



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
School of Education
Department of Language and Social Sciences Education

CVE 9020: LEGAL EDUCATION AND PUBLIC POLICY

Topic 3: Lecture Notes

TOPIC: Introduction to Public Policy Analysis

3.1 Topic Contents

1. The Meaning of Policy Analysis.
2. A framework for Policy Analysis
3. Forms of Policy Analysis.
4. Policy Formulation
5. Policy Implementation.

3.2 Aim.

This unit is aimed at introducing you to the public policy-making process and public policy analysis.

3.3 Unit objectives

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Explain the meaning of policy analysis
2. Differentiate policy science from mainstream social sciences.
3. Identify and describe the various components of the framework for Policy analysis.
4. Describe the forms of policy analysis.
5. Explain the various stages of the policy process.

3.4 Introduction

In this unit you are going to be introduced to the applied social science field called Policy Analysis. This is a field which deals with substantive examination of policy issues and the identification of preferable alternatives. It does so with the help of systematic approaches and explicit methods. Policy analysis is thus a tool for problem assessment and monitoring. It enables us predict policy outcome impacts before implementation and evaluate policy impacts after implementation. Policy analysis therefore, deals with the examination of the impact of policy using tools of systematic inquiry. It aims at raising the level of argument among contending interests, and this, hopefully, results in higher quality debate and perhaps eventually public choice among better known alternatives. This unit, therefore, enables you explore the basic concepts and skills in policy analysis.

3.5 The meaning of Policy Analysis

The definition of policy analysis, according to R. K, Sapru (2007: 51), is that “Policy analysis is a technique to measure organisational effectiveness through the examination and evaluation of the effect of a programme. Public policy analysis is thus nothing more than estimating the impact of public policies on the government programmes. It is a systematic and data-based alternative to intuitive judgements about the effects of policy or policy options.” Sapru further contends that policy analysis puts data to use in deciding about, estimating and measuring the consequences of public policies. He notes that the purpose of policy analysis is twofold; it provides maximum information with minimal cost about the likely consequences of proposed policies, and the actual consequences of the policies already adopted. And, along these lines, William Dunn (1981: 7) further explains that “Policy analysis is the process of producing knowledge ‘of’ and ‘in’ policy processes. The characteristic feature of policy knowledge, apart from how it may have been produced, is its fundamentally practical orientation: knowledge is a guide to action rather than an end in itself; the aim of policy analysis throughout history has ,therefore, been to provide policy makers with information that could be used to exercise reasoned judgement in finding solutions for practical problems”. Dunn points out that Policy analysis originated at that point in history

when knowledge was consciously cultivated such as to permit the explicit and self-reflective examination of links between knowledge and action. Furthermore, “Policy analysis is that applied social science discipline which uses multiple methods of inquiry and argument to produce and transform policy-relevant information that may be utilised in political settings to resolve policy problems”

The scope and methods of policy analysis, according to Dunn, are partly descriptive, and factual. Information about the causes and consequences of policy is essential for understanding public problems. Nevertheless, policy analysis cannot be successfully practiced within the boundaries of traditional social science disciplines that emphasise the development and testing of general descriptive theories. These disciplines (economics, sociology, political science, psychology) are often limited in several ways: complex policy problems do not recognize traditional disciplinary boundaries; general theories are seldom applicable to specific policy contexts and such theories frequently fail to provide information that permit policy makers to control or manipulate policy processes. For these reasons. Policy analysis goes beyond traditional disciplinary concerned with the explanation of empirical regularities by seeking not only to combine and transform the substance and methods of several disciplines, but also to produce policy-relevant information that may be utilized to resolve problems in specific political settings. Moreover, the aim of policy analysis extend beyond the production of facts; policy analysis seeks to produce information about values and preferable courses of action. Policy analysis therefore, includes policy evaluation as well as policy advocacy (Dunn, P 35).

