

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF JAPAN
Public Management and Policy Analysis Program
Graduate School of International Relations

ADC5006 (2 Credits)
Introduction to Policy Analysis
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Policy Analysis

This note contains main sentences of the required readings. However, it is at best supplementary and thus students must read through the readings by themselves.

1. Policy Analysis

Policy analysis became a popular discipline after the late 1970s on the basis of the analysis paradigm after the World War II.

“[P]olicy analysts create and craft problems worth solving” (p. 420).

“[P]olicy analysts create conceivable solutions that enables us, as citizens, to learn what we ought to want in relation to what’s available to get it with” (p. 421).

“The purpose of analysis is to connect knowledge with power, not ignorance with weakness” (p. xli).

“[S]peaking truth to power remains the ideal of analysts who hope they have truth, but realize they have not ... power” (p. xliii).

“One promise of policy analysis is that through repeated interactions, common understandings (though not necessarily, of course, common positions) will grow, so that action will be better informed” (p. xliv).

“Policy analysis is an applied subfield whose content cannot be determined by disciplinary boundaries but by whatever appears appropriate to the circumstances of the time and the nature of problem” (p. xlvi).

“Policy analysis, to be brief, is an activity creating problems that can be solved. Every policy is fashioned of tension between resources and objectives, planning and politics, skepticism and dogma. Solving problems involves temporarily resolving these tensions” (p. xlix).

“Policy analysis creates culture by restructuring social interaction and, consequently, the values we express by our participation as citizens in public policy” (p. 424).

“[E]ssence of policy analysis is learning to recognize and correct errors” (p. 424).

“When policy analysts propose solutions, they propose not only a mix of resources and objectives, not only an implicit causal model of a segment of reality, but also a structure of social relationships” (p. 430).

“But policy analysis as a social process of relating objectives to sources by interaction as well as by cogitation, constrained by dogma as well as criticized by skepticism, inevitably changes preferences as well as possibilities” (p. 441).

“Policy analysis is the search for error all along the way. ... its task, as regards any policy, is to probe in the interest of error prevention and to learn in the interest of error correction” (Landau 1977: 426).

“The product of policy analysis may be advice as simple as a statement linking a proposed action to a likely result: passage of bill A will result in consequence X. ... the advice relate to public decisions and that it be informed by social values” (Weimer and Vining 2011: 23).

“Policy analysis is client-oriented advice relevant to public decisions and informed by social values” (Weimer and Vining 2011: 24). Policy analysis “must address the issue that the client poses” (p. 32).

“Policy analysis is an applied social science discipline which uses multiple methods of inquiry and argument to produce and transform policy-relevant information that may be utilized in political settings to resolve policy problems” (Dunn, 1981: ix).

2. Objective and Resources

“[O]bjectives depend on resources, for what one might do depends in part on the resources one has for achieving goals” (p. xli).

“Analysis of policy, by contrast, always considers resources and objectives, means and ends together, never separately. The proper comparison for the policy analysis is always between alternative programs, which combine resources and objectives” (p. xlii).

“Objectives, therefore, must be limited by resources; what one tries to do depends on what one has to do it with” (p. xlix).

“Policy analysis is about the realm of rationality and responsibility where resources are related to objectives” (p. l).

“Good analysis compares alternative programs, neither objectives alone nor resources alone, but the assorted packages of resources and objectives” (p. 433).

“Good analysis is tentative. It suggests hypotheses that allow us to make better sense of our world. Good analysis promotes learning by making errors easier to identify and by structuring incentives for their correction. Good analysis is skeptical. ... Good analysis is aware of its shortcomings. ... good analysis works with historical contexts. ... Good analysis remembers people, the professionals in the bureaus who must implement the programs as well as citizens...” (p. 433).

