

The Modelling Preferences and Risk national scientific conference and the International Workshop on Multiple Criteria Decision Making: a summary of the conferences' long-standing success

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On 7th–8th April 2025, the University of Economics in Katowice hosted the jubilee, 15th Modelling Preferences and Risk 2025 (MPaR) national scientific conference, held jointly with the 11th International Workshop on Multiple Criteria Decision Making 2025 (IWOMCDM). Both events were organised by the Department of Operations Research of the University of Economics in Katowice, which celebrated its 25th anniversary last year, in collaboration with the INFORMS Poland Chapter. The academic supervision of the events was provided by Tadeusz Trzaskalik, PhD, DSc, ProfTit, and Tomasz Wachowicz, PhD, DSc, Professor at the University of Economics in Katowice. The conferences were held under the honorary patronage of the Rector of the University of Economics in Katowice, Celina Olszak, BEng, PhD, DSc, ProfTit, with additional scholarly patronage provided by the Committee of Statistics and Econometrics of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The MPaR/IWOMCDM conferences, initiated by Professor Tadeusz Trzaskalik, have now become as a regular position in the calendar of the academic events devoted to the application of the decision theory in economics and management. The purpose of the conferences is to provide an interdisciplinary forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences concerning the latest developments in the mathematical description and modelling of decision-making processes, with a particular focus on the issues of risk and multiple criteria decision making. The first MPaR conference was held in 1998, followed by another edition in 1999, and since then the meetings have been organised biennially.

The 15th MPaR/IWOMCDM conference was inaugurated in the Professor Zbigniew Pawłowski Auditorium. It is worth recalling that in this very hall – then regularly filled with students of the Silesian International School of Business – Professor Kazimierz Zaraś of the Université du Québec en Abitibi–Témiscamingue in Canada delivered a guest lecture in 1994

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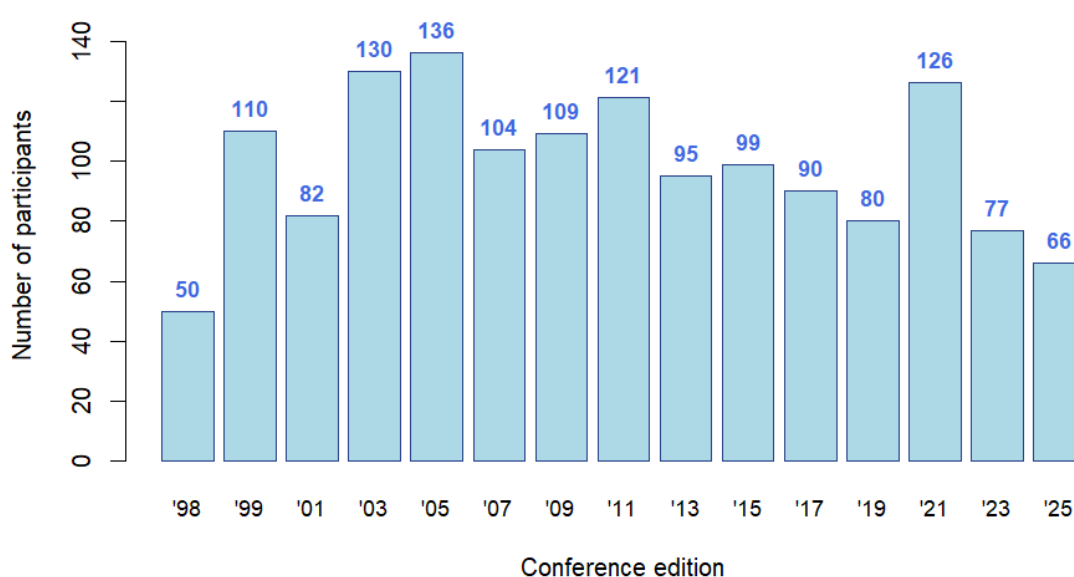
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entitled *Modelling Preferences and Risk*. It focused on the application of stochastic dominance in supporting multiple criteria decision making, and the current conference series took its name directly from the title of that lecture.

The inaugural MPaR conference in 1998 was opened with a plenary lecture delivered by Jean-Marc Martel of Laval University in Quebec City, Canada, entitled *Multicriterion Analysis under Uncertainty: The Approach of Outranking Synthesis*. It initiated a sequence of 29 plenary lectures delivered over the years by distinguished scholars from diverse academic centres worldwide. Since 2005, the MPaR conference has been accompanied by the IWoMCDM workshops, devoted to the theory and applications of multiple criteria decision making. These workshops continue the tradition of the large international conference, *The 4th International Conference on Multiobjective Programming and Goal Programming*, organised in 2000 by the Department of Operations Research at the Jaskółka Hotel in Ustroń. Subsequent MPaR/IWoMCDM conferences were held at this venue until 2023. This year, owing to the transformation of the hotel into a health resort, the conference took place at the University of Economics in Katowice.