3.6 The Policy Analysis Framework

The framework for policy analysis is built on that Policy Analysis is an Applied Social Science discipline which makes use of multiple methods of Inquiry:

- It provides the structure of policy arguments,
 - it involves politics of information utilization and
 - provides an explanation of how various actors relate in that integrated
- Framework for Policy Analysis.

a) Policy Analysis is an Applied Social Science Discipline

Policy analysis draws from a variety of disciplines and professions whose aims are **designative**, **evaluative**, and **advocative**. As an applied discipline policy analysis borrows not only from the social and behavioural sciences, but also from public administration, law, philosophy, ethics, and various branches of systems analysis and applied mathematics. The policy analyst may therefore be expected to produce information and reasoned arguments about three kinds of questions:

- (1) **Question of values:** As to whose attainment is the main test of whether a problem has been resolved;
- (2) **Question of facts:** As to whose presence may limit or enhance the attainment of values; and
- (3) **Question of actions:** As to whose adoption may result in the attainment of values and the resolution of problems.

Three Approaches to Policy Analysis.

In producing information and reasoned arguments about these three types of questions, the analyst may employ one or more of three approaches to analysis:

- **The Empirical Approach:** The empirical approach is primarily concerned with describing the causes and effects of given public policies. Here the primary question is factual (Does something exist?) and the type of information produced is designative in character.
- **The Evaluative Approach:** By contrast, the evaluative approach is mainly concerned with determining the worth or value of some policy. Here the question is one of value (Of what worth is it?) and the type of information produced is evaluative in character.
- **The Normative Approach:** The normative approach is primarily concerned with recommending future courses of action that may resolve public problems. In this case the question is one of action (What should be done?) and the type of information produced is advocative.

Put diagrammatically these three approaches can be presented as follows:

APPROACH	PRIMARY QUESTION	TYPE OF INFORMATION
EMPIRICAL	Does it exist? (<i>facts</i>)	Designative
EVALUATIVE	Of what worth is it (<i>values</i>)	Evaluative
NORMATIVE	What should be done? (action)	Advocative

Figure 7.0: showing three approaches to policy analysis: (Dunn. P 37)

Unlike traditional social science disciplines, policy analysis includes these three approaches. It goes beyond the aims of traditional social science disciplines which have so far tended to avoid evaluative and normative approaches, in part because of deep-seated beliefs in the desirability of separating values and facts in science. This belief in the separability of facts and values has sometimes contributed to misunderstandings about the methodology and aims of policy analysis. Policy advocacy, for example, is often viewed as a way to make emotional appeals and ideological pronouncements or to engage in political activism, rather than as a way to produce policy-relevant information and reasoned arguments about possible solutions for public problems (Dunn. p37).

b) Policy Analysis uses Multiple Methods of Inquiry

The production of policy-relevant information, whether designative, evaluative, or advocative in character, takes place by employing definite analytical procedures. As a process of inquiry, policy analysis makes use of general **analytical procedures** that are common to all efforts to solve human problems. **Description, prediction, evaluation, and prescription.** These general analytical procedures differ according to the kinds of questions posed by the analyst. Description and prediction assist in answering designative questions: Does a policy exist and how did it come about? What are its expected future consequences? Evaluation helps answer evaluative questions: Of what worth is a policy, and according to whose values? Finally, prescription aids in answering advocative questions, that is, questions of action involving facts as well as values: What should the policy be? Is it feasible as well as desirable?

These general analytical procedures differ not only in terms of the kinds of questions for which they are appropriate, but also in terms of their temporal relation to action. Thus, prediction and recommendation typically come into use *before* an action has been adopted (*ex ante*), whereas description and evaluation are normally employed *after* an action has occurred (*ex post*). Prediction and recommendation therefore deal with the future, while description and evaluation are concerned with the past. General analytical procedures are classified by time and type of question :

Figure 8.0 showing general analytical procedures by time and type of question

TYPE OF QUESTION			
Time	Designative	Evaluative	Advocative
Before Action (<i>ex ante</i>)	PREDICTION	EVALUATION	PRESCRIPTION
After Action (<i>ex post</i>)	DESCRIPTION	EVALUATION	

Note: Prescription may occur after action has been taken, although this retrospective form of policy analysis ("The government should have done so-and-so") is akin to a doctor who prescribes medicine after the patient has died. (Source: Dunn W. N. ;p 39)

In policy analysis these **general analytical procedures** correspond to four **policy- analytic methods**:

- (1) **monitoring (description)** permits us to produce information about the past causes and consequences of policies;
- (2) **forecasting (prediction)** enables us to produce information about the future consequences of policies;
- (3) **evaluation (evaluation)** involves the production of information about the value or worth of past and future policies; and
- (4) **recommendation (prescription)** permits us to produce information about the Likelihood that future courses of action will result in valued consequences.

