

FORSCHUNGSNO- TIZBUCH

MII · I

SYNCO



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RESEARCH STAGE

16TH WEEK - NOËL

01/01/2019

I am thinking about how to structure the thesis to limit the reading list to a manageable expression.

I might have a somewhat clear idea of what to put in the first chapter: background on the Cold War and the computer, Simon's place in the context of the creation of the computer, and Simon's history between the computer and artificial intelligence. This part could benefit from relating the computer to artificial intelligence. After all, Simon did write about the computer in his writings, but as far as I am aware, he spoke more about artificial intelligence than about computers per se.

Perhaps, in that sense, it would be worth it to look at all of Simon's explicit writings on the computer ...it seems I would need to read, on top of "Administrative Behavior", his "The Sciences of the Artificial". I would like to limit the amount of books to read for the thesis, but it seems unavoidable to read one book on the history of the computer. Should I fall short of time, it should be Edward's "The Closed World".

As in my previous discussion with Prof. Lenfant, we agreed that introducing the topic of artificial intelligence is more difficult than it appeared at first sight, we might be forced to talk more about the organization of labor rather than artificial intelligence. In fact thinking about it, we should, perhaps, forget about artificial intelligence at this point, and talk about the computer as a social technology.

I am beginning to sense that the biggest challenge at this point really is choosing the corpus. The problem is that if the topic is too broad as to require a vast amount of reading to treat satisfactorily, the thesis will be ambitious but an utter failure. The topic must be adjusted to reduce the reading to an amount that is manageable within the time constraints and that allows a satisfactory treatment of the subject.

Today, I am checking Simon's "Models of Bounded Rationality, Vol 3.", which was published in 1997, just a few years before his death. Vol. 1 dates from 1982. Vol. 2 from 1982 (1984 the softcover edition). It is very likely that the motivation for this collection comes from his receiving the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1978. In other words, there is a 15 year gap between the first volumes and the third. It would be interesting to find out the history behind the motivation for the publication of the third volume, but this would be impossible to undertake at this point.

The following is the description of Vol. 2 from the MIT Press website:

The Nobel Prize in Economics was awarded to Herbert Simon in 1978. At Carnegie-Mellon University he holds the title of Professor of Computer Science and Psychology. These two facts together delineate the range and uniqueness of his contributions in creating meaningful interactions among fields that developed in isolation but that are all concerned with human decision-making and problem-solving processes. In particular, Simon has brought the insights of decision theory, organization theory (especially as it applies to the business firm), behavior modeling, cognitive psychology, and the study of artificial intelligence to bear on economic questions. This has led not only to new conceptual dimensions for theoretical constructions, but also to a new humanizing realism in economics, a way of taking into account and dealing with human behavior and interactions that lie at the root of all economic activity.

The sixty papers and essays contained in these two volumes are grouped under eight sections, each with a brief introductory essay. These are:

Some Questions of Public Policy, Dynamic Programming Under Uncertainty; Technological Change; The Structure of Economic Systems; The Business Firm as an Organization; The Economics of Information Processing; Economics and Psychology; and Substantive and Procedural Reality.

Most of Simon's papers on classical and neoclassical economic theory are contained in volume one. The second volume collects his papers on behavioral theory, with some overlap between the two volumes. The second edition of Simon's widely read and referenced The Sciences of the Artificial was published by The MIT Press 1981 and is available in both hardcover and paperback.

From the preface to Vol. 3, it seems to me that Simon had a big say on what papers were chosen for these volumes. He claims that the papers contained therein have historical interest. They constitute, to his judgment, the principal papers in economics. Thus, as we can infer from the introduction to the third volume, since these papers do not get into his published books, taking those aside, these papers constitute the *principal* papers Simon wrote dealing with economics according to his personal appreciation.

Simon claims that the reason the categories used in Vol. 3 doesn't match those of the previous volumes is that his interests changed dramatically. Apparently, vol. 3 includes mostly papers from the 1980s and 1990s, such as formal representation of causal ordering (closely connected with the identification problem) in dynamic systems., the implications for our society of the new information systems that are being generated as products of the rapid development of computers and electronic communication networks, and the nature of employee and managerial motivation in the business firm, and the implications for economics of the propensity of human beings to identify with the goals of organizations, and the state of economics itself (its changing attitude toward formal theory vis-à-vis empirical research). It is interesting that the topic of the application of economics to governmental administration and policy, and rational choice under uncertainty and technological change are hardly represented in this volume.

Use the following guide when comparing the changes in Simon's thought between the two volumes:

Volume 3	Volumes 1 and 2
Simulating Large Systems	Structure of Economic Systems
The Advance of Information Technology	The Economies of Information Processing
Motivation and the Theory of the Firm	The Business Firm as an Organization
Behavioral Economics and Bounded Rationality	Economics and Psychology
	Substantive and Procedural Rationality
The Structure of Complex Systems	Causes and Possible Worlds

In any case, for now I think we better just finish up the three papers we had begun reading: the one by Hunter Heyck, the two by Simon. Then, we can discuss what to read next, although the papers in Vol. 3 dealing with the impact of communications technologies seem to be next. Likewise, reading "Administrative Behavior" seems to be a must. For now, let's stay clear of books on the computer, for they may not be relevant to Simon's own thinking: I must find out who were Simon's intellectual forefathers in terms of thinking about computing.

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