

PAI 897

Lecture 1: What is policy analysis?

Chapter 2, Weimer and Vining.

Simple:

If we pass bill A, we will have as a consequence outcome X.

Complex:

If we pass bill A, using strategy S, we will have as a result aggregate social costs C, aggregate social benefits B, and disproportionate benefits for group 1 and disproportionate costs for group 2.

Policy advice is informed by social values.

Policy analysts, in either public or private settings, have clients for their advice who can participate in public decision making.

Policy analysis is client-oriented advice relevant to public decisions informed by social values.

Break down pieces:

Client oriented

Public decision

Social values

Defining by contrast:

	Major Objective	Client	Common Style	Time Constraints	General Weakness
Academic	Construct theories for understanding society	“truth”, other scholars, journals	Rigorous methods for constructing and testing theories	Tenure!	Can be irrelevant to decision making
Policy Research	Predict impacts of changes in variables that can be altered by public policy.	Actors in the policy arena	Application of formal methodology to policy relevant questions	Some deadline	Translation of findings to specific policy actions
Planning	Define and achieve desirable future state for society	The public interest as professionally defined	Established rules and professional norms	Long term future	Lack of political context and evolving circumstances
Public Admin.	Efficiently execute programs established by political process	The public interest as embodied in mandated program	Managerial and legal	Tied to budget cycles / policy details	Does not look at other options
Journalism	Focus public attention on societal problems	General public	Descriptive	Deadline issue, topical window	Lack of depth and balance
Policy Analysis	Systematic comparison and evaluation of alternatives available to public actors for solving social problems	Specific person or institution as decision maker.	Synthesis of existing research and theory to predict consequence of alternative policies	Analysis deadline tied to implementation schedule of policy	Myopia due to client orientation and time pressure.

Academic Social Science Research

Some examples from journals in sub-fields related to Policy Analysis.

ECONOMICS

Econometrica

[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1468-0262](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1468-0262)

POLICY RESEARCH

[HTTP://ONLINELIBRARY.WILEY.COM/JOURNAL/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1541-1338](HTTP://ONLINELIBRARY.WILEY.COM/JOURNAL/10.1111/(ISSN)1541-1338)

If we attempt to distinguish between policy analysis and policy research we find policy research less tied to political decision makers / less client oriented.

It is more geared toward influencing the overall policy environment rather than policy maker.

PLANNING

<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cppr20/current>



(Planned economies: we will turn a five year plan into a four year one)

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

<http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/pa/>

Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory

<http://jpart.oxfordjournals.org/>

POLICY ANALYSIS

Journal of Policy Analysis and Management

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/%28ISSN%291520-6688>

Specific for policy analysis focused on education

<http://cepa.stanford.edu/publications/journal-articles>

Or on Energy

<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/energy-policy/>

Policy analysis as a profession

Grown as a field since the 1980s.

“Policy Analysis” position in government offices.

<http://www.publicservicecareers.org/>

Places one might find such a person:

Academics

Research Institutes

International organizations

Federal

State

Local

Departments, legislatures

Consulting firms, research institutes, trade organizations,
NGOs.

Office of Management and Budget;

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/>

Council of Economic Advisors

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cea/>

Congressional Budget Office

<http://www.cbo.gov/>

Government Accountability Office

<http://www.gao.gov/>

Office of the Assistant Secretary, Planning and
Evaluation.

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/>

Some are not government, but industry group

America's Health Insurance Plans

<http://www.ahip.org/>

Four functions:

- 1) Desk officer. Point of contact and coordination on key issue. Monitoring other organization working on this topic. Prepared to make assessments and statements on this issue.
- 2) Policy development. Work on policy options papers and help formulate proposals.
- 3) Policy research and oversight. Contract out money for studies to be done. Review research plans, award contracts, review research conducted under contract.
- 4) Firefighting – be ready to respond quickly to requests for analysis from many different actors in the policy making apparatus.

What do you need to be a policy analyst?

