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PUBLIC POLICY MODELLING: A REVIEW AND ANALYSIS FOR GOVERNMENT POLICY TREATISES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analysed public policy model in the preparation of government policy treatises by examining the meanings, processes, and practices underlying their formulation. Previous studies have predominantly emphasized technocratic and normative approaches to policy modelling, while limited attention has been given to the social, contextual, and interpretive dimensions that shape policy formulation and implementation. This study addresses this gap by exploring how policy models are constructed, legitimized, and translated into practice within institutional settings. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of policy modelling practices. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key policy actors, observations of policy formulation processes, and analysis of policy documents and meeting minutes. Informants were selected purposively and expanded using snowball sampling based on their direct involvement in drafting policy treatises. This study argues that policy modeling is a socio-politically embedded interpretive process, not merely a neutral technical exercise. Four themes emerge: modeling serves as a governmental legitimacy tool, technocratic approaches often overlook social contexts, actors' tacit knowledge shapes model formulation, and significant gaps exist between formal models and actual implementation. Theoretically, this highlights contextual and experiential dimensions in public policy. Practically, it urges adaptive, context-sensitive policymaking. Future research should use participatory methods and recent sources to compare modeling across sectors and regions.

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INTRODUCTION

Public policy plays a central role in addressing complex social, economic, and governance challenges in contemporary societies. The increasing complexity of policy environments, characterized by multi-actor involvement, cross-sectoral issues, and diverse public demands, requires policy processes that are adaptive, evidence-based, and context-

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sensitive. However, policy formulation and implementation frequently experience inconsistencies, resulting in gaps between formal policy design and practical outcomes. Recent studies emphasize that policymaking should not only rely on administrative procedures but also consider contextual realities, institutional dynamics, and actor interactions in the policy process (Jones, 2024).

In Indonesia, public policy formulation is still often influenced by political interests and administrative pragmatism rather than comprehensive empirical analysis. Consequently, many policies face limitations in addressing structural issues such as development disparities, weak intersectoral coordination, and limited public participation. Recent evidence-based policymaking studies in Indonesia also demonstrate that the utilization of research evidence in policymaking remains relatively limited, particularly in translating policy analysis into effective implementation strategies (Lentari, 2024).

The growing development of qualitative approaches in public policy studies highlights the importance of understanding the meanings, experiences, and interpretations of policy actors within institutional contexts. Qualitative inquiry enables researchers to examine how policies are constructed, negotiated, and implemented through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Recent scholarship argues that policy processes should be understood not merely as technical procedures, but as socially and politically embedded practices shaped by tacit knowledge, institutional culture, and contextual realities (Brubacher et al., 2024).

Despite the increasing discussion on evidence-based policymaking and qualitative policy analysis, there remains limited research examining public policy modeling as an interpretive and socio-political process, particularly within the Indonesian governance context. Existing studies predominantly focus on technical modeling approaches, policy evaluation, or administrative effectiveness, while insufficient attention has been given to how policy actors construct, interpret, and utilize policy models in practice. This gap indicates the need for a more contextual and theoretically grounded understanding of policy modeling beyond its technocratic orientation (van Geet et al., 2021)

This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the process and meaning of public policy modeling in the preparation of government policy treatises using a qualitative approach. The study focuses on how policy actors construct, articulate, and interpret policy models in responding to complex public issues. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of an interpretive framework of policy modeling that emphasizes contextual, experiential, and socio-political dimensions in policymaking. Practically, the findings are expected to support policymakers and government institutions in developing more adaptive, inclusive, and evidence-based policy practices.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to examine the process and meaning of public policy modeling in the preparation of government policy treatises. A qualitative case study is considered appropriate for investigating complex and contextual policy phenomena within real institutional settings, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its environment are not clearly defined (Yin, 2017). This approach enabled the study to explore how policy actors construct, interpret, and utilize policy models in policymaking practices, rather than testing causal relationships or producing statistical generalizations.

The research was conducted in several governmental institutions involved in policy formulation processes at both national and regional levels. Informants consisted of policy analysts, government officials, consultants, and academics who had direct experience in drafting or analyzing policy treatises. Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement and expertise in policy modeling practices, while additional participants were identified through snowball sampling to enrich the depth of information and ensure data saturation. This strategy allowed the research to capture diverse perspectives regarding institutional dynamics and policymaking processes (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and limited non-participatory observations. Interviews were used to explore the experiences, interpretations, and reflections of policy actors regarding policy modeling practices. Document analysis focused on policy briefs, evaluation reports, and government planning documents to understand how policy narratives and models were formally constructed. Observations were conducted during selected policy discussions and formulation activities to capture interactional and procedural dynamics within policymaking

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processes. The integration of these techniques strengthened the depth and contextual richness of the findings through methodological triangulation (Flick, 2022).

Data analysis was conducted iteratively using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2013). The analysis process involved coding interview transcripts and policy documents to identify recurring themes related to actors, institutional practices, and interpretive dimensions of policy modeling. To ensure research credibility and trustworthiness, the study applied source triangulation, member checking, and researcher reflexivity throughout the analytical process. These strategies were important for maintaining the validity and consistency of interpretations in qualitative policy research (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Data analysis was carried out on the results of in-depth interviews with policy actors, limited observations in policy formulation forums, and study of government policy minutes documents. The thematic analysis process produced four main themes that represent the patterns, meanings and practices of public policy modeling in the preparation of government policy treatises.

