

Abstract

The bachelor thesis pursues the issue of forms and functions of operationalization in social science in relation to its assumptions formed on the basis of philosophy of science conceptions. It shows that the problem was historically shaped by logical empiricism and in spite of the rejection of basic aspects of this position, its influence can still be detected in some approaches to operationalization. As a framework for drawing up operational definitions enabling to step aside from remaining tendencies of logical empiricism the methodological impulses stemming from the realist philosophy of science are brought forward.

The first chapter points out to the fact that comparatively little attention has been given to the issue of operationalization in the general methodology of social sciences and presents an overview of plausible explanations of this situation. After that, a standard model of the process of operationalization is outlined together with various conceptions of conditions of its application. The clarification of the philosophy of science basis of operationalization taking place in subsequent parts is therefore expected to provide at least a partial explanation of the little attention given to operationalization. Above all, it aims to set a firm ground for the grasp of various contents of the general model of operationalization and approaches to its form and function.

The second chapter follows the development of the issue of operationalization in connection with ideas of logical empiricism and describes in which forms its influences can still be recognized. Subsequently, the fundamental aspects of realist philosophy of science are introduced and its suggestions for operationalization summed up. The process of operationalization based on realist underpinnings is sketched and its potential to overcome the residues of logical empiricism shown. The third chapter presents several concepts of operationalization and explores their philosophy of science grounds. Realist and logical empiricist components of the approaches are pointed out and attention drawn to the fact that they often blend with each other. It is thus shown how the employed assumptions shape the view on operationalization, its problems and strategies of their solution.

Keywords

operationalization, social science, logical empiricism, realist philosophy of science