- 1) The ability to gather, organize and communicate information in situations where deadlines are strict and access to information is limited / specialized.
- 2) An ability to put the problem in question in context of a larger theoretical structure:
 - a. What is the case for policy as a remedy
- 3) Technical skills to predict and evaluate the consequences of alternative predictions/ an ability to express in the language of the policy world (economics and statistics) the alternative outcomes.
- 4) Understanding of political and organizational behavioral context of the client. Presenting information that they can use in their particular setting in a way that they can use it.
- 5) Ethical framework in which to conduct analysis and present findings.

Chapter three: Toward Professional Ethics

‘Advising the philosopher-king’ model.

“Thus, as long as the king truly had wisdom, benevolence, and power, the analyst could expect that only reasoned and reasonable differences of opinion would come between recommendations and action.” (p. 39)

Issues that prevent this vision of the advisor to the benevolent leader playing out when we meet reality:

- Distribution of authority
- Lack of authority
- Lack of time and attention
- Political self interest
- Personal self interest

So we have to go forward in policy analysis with an awareness of the political context.

How do we go about doing this?

Some overarching principles:

Efficiency – getting the greatest aggregate good from the available resources

Equity – fairness in the way the good generated is distributed

Promotion of human life and dignity

Promotion of individual choice and responsibility

Three, at times conflicting, goals confront the policy analyst

1) Analytical integrity

2) Responsibility to client

3) Adherence to one's personal conception of the good society

To illustrate these goals, they define three roles policy analysis people can take

1) Objective Technician.

- a. In this role, analytical integrity is given prime position.
- b. Technical skills are the source of the analyst's legitimacy.
- c. Objective advice about consequences of proposed policy.
- d. Work under time constraints and with limited information and resources, but given this, perform with professional standards and peers in mind.
- e. Clients are a necessary evil – they have resources and interesting questions.
- f. Preference is for institutional rather than individual clients.
- g. If there is a clear best answer, that is to be identified. If there is not a clear answer, lay out the range of options clearly for the decision maker.

2) Client's advocate.

- a. The responsibility is to the interest of the client above all other objectives.
- b. Loyalty and confidentiality.
- c. There is an agenda associated with the client's political prospects.
- d. The goal is to advance the client's political fortunes and the legitimacy of the analysis is tied to the client's political prospects.
- e. The role here is like that of an attorney – the job is to make the best case possible that is in the interest of the client.
- f. Selection of client is critical since one subordinates one's own preferences and agenda to that of the client in return for access and the chance to influence policy.
- g. If the analysis leads to ambiguity, stress the ambiguity if it helps make the case for the client. Call assumptions into question for steps that are competitors to that favored by the client.

3) Issue advocate.

- a. Analysis should be an instrument for making progress towards what the analyst believes is in the best interest of society.
- b. Focus on policy outcome – does the analysis influence policy towards the outcome that I think is right for society?
- c. They are not just advisors to those in the policy making arena, but are themselves players in the policy process.
- d. Advocate for interest in society; the poor, the taxpayer, the oppressed, the voiceless, the gun owners, the hydrofrackers,.....
- e. If the analysis leads to ambiguity, stress the ambiguity if it helps make the case for the approach to the issue favored. Call assumptions into question for steps that are competitors to that favored by the steps favored by the analyst's approach to this issue.

Summary Table

Table 3.1 *Three Views on the Appropriate Role of the Policy Analyst*

	Fundamental Values		
	Analytical Integrity	Responsibility to Clients	Adherence to One's Conception of Good
Objective Technician	Let analysis speak for itself. Primary focus should be predicting consequences of alternative policies.	Clients are necessary evils; their political fortunes should be secondary considerations. Keep distance from clients; select institutional clients whenever possible.	Relevant values should be identified but trade-offs among them should be left to clients. Objective advice promotes good in the long run.
Client's Advocate	Analysis rarely produces definitive conclusions. Take advantage of ambiguity to advice clients' positions.	Clients provide analysts with legitimacy. Loyalty should be given in return for access to privileged information and to political processes.	Select clients with compatible value systems; use long-term relationships to change clients' conceptions of good.
Issue Advocate	Analysis rarely produces definitive conclusions. Emphasize ambiguity and excluded values when analysis does not support advocacy.	Clients provide an opportunity for advocacy. Select them opportunistically; change clients to further personal policy agenda.	Analysis should be an instrument for progress toward one's conception of the good society.

