The past, present and future of policy modeling

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Abstract

We evaluate the past, present, and future of policy modeling from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. We do this through an extensive review and analysis of papers published in the Journal of Policy Modeling between 1978 and 2018. Over the years the focus of the policy modeling literature (and the Journal) changed. The changes were in research topics, approaches, techniques, theories, methods, and analytical tools as required for the rigorous analysis of complex and dynamic economic phenomena in policy modeling.

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1. Definition and classification of policy modeling

“Policy modeling” can be defined as “an academic research, that is supported by the use of different theories as well as quantitative or qualitative models and techniques, to analytically evaluate the past (causes) and future (effects) of any policy on society, anywhere and anytime.” As an integral part of this definition, “policy” is defined as “a theoretical or technical instrument that is formulated to solve specific problems affecting, directly or indirectly, societies across different periods of times and geographical spaces” (Ruiz Estrada, 2011).

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Policy modeling can be classified in categories. Based on an analysis of all the two thousand and eighty-five (2085) papers that were published in the Journal of Policy Modeling (JPM) between 1978 and 2018 (40 years) (see Table 1). Policy modeling can be classified into the following seventeen (17) categories: (i) domestic and international trade policy modeling; (ii) energy, infrastructure, communications, and transportation policy modeling; (iii) environmental, agriculture, and natural resources management policy modeling; (iv) fiscal, government expenditure, and public debt policy modeling; (v) institutional, regulation and negotiation policy modeling; (vi)
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