Policy Modeling as a Tool for Policy Legitimacy

The findings show that policy modeling is often understood by policy actors not just as an analytical tool, but as an instrument of legitimacy to strengthen policy positions before decision-makers and the public. Policy models are used to simplify complex issues into narratives that are easy to understand and politically acceptable.

One of the informants stated:

> *"The model is important not only for analysis, but to convince leadership that this policy is reasonable and accountable."*
>
> (Informant A, Policy Analyst)

This is reinforced by an analysis of policy minutes documents that show that models are often presented in the form of flowcharts, problem-solution matrices, or policy scenarios that emphasize policy rationality, although they do not always reflect the complexity of the field conditions as a whole.

Dominance of Technical Approaches and Lack of Contextual Reflection

The second theme that emerges is the dominance of technocratic approaches in policy modeling. Many informants revealed that the policy model is prepared based on a standard format and a predetermined institutional framework, so that there is limited space for reflection on social, cultural, and local contexts.

An informant explained:

> *"Usually, we follow the existing template. The focus is on how the policy is technically logical, not on the social dynamics on the ground."*
>
> *(Informant C, Planning Officer)*

Observations of the policy formulation process show that discussions are more centered on performance indicators, output targets, and efficiency, while the experience of communities or non-governmental actors is rarely the primary basis in policy modeling.

Reliance on Actors' Experience and Implicit Knowledge

Although the policy model appears formal and systematic, this study found that modeling practices are strongly influenced by the *implicit knowledge* and personal experiences of policy actors. Many decisions in modeling are based on intuition, previous policy experience, and informal networks between actors.

An informant said:

> *"Not everything can be modeled formally. Many of those considerations are based on experience, sometimes feelings as well."*

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(Informant D, Policy Expert)

These findings suggest that policy modeling is a hybrid process between formal analysis and social practice that is loaded with subjective values, interests, and experiences.

The Gap Between Policy Models and Implementation Reality

The final theme is the gap between the policy model presented in the policy treatise and the reality of implementation on the ground. Informants acknowledge that policy models are often ideal and normative, while implementation dynamics face limited resources, actor resistance, and local political factors.

"On paper it looks neat, but when implemented many variables are not included in the model."

(Informant B, Implementing Officer)

This gap is reflected in policy evaluation documents that show the difference between the model's assumptions and the actual achievements of the policy.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that public policy modeling cannot be understood solely as a neutral technical instrument, but rather as a social and political practice shaped by institutional contexts, actors' experiences, and power relations. This is in line with the views of (Parkhurst, 2017) who emphasize that policy models always contain assumptions of value and political implications.

The dominance of modeling as a tool for policy legitimacy supports the findings of (Muallidin, 2026), who states that policy treatises in Indonesia tend to display policy models normatively to strengthen policy arguments, rather than as a critical reflection on the complexity of public issues. However, this study expands on these findings by showing how legitimacy is constructed through a simplified rationality narrative.

The limitations of contextual reflection in policy modeling also confirm the criticism of rational models that assume complete information and stable conditions. In contrast to the findings of "systemic modeling strategies" which emphasize the importance of systemic modeling to address complexity, practice in the field actually shows a tendency to oversimplify for administrative and political interests (Billi et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the findings on the role of implicit knowledge of policy actors provide a new perspective in the study of policy modeling. This suggests that even if formal frameworks are used, the modeling process remains influenced by the subjective experiences and social networks of actors, as affirmed in interpretive and qualitative-based policy approaches (Creswell & Poth, 2017). These findings have not been widely raised in public policy studies in Indonesia, thus enriching the theoretical discourse on the relationship between policy models and policy actors.

The gap between model and implementation reinforces the argument that policy modelling needs to be designed in a more reflective and adaptive way to field dynamics. Practically, the results of this study suggest that policy modeling should not only focus on technical rationality, but also include the perspectives of local actors, previous implementation experiences, and policy feedback mechanisms.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of an understanding of policy modeling as an interpretive process that combines technical, social, and political dimensions. Further research can deepen this study by comparing policy modeling practices between sectors or regions, as well as integrating participatory approaches in public policy modeling.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that public policy modeling in the preparation of government policy minutes is not just a technical or analytical process, but a social and institutional practice that is loaded with considerations of values, actors' experiences, and political and organizational dynamics. The main findings reveal that policy modeling functions as an instrument of policy legitimacy, tends to be dominated by technocratic approaches, is strongly influenced by the implicit knowledge of policy actors, and faces a gap between model construction and implementation realities in the field. These patterns show that policy modelling often simplifies the complexity of public issues for administrative and political needs.

From the theoretical side, this research contributes to the enrichment of public policy studies by strengthening the understanding of policy modeling as an interpretive process that integrates technical, social, and political dimensions. These

findings complement the literature that has tended to place policy modeling within rational and normative frameworks, by showing the importance of context and the role of actors in shaping policy models. Thus, this study expands the theoretical discourse on the relationship between policy models, policy actors, and government practices.

In terms of practicality and policy, the results of this study confirm the need for a more reflective, adaptive, and contextual approach to policy modeling. Policy modeling is expected to be not only oriented towards technical efficiency and compliance with institutional formats, but also to be able to accommodate social dynamics, implementation experiences, and input from affected actors and communities. This approach has the potential to improve the quality of policy minutes as a more responsive and sustainable decision-making tool.

As a follow-up implication, subsequent research is suggested to explore policy modeling practices comparatively across sectors or regions, as well as examine the possibility of integrating participatory approaches and systemic modeling in the public policy formulation process. This effort is expected to deepen understanding of how policy modelling can contribute more substantively to the effectiveness and legitimacy of public policies in various government contexts.

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