3. Type of policy analysis

An *ex post policy analysis* is post hoc or retrospective in that it describes and interprets past policies that were already implemented. An *ex post* analysis evaluates if a policy met its goals. By contrast, an *ex ante policy analysis* is pre hoc or prospective/predictive in that this

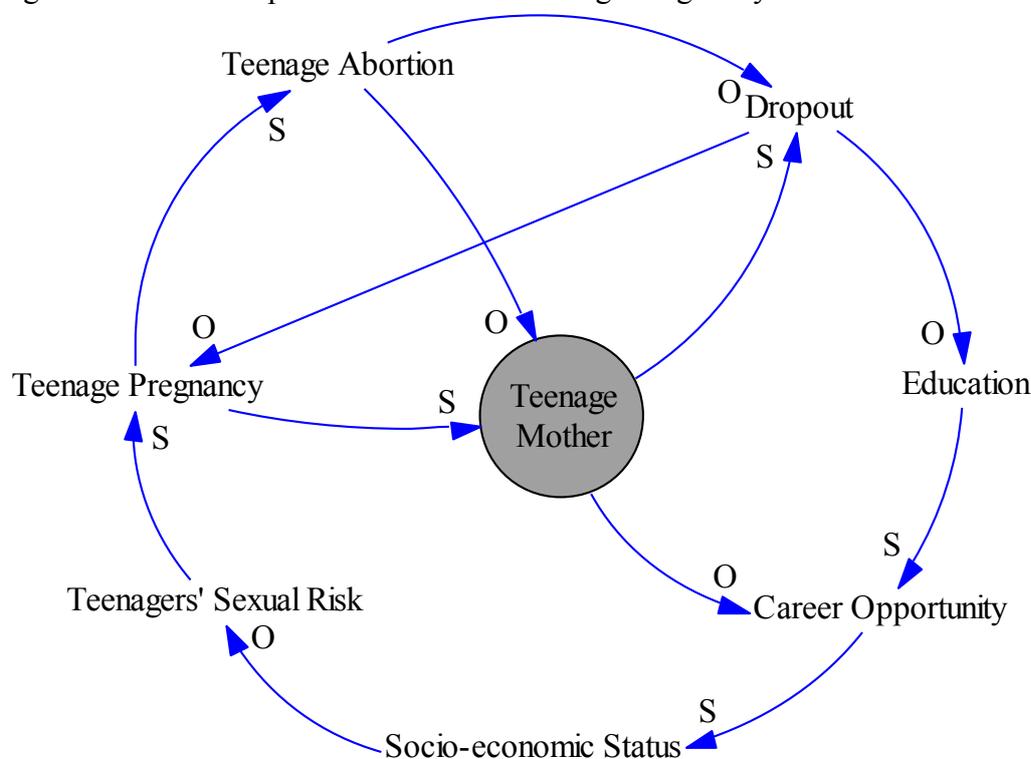
analysis projects future states of a policy. A prescriptive policy analysis recommends a course of actions that is believed to bring about a desirable result.

Given the hypothetical status of a policy, it is valuable to examine the causal relationship between policy instrument and policy goal and its strength.

There are several analysis tools and approaches to produce costs and/or benefits of policy alternatives. These tools are not mutually exclusive.

- Cost effectiveness analysis
- Cost benefit analysis
- Policy modeling/management science/operations research
- Statistical and econometric analysis

Figure 1. Causal Loop of the Premarital Teenage Pregnancy & Motherhood



4. Art and Craft of Policy Analysis

Wildavsky (2018) criticized so called “rational paradigm” (xxxix) and Majone (1989: 12-20) pointed out limitations of determinism, which Lindblom (1959 and 1979) called “comprehensive model.”

“Programs are solutions, solutions are compromises, and compromises are more often feasible than optimal, satisfactory than perfect and tolerable than desirable” (p. 426).

“Where there is no error there can be no analysis. Policy analysis serves organizations of people who want to correct their mistakes” (p. 7).

“[Creativity] consists of finding a problem about which something can and ought to be done. In a word, the solution is part of defining the problem” (p. xxxiii).

“Problem-finding is analogous to inventing or theorizing. ... to connect what might be wanted with what can be provided. ... in policy analysis, the most creative calculations concern finding problems for which solutions might be attempted”(p. xxxiii).

