular, they argue that operational research can help in the articulation of this purpose and illustrate their arguments with case examples.
- Unaided decisions are prone to errors, as demonstrated by the extensive research programme on heuristics and biases. In “Guided Decision Processes”, Manel Baucells and Rakesh Rasin propose that such errors can be countered by relying on personalised decision rules which are not too onerous but still have strong prescriptive properties.
- There are multiple objectives in almost all decision processes. In his paper “Identifying, Prioritizing, and Using Multiple Objectives”, Ralph Keeney describes instructive real-life examples which show how such objectives can be best recognised to benefit decision makers.
- Choosing an appropriate multicriteria methodology in a given decision context involves many questions that the analyst needs to be aware of. In “Questions Guiding the Choice of a Multicriteria Aiding Method”, Bernard Roy and Roman Slowinski elaborate these questions and illustrate them in the light of many high-impact applications.
- At the global level, many research institutions and policy organizations use methods of decision analysis, policy analysis, and systems analysis to shed light on global problems. In “Providing a Decision Focus for Global Systems Analysis”, the former Director of the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis, Detlof von Winterfeldt discusses the institutional and methodological characteristics of global systems analysis. He also argues that adopting a stronger decision focus will further improve the effectiveness of global systems analysis.
- Analytics—which uses quantitative methods to discover meaningful patterns in data—has become increasingly important for business decisions. In their paper “Policy Analytics: An Agenda for Research and Practice”, Alexis Tsoukias, Gilberto Montibeller, Giulia Lucertini and Valerie Belton discuss how public decision making differs business decisions and, in particular, what implications these differences have for research and practice.
- Decision processes which involve parties whose interests are not fully aligned can be viewed as negotiations which consist of offers and information exchanges. In his paper “Negotiation Processes: An Integrated Perspective”, Rudolf Vetschera gives a comprehensive review of process models of negotiation and outlines a promising agenda for future research.

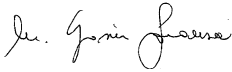
We would like to end this Editorial by expressing our deepest gratitude to the strong Editorial Board of *EURO Journal on Decision Processes*, to the authors of the papers in this issue, and more generally, to EURO and to all those many others through whose support this journal has become alive.

We are confident that, thanks to this continuing support, the *EURO Journal on Decision Processes* will quickly establish itself as an influential publication that

disseminates valuable knowledge on the many roles that operational research has in enhancing decision processes.



Ahti Salo
Editor-in-Chief
Aalto University



M. Grazia Speranza
EURO Past President
University of Brescia