

Preface

Complex Strategic Choices set focus upon providing deliberate and methodical support for decision-makers engaged in strategic decision making. The book aim especially at shedding light on decision support under conditions that are uncertain and complex. In this respect systemic planning (SP) will be introduced as a new approach—the SP approach—to deal with future-oriented, often long-term, actions which can improve our capability of meeting present-day strategic challenges.

The book is aimed at people with an interest in new possibilities for supporting decision making. This group of people includes managers and corporate employees and also students and researchers of various kinds and for that matter all people seeking to come to grips with the challenge of what we may term deliberate, informed change. Known in some contexts as decision engineering (DE), the book will show that DE is embedded into and dependent on a plethora of knowledge types which range from applied mathematics known as operations research via economics and organisation theory to social science issues. However, throughout the book focus will be maintained on formulating a framework of practical advice. Stated quite simply, this practice framework will aim at supporting analysts and decision-makers in achieving better complex strategic decisions.

Normally a book is read in a linear way, which in this case means from [Chap. 1](#) to [Chap. 8](#). Such a reading of the book is based on the perception that it can be an advantage that the theory is in place when the new methodology is presented as a coherent process-and-methodology framework in [Chaps. 7](#) and [8](#). However, it is my experience from teaching planning and appraisal courses at the Technical University of Denmark that theoretical issues appear to be more relevant and interesting if the students early on are at least partially convinced about their applicability and usefulness. Therefore it may be relevant for the reader of this book to reverse—or at least consider doing so—the order in which the chapters are read or to split up the reading into appropriate parts. Therefore if you as reader is curious to find out whether the book offers some interesting news, an option may be to read [Chap. 7](#) on the case example first and then [Chap. 8](#) which summarises the main findings and recommendations. Then you may continue with [Chaps. 5](#) and [6](#) with their presentations of tools and methodology. [Chapters 2–4](#) about the

grounding of the later practice are probably the most heavy-going and may therefore as suggested above be postponed and skipped in the first place. [Chapter 1](#) is an introduction that, among other things, sets out the main themes treated in the book and gives an overview of the chapters. To facilitate the reading of the book and tie the individual chapters together, each chapter ends with a listing of the main points and findings of that chapter. Additional technical material is presented as two appendices.

The SP approach treated in the book has so far been tested on a number of cases which has shown its potential to those involved. I sincerely hope that *Complex Strategic Choices* will inspire and support readers in their dealing with upcoming complex planning problems and strategic decision making.

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Complex Strategic Choices

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