“Designing problems is an art but justifying solutions is a craft amenable to various conventions” (p. xlv).

“[P]olicy analysis has some structure. That structure lies less in discovery (how policy analysis is created) and more in justification (how we distinguish better from worse analysis)” (p. 422).

“What is accepted as evidence depends on how persuasive others find our analytic arguments. In discovery, analysis as problem solving is more art than craft, more finding new ways than persuading others of their feasibility and desirability. In justification, analysis is more craft than art. ... without art, analysis is doomed to repetition; without craft, analysis is unpersuasive. ... art and craft are interdependence” (p. 423).

“Policy analysis is creating and crafting problems worth solving” (p. 423).

“[A]nalysis inevitable is *argumentative*, leaning toward this view and rejecting that other one” (pp. xlv-xlvi).

“Policy analysis, however, is one activity for which there can be no fixed program, for policy analysis is synonymous with creativity, which may be stimulated by theory and sharpened by practice, which can be learned but not taught” (p. xxxiv).

“[A]nalysis is indeed an art. But as we proceed to justification (why we should tentatively accept evidence), rules of craftsmanship become more important. ... How policy is created may be a private affair, but whether it is justified is part of a public proceeding” (p. xlvi).

“Policy analysis is an art. Its subjects are public problems that must be solved at least tentatively to be understood. ... policy analysis must create problems that decision-makers are able to handle with the variables under their control and it the time available” (p. xlvii).

“[P]olicy analysis must be prescriptive; arguments about correct policy, which deal with the future, can not help but be willful and therefore political” (p. xlvii).

“Craftsmen are judged by how they use their tools. Their handiwork is done individually but judged collectively. ... Craftsmanship is persuasive performance.” (p. 437).

5. Social Interaction and Intellectual Cogitation

“Policy analysis, therefore, is about combining social interaction with intellectual cogitation. My preference for interaction rather than cogitation, for more “asking” and less “telling,” for politics over planning...” (p. xliii).

Skepticism	Dogma
Politics	Planning
Ask	Tell
Expression	Control
Adaption	Anticipation
Bargaining	Hierarchy
Individual	Collective

Source: Wildavsky (2018).

“Citizens act as analysts when they take responsibility for policy performance by comparing what they receive for what they put in, by learning to refine their preferences, and by developing morally in connecting what they do to what other people want” (p. xliii).

“‘Asking’ means setting up instructions, such as voting for public office and bargaining over prices, to help people evolve preferences. ‘Telling’ means deciding intellectually what is good for people and moving them in a predetermined sequence toward a preselected destination. Asking (which we will call social interaction or just plain politics) and telling (intellectual cogitation or just plain planning) both belong into policy analysis” (p. xlvi).

“These, then, are the tasks and tension of policy analysis: relating resources to objectives by balancing social interaction against intellectual cogitation so as to learn to draw the line between skepticism and dogma” (p. l).

6. Error Detection and Correction (Iterative process)

“[T]otality of a cycle rather than the bifurcation of “cause or effect”” (p. 431).

Landau (1977) argued that the primary task of policy analysis is to prevent and eliminate error in a policy (p. 425). Policy analysis is a “search for error” to prevent potential errors and correct them (p. 426).

“By making it clear that error was expected, correction was considered commonplace and those corrected did not feel threatened. Finding a new mistake became the thing to do. Unless recognition of errors is rewarded, they will not be corrected. ... The good organization evaluates its own activities, correcting error as it goes along, and acknowledging mistakes as a way of improving performance” (p. xxxvii).

“The good organization is devoted to correcting errors, ... Error correction itself has to be traded off against error recognition, for the very visibility of error, which facilitates detection, is correlated with large size, which makes correction difficult” (p. xlvi).

“If evaluation is social, correction of errors depends on how society is organized. The relative objectivity of analysis depends on people living together in reasonable trust within a common culture” (p. xxxviii).

“Instead of thinking of permanent solutions we should think of permanent problems in the sense that one problem always succeeds and replaces another” (p. xxxvi).