Problem Structuring and Practical Inference

In addition to these four policy-analytic methods there are two methods that cannot be directly translated from general analytical procedures so far discussed. These policy-analytic methods are **problem structuring** and **practical inference**.

(5) **Problem structuring:** In order to do any kind of analysis one must first be aware of the existence of a problem. *Problem structuring* is that phase in the process of inquiry where the analyst, confronted with information about the consequences of some policy, begins to experience a “troubled, perplexed, trying situation, where the difficulty is, as it were, spread throughout the entire situation, infecting it as a whole.” Problem structuring, which is perhaps the least understood method used by policy analysts, relies essentially on procedures of classification that permit the analyst to speculate about potential solutions for a problem. Unemployment, for example, may be classified as a problem of labour demand, individual initiative, or educational achievement. Although a potential solution may at this point be ill-defined, vague, and ambiguous, it nevertheless guides the production of subsequent information. In order to analyze a policy one must first have some sense of a policy problem and its possible solutions. Problems seldom emerge fully defined; rather, they are structured in different ways as the analyst continuously analyzes and reanalyzes them. Problem structuring, which involves all policy-analytic methods, is not simply a method; it is a *metamethod* (**method of methods**) that functions as a kind of central regulator of the overall process of policy analysis. (Dunn. P 39)

(6) **Practical Inference:** permits us to reach conclusions about the extent to which policy problems have been resolved. The reason for describing such conclusions as “practical” is to emphasize their close relationship to social values and norms. Other forms of inference (for example, causal inference or statistical inference) do not require that analysts make value judgments as part of their efforts to determine the scope and severity of a policy problem.

Hierarchy of the Six Policy-Analytic Methods

One of the important characteristics of policy-analytic methods is their hierarchical relationship. It is not possible to use some methods without first having used others. Thus, it is possible to monitor policies without forecasting their consequences; but it is seldom possible to forecast policies without first monitoring them. Similarly, the analyst can't monitor policies without

evaluating them, but it is not possible to evaluate a policy without first having monitored it. Finally, to recommend a policy normally requires that the analyst has already engaged in monitoring, forecasting, and evaluation. This is another way of saying that the normative approach to policy analysis necessarily involves factual as well as value premises. Only the empirical approach to policy analysis is, in principle, value free. The hierarchy of policy-analytic methods is illustrated in figure 9.0 below.

