

Stability, Duality and Decomposition in General Mathematical Programming

O. E. FLIPPO

Stichting Mathematisch Centrum, Amsterdam, 1991. vii + 228 pp. Dfl.59.00
ISBN 90 6196 398 2

This is an excellent and heavily technical book in mathematical programming from Flippo. The book is divided into three separate and self-contained parts dealing with the three notions of Stability, Duality theory, and Decomposition methods in general mathematical programming. Each part is preceded by an introduction and concluded by a summary, which also contains a list of theoretical contributions. The book is preceded by a very useful section on notational conventions, and concluded by an epilogue, an author index, a subject index, a list of references. The author claims to have a summary in Dutch which we were sorry not to find.

The notation is very good and the use of extended functions and point-to-set maps is very clever. The sections do not lead to any major theorems but perhaps the importance of the book is in its unification of several ideas under one framework.

The book contains quite a lot of theorems with proofs which, as far as we can see, are correct.

We have no hesitation in recommending the book to graduate students, research students, and researchers in the field of Mathematical Programming, Optimization and Operational Research.

M. TAMIZ and E. W. WYNN

The Escapism of Operations Research

NIELS WARRER

Aarhus University Press, Denmark, 1992. 48 pp. 94 DDK
ISBN 87 7288 402 9

This short paperback is written by an Associate Professor of management and aims to review critically the practical application of the OR/MS methodology and as such is to be welcomed.

The basic viewpoint of the book is that OR/MS presents academic recommendations which cannot be applied in the 'real world' (which Warrer defines as industry) since they ignore practical realities.

The style of the book is rather difficult – literature surveys and statistics are presented to support the author's viewpoints, but these tend to be in much depth but very little breadth. The author's definition of OR/MS is based on four textbooks (one from 1973 and the rest from the early 1980s), one conference and one journal (*Interfaces*).

The book is consciously aimed at the manufacturing area – production is defined as 'the absolute main interest of OR/MS.' As a practitioner who has worked in public service and commerce; and an ex-student having studied OR in marketing, health and general forecasting/computing – it is difficult for me to agree with this definition.

It is disappointing to see a management professor with no apparent understanding of the developments in OR methodology such as soft systems, or of applications of the approach outside manufacturing.

Nevertheless, the book's closing comment is worth reiterating: 'A discipline, which isolates itself from the test of realities takes great risks for getting out of contact with the empirical field.' Perhaps before we attempt a further PhD on the Travelling Salesman Problem, we should ponder the implications of this for our profession.

JASON LOWTHER