“Policies should be considered not as eternal truths but as hypotheses subject to modification and replacement by better ones until these in turn are discarded” (p. xlvi).

“[P]olicy could possibly be its own cause. ... The more we do, therefore, the more there is for us to do, as each program bumps into others and sets off consequences all down the line. In this way past solutions, if they are large enough, turn into future problems” (p. xxxv).

“When results do not live up to our expectations, or we think we can do better, which is most of the time, the question of error detection and error correction comes to the fore” (p. 1).

“Solutions are temporary in that the conditions producing the initial dislocation change in time, creating different tensions. Solutions often carry their own tensions with them, and acting as their own cause give rise to different problems” (p. 424).

“Programs as solutions are also temporary. Resources change, along with perceptions of wants. A subtler and more interesting form of realignment of tensions results, not from changes in the system but by the very presence of programs within the system” (p. 427).

“Analysts should value policies by the extent to which they permit learning, the ease by which errors are identified, and the motivation produced by organizational incentives to correct error” (p. 427).

7. Evidence, Argument, and Persuasion (Majone 1989)

“[A]rgument is central in all stages of the policy process” (p. 1).

“[A]rguments are needed not only to clarify his position with respect to an issue, but to bring other people around to this position” (p. 2).

“Argumentation is the key process through which citizens and policymakers arrive at moral judgements and policy choices. Public discussion mobilizes the knowledge, experience, and interest of many people, which focusing their attention on a limited range of issues” (p. 2).

“The starting point of a dialectic argument is not abstract assumptions but points of view already present in the community; its conclusion is not a formal proof, but a shared understanding of the issue under discussion; ... Like dialectic, policy analysis usually starts with plausible premises, which contestable and shifting viewpoints, not with indisputable principles or hard facts. Like dialectic, it does not produce formal proofs but only persuasive arguments” (p. 6).

“[P]olicy analysis, like dialectic, contributes to public deliberation through criticism, advocacy, and education. ... The job of analysts consists in large part of producing evidence and arguments to be used in the course of public debate” (p. 7).

“Rhetoric is the craft of persuasion” (p. 7).

“[P]ersuasion is needed in order to increase both the acceptability of advice and the willingness to act on less than conclusive evidence” (p. 8).

“Fashioning mutual understandings about the boundaries of the possible in public policy is arguably the most important contribution that analysts can make to public debate” (p. 8).

Data→information→evidence→argument.

“Evidence is not synonymous with data or information. It is information selected from the available stock and introduced at a specific point in the argument in order to persuade a particular audience of the truth or falsity of a statement” (p. 10).

“Facts can be evaluated in terms of more or less objective canons, but evidence must be evaluated in accordance with a number of factors peculiar to a given situation ...” (p. 11).

“Evidence, ... is, rather, information selected from the available stock and introduced at a specific point in an argument “to persuade the mind that a given factual proposition is true or false”” (p. 48).

“Argument is the link that connects data and information with the conclusions of an analytic study. The structure of the argument will typically be a complex blend of factual statements and subjective evaluations” (p. 10).

“If a joint decision is required they will have to resolve their differences through interactive processes like negotiation and persuasion, about which the model is silent” (p. 15).

“[D]ecisions must always be justified. Justificatory arguments play an important role in the policy debate but are alien to the philosophy of decisionism” (p. 19).

“The policy analyst is producer of policy arguments, ... but argumentative: the ability to probe assumptions critically, to produce and evaluate evidence, to keep many threads in hand, to draw for an argument from many disparate sources, to communicate effectively” (pp. 21-22).

“[P]racticizing policy analysts often engage in argumentative discourse: they debate values, question objectives, agree or disagree about assumptions, and advocate or justify courses of action on the basis of less-than-conclusive evidence” (p. 23).

“[P]olicy analysts and researchers are often deeply involved in the process of norm setting” (p. 24).

“Experts may play an important role in setting standards for public policy even when they appear to be dealing with purely factual questions” (p. 26).

“Experts, including policy analysts, are often engaged in setting norms rather than in searching for solutions that satisfy given norms. ... Hence, argument and persuasion play the key role in norm setting and problem definition” (p. 28).