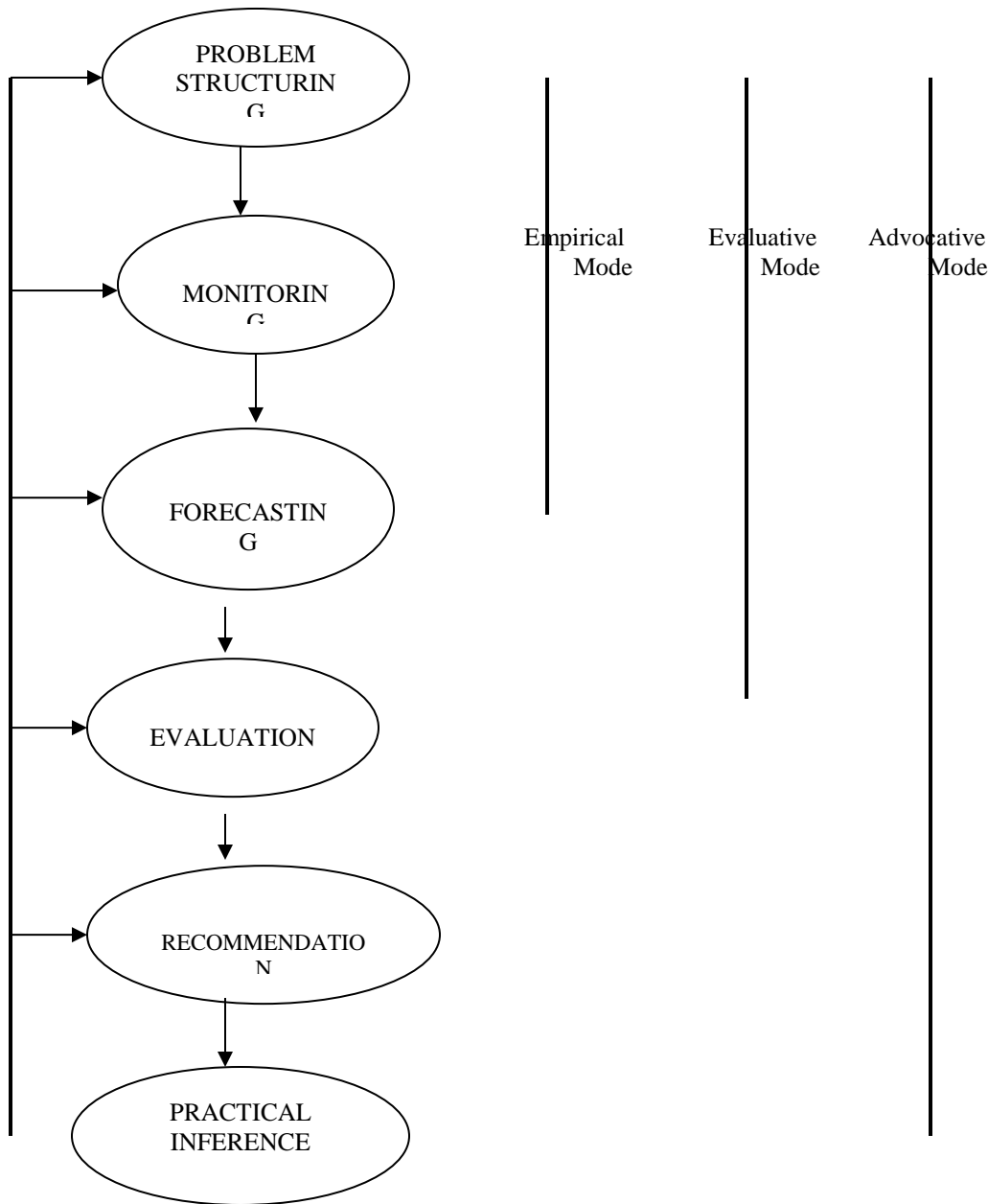


Figure 9.0 showing hierarchy of the six policy-analytic methods: (Dunn W. N, P41)

c) The Structure of Policy Arguments

Policy analysis is much more than the use of multiple methods of inquiry to produce policy-relevant information. Analysts seek, not only to produce different kinds of information, but also to transform this information as part of reasoned arguments about public policy. Policy arguments, which reflect the *reasons* why different segments of the community disagree about alternative courses of action available to governments, are the main vehicle for conducting debates about public policy issues. Every policy argument has six elements as shown in fig. 10-0 below (Dunn, p.42)

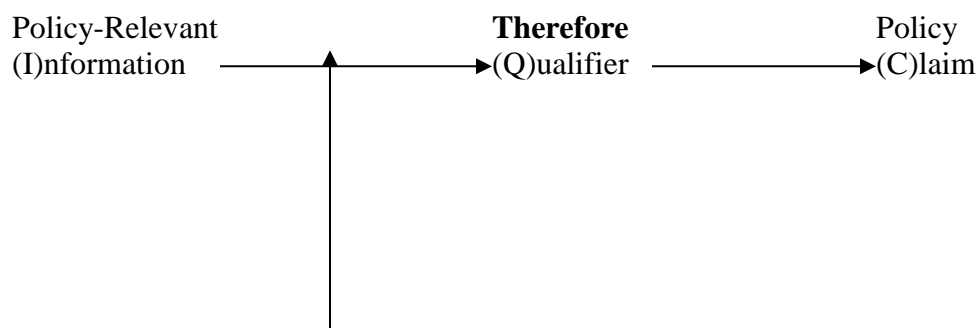
1. ***Policy-Relevant Information:*** Policy-relevant information (**I**) produced by multiple methods constitutes the evidence at an analyst's disposal. Information about policy problems, policy alternatives, policy actions, policy outcomes, and policy performance may be provided in various forms. For example, the outcomes of government energy policy might be expressed in the form of a statistical generalization ("Results of federal demonstration projects show that nuclear power plants are more efficient than conventional power plants"); as the conclusions of experts ("The panel of experts report that nuclear energy is the most practical and efficient form of energy now available"); or as an expressed value or need ("The construction of more nuclear power plants is needed to ensure continued economic growth"). However expressed, policy-relevant information is the point of departure in all policy arguments.
2. ***Policy Claim:*** A policy claim (**C**) is the conclusion of a policy argument. Policy claims – for example, the advocative claim that the government should invest in the construction of more nuclear power plants – are typically the subject of disagreement or conflict among different segments of the community. When a policy claim follows the presentation of information, the claim implies "therefore." For example, if nuclear energy is more efficient (**I**) it follows (therefore) that the government should invest in the construction of more nuclear power plants (**C**). Hence, policy claims are the logical consequence of policy-relevant information.