The conferences have consistently attracted strong interest among researchers engaged in applying decision theory to economics and management, both in Poland and abroad. This is demonstrated by the fact that the events have gathered a total of 1,475 participants. Figure 1 illustrates the number of participants in each edition.

Figure 1. Number of participants in each edition of the MPaR/IWoMCDM conferences

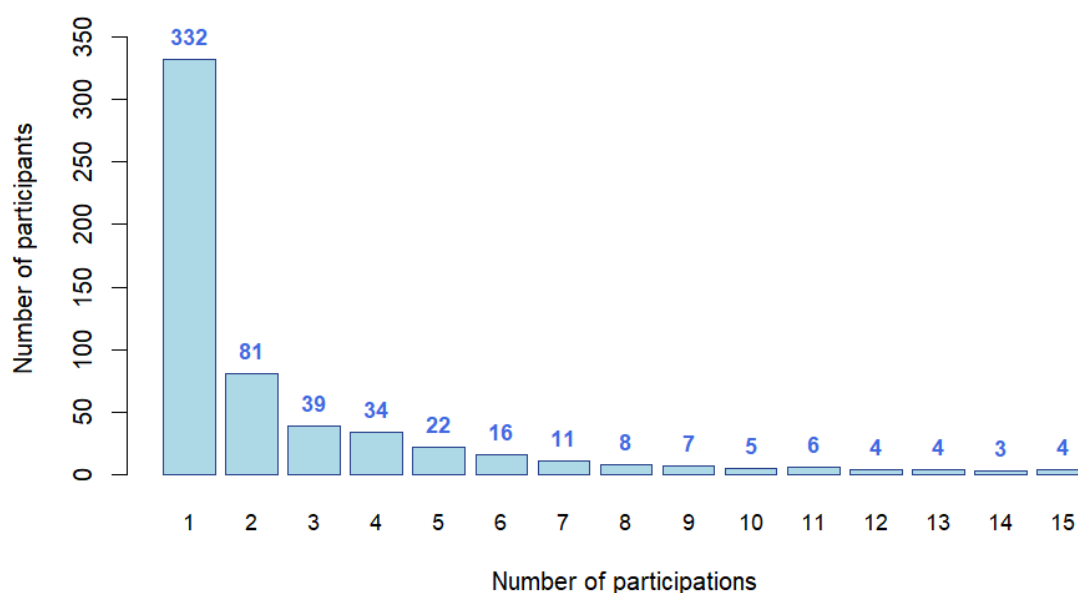


Source: authors' work.

The largest attendance – 136 participants – was recorded in 2005, when the IWoMCDM conference was organised for the first time. In 2021, the third highest number was achieved, with 126 participants. This edition was held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which enabled exceptionally broad participation from scholars representing every continent except Australia – something that would not have been possible in a traditional in-person format. On average, 95 participants attended each edition of the conference. It is also noteworthy that the successive editions have attracted participants from a wide range of academic centres; for instance, in 2011, 34 institutions, both Polish and international, were represented.

Equally noteworthy are the statistics concerning repeated participation. Across all editions, there have been 576 individual participants. Figure 2 presents the distribution of participation. As many as 244 individuals have taken part in the conference at least twice, attesting to their strong or very strong association with this event. Significantly, 15 of the 50 participants at the inaugural conference in 1998 were also present at this year's 15th edition.

Figure 2. Distribution of participation in the MPaR/IWoMCDM conferences



Source: authors' work.

In 1998, the first volume of the *Modelling Preferences and Risk* series was published by the Publisher of the University of Economics in Katowice, subsequently appearing annually and containing articles presented at the MPaR conferences. The IWoMCDM workshops, in turn, gave rise to the annual journal *Multiple Criteria Decision Making (MCDM)*, also published by the University of Economics in Katowice. The journal featured a variety of contributions,

including papers presented during the successive workshops. The *Modelling Preferences and Risk* series was published in Polish between 1998 and 2022, while the *MCDM* journal has been issued in English since 2005. Both series are edited by Professor Tadeusz Trzaskalik. For many years they have attracted considerable interest from both Polish and international authors. This in part resulted from the fact that many participants in these conferences were at the beginning of their academic careers and sought opportunities for advancement, which the publication of their articles facilitated. All papers published in the successive volumes of the *Modelling Preferences and Risk* series are available online at www.mpar.ue.katowice.pl.