“[It] is useful to distinguish between the procedure by which a conclusion is reached—the process of discovery—and the procedure by which the conclusion may be justified—the process of justification” (p. 29).

“[A] good experiment is a powerful piece of rhetoric; it has the ability to persuade the most obdurate and skeptical mind to accept a new idea; it makes a positive contribution to public knowledge” (pp. 30-31).

“Decisions must be legitimated, accepted, and carried out. After the moment of choice comes the process of justification, explanation, and persuasion” (p. 31).

“Moreover, since policies exist for some time, their political support must be continuously renewed and new arguments are constantly needed to give the different policy components the greatest possible internal coherence and the closest fit to an everchanging environment” (p. 31).

“Arguments are only more or less plausible, more or less convincing to a particular audience. ... there is no unique way to construct an argument: data and evidence can be selected in a wide variety of ways from the available information, and there are several alternative methods of analysis and ways of ordering values” (p. 32).

“The argument is the link connecting data and information with the conclusions of the analysis. ... the structure of the argument typically will be a complex blend of factual statements, interpretations, opinions, and evaluations” (p. 63).

“... the significance of the rhetorical aspects of policy-making—the role of justification, communication, and persuasion in the formation and development of public policy” (p. 33).

“[T]he job of the analyst is not only to find solutions within given constraints, but also to push out the boundaries of the possible in the public policy. Major policy breakthroughs become possible only after public opinion has been persuaded to accept new ideas” (p. 35).

“[S]ince policy analysis cannot produce conclusive proofs but only more or less convincing arguments, persuasion always has a role to play in increasing both the acceptability of advice and the willingness to act on less than complete evidence. ... analysis should be done in two stages: the first stage to find out what the analyst wants to recommend, and a second stage to make the recommendation convincing even to hostile and disbelieving audience” (pp. 40-41).

“[T]he main justification of advocacy and persuasion in democratic policy-making is their function in a continuous process of mutual learning through discourse” (p. 41).

“The structure of an analytic argument is typically a complex blend of factual propositions, logical deductions, evaluations, and recommendations” (p. 44).

“The analyst ... operate with concepts, theories, data, and technical tools to produce arguments and evidence in support of certain conclusion” (p. 45).

“The craft paradigm, on the other hand, provides categories—data, information, tools, evidence, arguments, conclusions—that are applicable to any type and style of analysis, prospective or retrospective, descriptive or prescriptive, or in an advocacy mode” (p. 46).

“No amount of technical sophistication can compensate for carelessness in structuring the arguments or in drawing the necessary distinctions among data, information, evidence, and conclusions” (p. 52).

“Problem setting is the process of translating a problem situation into an actual policy problem stating the goals to be achieved and a strategy for accomplishing them” (p. 57).

“The conclusion of a policy study may be a prediction, a recommendation, an evaluation of ongoing programs, a new proposal, or a different perspective on an old problem” (p. 65).

8. Task of Policy Analysts (Weimer and Vining, 2011: 37-38).

“First, analysts must know how to gather, organize, and communicate information in situations in which deadlines are strict and access to relevant people is limited.” “They must be able to develop strategies for quickly understanding the nature of policy problems and the range of possible solutions.” Policy analysts “identify, at least qualitatively, the likely costs and benefits of alternative solutions and communicate these assessments to their clients” (p. 37).

“Second, analysts need a perspective for putting perceived social problems in context.” “[T]he analyst needs a perspective that includes government failure as well as market failure” (p. 37).

“Third, analysts need technical skills to enable them to predict better and to assess more confidently the consequences of alternative policies” (p. 37).

“Fourth, analysts must have an understanding of political and organizational behavior in order to predict, and perhaps influence, the feasibility of adoption and the successful implementation of policies. ... Analysts often face dilemmas when the private preferences and interests of their clients diverge substantially from their own perceptions of the public interest” (p. 38).

“Finally, analysts should have an ethical framework that explicitly takes account of their relationships to clients” (p. 38).

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