3. **Warrant:** A warrant (**W**) is an assumption in a policy argument which permits the analyst to move from policy-relevant information to policy claim. A warrant may contain assumptions of several kinds: authoritative, intuitive, analytically, causal, pragmatic, and value-critical. For example, a pragmatic warrant for the claim that the government should invest in the construction of more nuclear power plants might be expressed simply as “More energy is needed.” The role of the warrant is to carry policy-relevant information to a policy claim about which there is disagreement or conflict, thus providing a *reason* for accepting the claim.

4. **Backing:** The backing (**B**) for a warrant consists of additional assumptions or arguments that may be used to support warrants which are not accepted at face value. The backing for warrants may also take various forms, including scientific laws, appeals to the authority of experts, or ethical and moral principles. The backing for warrants allows the analyst to go one step further backward and state underlying assumptions.

5. **Rebuttal.** A rebuttal (**R**) is a second conclusion, assumption, or argument that states the conditions under which an original claim is unacceptable, or under which it may be accepted only with qualifications. Taken together, policy claims and rebuttals form the substance of policy issues, that is, disagreements among different segments of the community about alternative courses of government action. The consideration of rebuttals helps the analyst to anticipate objections and serves as a systematic means for criticizing one’s own claims, assumptions, and arguments.

6. **Qualifier:** A qualifier (**Q**) expresses the degree to which the analyst is certain about a policy claim. In policy analysis, qualifiers are often expressed in the language of probability (“probably,” “very likely,” “at the .01 level of confidence”). When the analyst is completely certain about a claim – that is, when conclusions are wholly deterministic in nature and contain no error – no qualifier is necessary.



Nuclear power is two to three times more efficient than conventional power sources.

(Probably)

The government should invest in the construction of nuclear power plants.

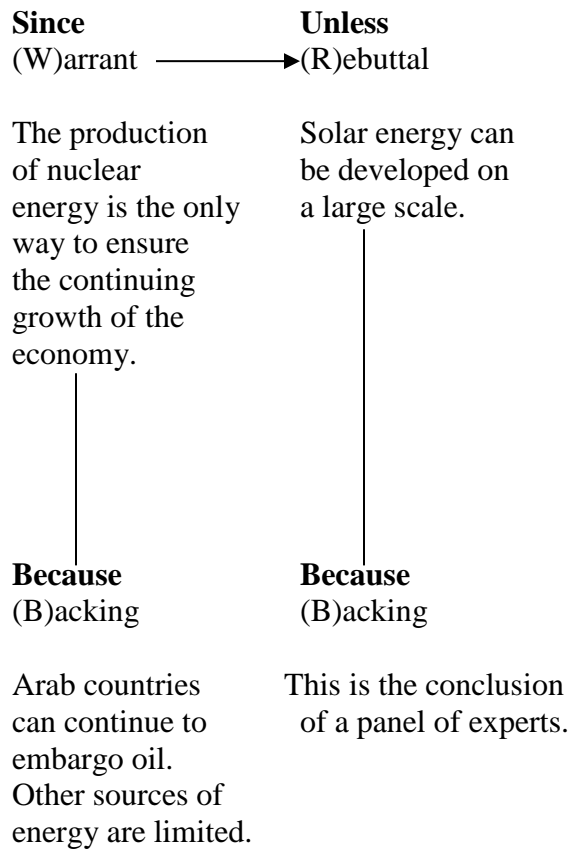


Figure 10.0 showing elements of a policy argument: (Dunn W. N, P.43)

