

# Preface

This book is about *ex-ante* policy analysis—that is, analysis that aims at supporting policymakers and other actors involved in the difficult tasks they face in policy development. *Ex-ante* policy analysis emerged after World War II, when systems analytic and operations research methods were increasingly applied to a range of strategic policy problems. These ‘traditional’ policy analysis approaches are characterized by a focus on system modeling and choosing among policy alternatives. However, while successful in many cases, this approach has been increasingly criticized for being technocratic and ignoring the behavioral and political dimensions of most policy processes. In recent decades, increasing awareness of the multi-actor, multiple perspective, and polycentric character of many policy processes have led to the development of a variety of different perspectives on the styles and roles of policy analysis, and to new analytical tools and approaches—for example, argumentative approaches, participative policy analysis, and negotiation support. As a result, the field has become multi-faceted and somewhat fragmented.

While most publications in the field elaborate on one particular approach, this book acknowledges the variety of approaches and provides the first synthesis of the traditional and new approaches to policy analysis. It provides an overview and typology of different types of policy analytic activities, characterizing them according to differences in character and leading values, and linking them to a variety of theoretical notions on policymaking. Thereby, it provides assistance to both end users and analysts in choosing an appropriate approach given a specific policy situation. It broadens the traditional approach and methods to include the analysis of actors and actor networks related to the policy issue at hand. It deepens the state-of-the-art in certain areas, such as problem formulation, designing a policy analytic approach, and dealing with uncertainty. And, while its main focus is on the cognitive dimensions of policy analysis, it also links the policy analysis process to the policymaking process, showing how to identify and involve all relevant stakeholders in the process, and how to create favorable conditions for use of the results of policy analytic efforts by the policy actors.

## Intended Audience

This book is intended for use by a broad audience, including educators in faculties dealing with public policy and public administration, policy analysis practitioners, and those who commission and consume policy analysis in government. It will probably be of most use to educators, for whom it will provide instructional material that can be used in a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses as a primary text and as supplementary material. Instructors in fields besides public policy and public administration, such as business administration, engineering, and environmental studies, will also find the text useful, because the approaches we describe can be used in those areas. While some chapters are mainly descriptive in nature, outlining developments and variety in the field, other chapters have a more prescriptive character. As a result, the book should also be useful to practicing analysts. It provides instruction and guidance in structuring complex problem situations, and identifying and applying appropriate methodologies to deal with them, as well as advice for practitioners based on the experiences of the authors in carrying out actual policy studies. For policymakers, the book includes realistic examples and practical guidelines that should help them understand what policy analysis is and how it may be of assistance to them.

The book should find a worldwide audience, since the approaches described and problems addressed have worldwide applicability.

## Outline of the Book

The book has as its major objective to describe the state-of-the-art and the latest developments in *ex-ante* policy analysis. It is divided into two parts. Part I, consisting of [Chaps. 2–6](#), explores and structures policy analysis developments ([Chaps. 2 and 3](#)) followed by the development and description of approaches to diagnose policy situations ([Chap. 4](#)), to design policy analytic efforts ([Chap. 5](#)), and to create policy process conditions, such that policy analytic outputs are taken into account ([Chap. 6](#)).

Part II focuses on recent developments regarding models and modeling for policy analysis, placing modeling approaches in the context of the variety of conditions and approaches elaborated in Part I. It consists of three chapters, discussing system analytic models for policy analysis ([Chap. 7](#)), models of actors and actor networks ([Chap. 8](#)), and analytic approaches to identify good policies in the face of uncertainties—and, in particular, deep uncertainties ([Chap. 9](#)).

In the Appendix, we provide brief summary explanations and specifications of a small set of conceptual analytic approaches and tools that are particularly useful in the context of the overall approach described throughout the book. The descriptions of the tools provide references to more extensive treatments and explanations of the methods.

## Acknowledgments

This book emerged during the last decade as a joint effort of many staff members of the Faculty of Technology, Policy, and Management at the Delft University of Technology. During the last two decades, the faculty has developed and implemented interdisciplinary education programs in Systems Engineering, Policy Analysis and Management (SEPAM), and Engineering and Policy Analysis (EPA), both aiming to produce graduates who can synthesize systems analytical and modeling capabilities with knowledge of behavioral and process aspects of policy development. The associated Multi-Actor Systems (MAS) research program explicitly targets the development of a synthesis of traditional, systems-based approaches to dealing with complex policy and design issues, and behavioral approaches rooted in the social and policy sciences.

Many of the chapters in this book emerged from material developed and class-tested in close cooperation with scholars possessing a range of disciplinary backgrounds, including operations research, systems engineering, and the policy sciences. We thank the many generations of students and many colleagues who, sometimes unknowingly, helped sharpen our views and concepts. In particular, we acknowledge the support and feedback of our present and former colleagues of the Faculty of Technology, Policy, and Management, some of whom are authors or coauthors of chapters in this book. We, finally, appreciate the admirable patience and endurance the contributors to this volume have shown during a process with many revisions and delays.

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