Articles published in these conference-related series, particularly in the *MCDM* journal, have often attracted international attention, as demonstrated by the citation data. The most frequently cited in the SCOPUS database, with 262 citations is the article titled *Multi-criteria decision making models by applying the TOPSIS method to crisp and interval data* by Ewa Roszkowska.

On the occasion of the MPaR/IWoMCDM jubilee, the most active participants (outside the Department of Operations Research of the University of Economics in Katowice) were presented with diplomas. The first one was awarded to Prof. Kazimierz Zaraś, whose lecture title – as mentioned earlier – gave the name to the MPaR conference. The second diploma was awarded to Józef Stawicki, PhD, DSc, ProfTit, who not only took part in every edition of the MPaR/IWoMCDM conference, but also contributed extensively to their organisation by preparing programmes and reviewing numerous papers submitted for publication in the conference proceedings. The third diploma was presented to Professor Ewa Roszkowska, author of the most frequently cited paper delivered at the conference. Other diplomas were awarded for participation in at least ten editions of MPaR to Professors Andrzej Skulimowski, Ignacy Kaliszewski, Grażyna Trzpiot, Marcin Anholcer, Dorota Kuchta, Stefan Grzesiak, Ewa Konarzewska-Gubała, Lech Kruś, Włodzimierz Szkutnik, Zbigniew Świtalski, Krzysztof Dmytrów, Joanna Olbryś, Honorata Sosnowska, and Stanisław Wieteska. Diplomas were also prepared for the most active international participants of the IWoMCDM workshops: Petr Fiala, Josef Jablonský, Jaroslav Ramík, Ralph Steuer, Leonas Ustinovičius and Lidija Zadnik-Stirn. One should also acknowledge the staff of the Department of Operations Research, who, under the leadership of Professor Tomasz Wachowicz, organised the successive meetings. These include Renata Dudzińska-Baryła, PhD, Anna Gorczyca-Goraj, PhD, Krzysztof Grzanka, MA, Beata Humańska, MA, Sławomir Jarek, PhD, Ewa Michalska, PhD, DSc, Professor at the University of Economics in Katowice and Krzysztof Targiel, BEng, PhD, DSc, Professor at the University of Economics in Katowice.

This year's edition of the MPaR/IWoMCDM conference was attended by 66 participants representing 26 academic and research centres as well as companies from Poland and abroad. In total, 44 papers were presented in 14 sessions, addressing topics such as preference analysis, the search for optimal decisions, project management, risk measurement, analysis and management, and multiple criteria decision making. In this year's opening plenary session of the conference and workshop, the following lectures were delivered:

- Milena Bieniek, *The Impact of Demand Uncertainty on Logistic Decision Making*;
- Wojciech Sałabun, *Recent Advances in the Development of MCDA Methods and Tools*.

A regular feature of the MPaR conference is a session co-organised with the INFORMS Poland Chapter, providing a platform for practitioners' perspectives. This year two INFORMS sessions were held. On the first day of the event, Maciej Gwóźdź, CEO of the Ammega Group, delivered a lecture entitled *Decision Making and Risk Management in a Private Equity Environment Based on Ammega*. On the next day, Przemysław Juszczuk, PhD, of the Institute of Computer Science, Polish Academy of Sciences, presented a lecture entitled *A System for Heterogeneous Memory Management Based on Multi-criteria Optimisation and Machine Learning*, showcasing a commercial solution developed in cooperation with the Infoklinika S.A. company. Among the additional activities accompanying the previous editions of MPaR were open meetings of the Operations Research Section of the Committee of Statistics and Econometrics of the Polish Academy of Sciences, as well as open sessions of the Commission on the Didactics of Mathematics for Economic Studies of the Polish Mathematical Society.

The MPaR/IWoMCDM conferences are also regularly accompanied by special concerts. In previous years, the participants had the opportunity to enjoy performances by the 'Silesianie' Song and Dance Ensemble of the University of Economics in Katowice, the University's Choir (on two occasions), an organ recital on a positive organ by Małgorzata Trzaskalik-Wyrwa, a quartet from the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, the distinguished harpsichordist Marcin Świątkiewicz, the soprano Edyta Nowicka, and the piano duo Ayaka Meiwa (Japan) and Tadeusz Trzaskalik. In this year's edition, tenor Michał Ryguła performed an engaging programme of Italian and Neapolitan songs.

We would like to warmly invite all those interested in the issues of preference modelling, risk and multiple criteria decision support to participate in the next edition of the MPaR/IWoMCDM conference, which is scheduled to take place in the spring of 2027.