Responses to value conflicts: Voice, Exit and Disloyalty.

Figure 3.1 on table 46

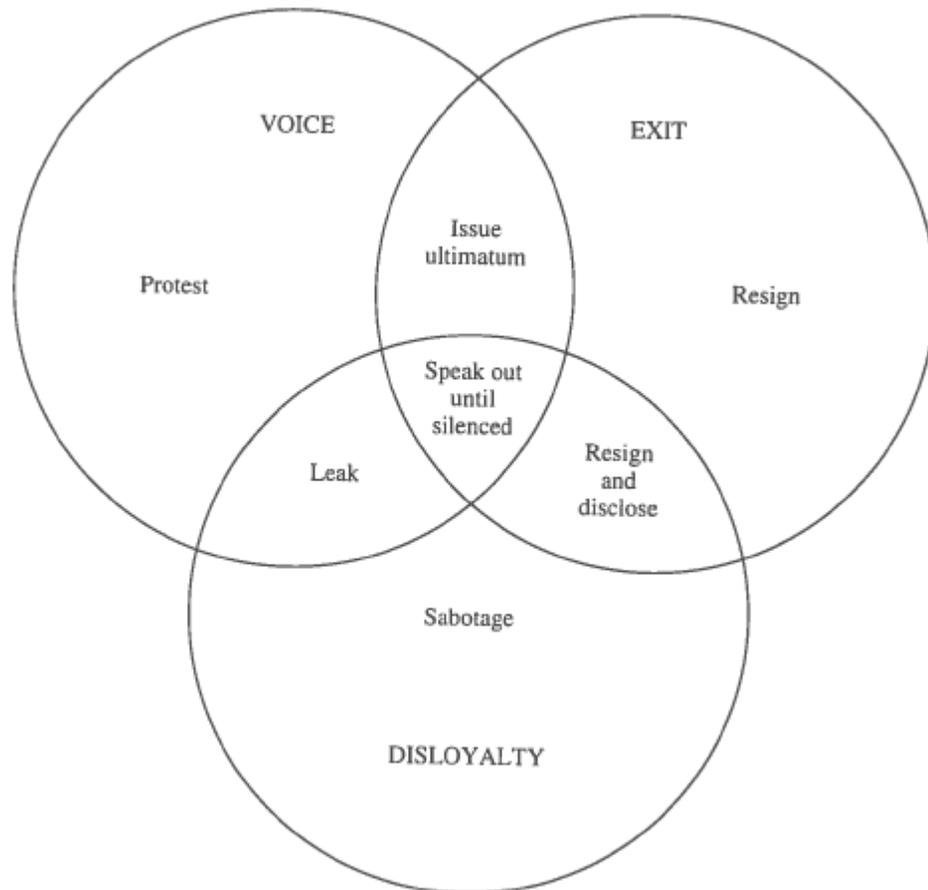


Figure 3.1 Alternative Responses to Value Conflicts

Voice – speak up, work to make change from within.

Exit – leave the situation and seek out another

Disloyalty – betray the trust of the client in the name of a higher good.

Violations of confidentiality – larger issues arise about how an institution functions.

‘Whistle-blowing’

Four necessary conditions.

- 1) All internal channels exhausted
- 2) Procedural, policy, moral or legal bounds violated
- 3) The violation will have demonstrable harm to people / state
- 4) The violation that is posited in two must be supported by unequivocal evidence.

Resignation: while it does take you out of the conflict and notes your protest, you lose the chance to influence what you object to, and may jeopardize other projects that merit support

Examples of value conflicts.

When shading the ambiguity in results goes to demand for cooked results.

Client has range of outcomes presented, chooses to stress the most optimistic (or pessimistic).

To slant or not to slant (balance what is coming from the competitors, but is it better to counter-slant or critique competitor?)

Client misrepresents what analyst found.

Client ignores what the analyst found and publicly states something in contradiction to findings.

Somewhat like perjury – what if you know they are aware that they are saying something false?

No real code exists for what is the correct ethical action, but the same kinds of dilemmas occur in many different kinds of contexts.