The structure of policy arguments illustrates how policy analysts may use reason and evidence to advocate solutions for policy problems. The relations among the six elements of any policy argument also demonstrate how policy-relevant information may be interpreted in different ways, depending on the frame of reference, ideology, or world view of different groups. Policy arguments enable us to go beyond the mere production of information and transform it in light of specific facts and values. By answering questions about the meaning of information, analysts may

employ multiple methods in a way that is open to challenges, is self-critical, and is directed toward the resolution of problems, rather than the justification of favoured policy alternatives. Any effort to recommend or advocate a course of action depends in part on how well we are able to describe policy problems. To recommend a solution to problems of crime, for example, depends partly on our ability to identify factors presumed to be its causes (unemployment, poverty, inadequate law enforcement). Yet recommendation also depends on whether we have identified the right values to pursue, which means that policy analysis is based as much on the production of ethical as empirical knowledge. Thus, for example, not everyone agrees that government should invest resources in crime control activities, since some groups believe that values of social justice should take precedence over those of security. Indeed, many hold that failures to achieve social justice are the source of present-day problems of crime.(Dunn p.44)

Types of Policy-Relevant Information

There are five types of policy relevant information. Diagrammatically these can be represented as follows(Dunn P44-5):

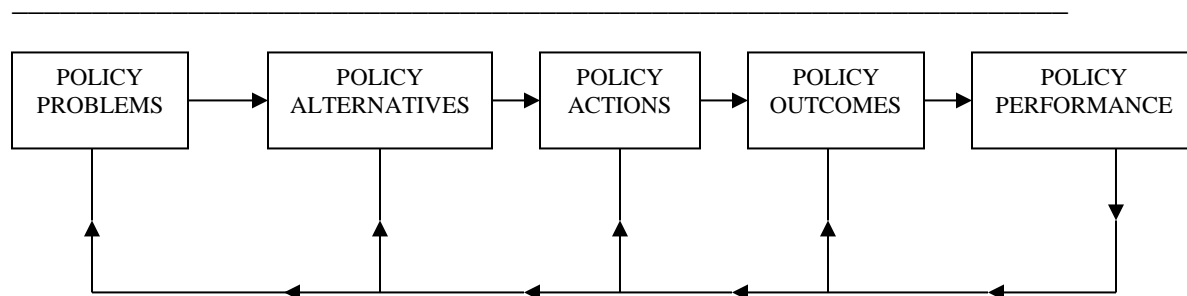


Figure 11.0 showing five types of policy relevant information

A **policy problem** is an unrealized value, need, or opportunity which, however identified, may be attained through public action. Knowledge of what problem to solve requires information about a problem's antecedent conditions (for example, school dropouts as an antecedent condition of unemployment), as well as information about values (for example, better schools or full employment) whose attainment may lead to a problem's solution. The provision of information about policy problems is the most critical task of policy analysis, since the way a problem is defined governs our ability to search out and identify appropriate solutions. Inadequate or faulty

information at this stage of analysis may result in a fatal error: solving the wrong formulation of a problem when instead one should have solved the right one.

A ***policy alternative*** is a potentially available course of action that may contribute to the attainment of values and, hence, the resolution of a policy problem. Information about the conditions that gave rise to a problem is essential to the identification of possible solutions. Yet such information is usually insufficient; the part may not repeat itself, and values themselves change over time. For these reasons the analyst must be concerned with producing information about alternatives that are not “given” by the existing situation. To produce such information requires creativity, insight, and what many have called “intuition,” “judgment,” or “tacit knowledge.”

A ***policy action*** is a move or series of moves guided by a policy alternative that is designed to achieve valued outcomes. In order to recommend or advocate a policy action, it is necessary to have information about the positive and negative consequences of acting on different alternatives, including information about the political, legal, and economic constraints on action. Yet it is also essential to know which alternative courses of action are preferable on evaluative grounds, which requires information about which policy alternatives are valued and why. Hence, information about policy actions is produced by forecasting and evaluating the expected consequences of actions. In short, policy recommendation pre-supposes monitoring, forecasting, and evaluation.

A ***policy outcome*** is an observed consequence of policy actions. The consequences of policy actions are not fully stable or known in advance of action; nor are all observed consequences of action intended or anticipated. Policy analysis therefore produces information about policy actions both before and after they have occurred. In other words, information about the consequences of alternative courses of action is produced *ex ante* as well as *ex post* (fig. 11.0).

Policy performance is the degree to which a given policy outcome contributes to the attainment of values. In reality policy problems are seldom “solved”; they are most often resolved, reformulated, or even “unsolved.” For this reason policy analysis is best described as a methodology for problem structuring and not as a means to “solve” problems. Yet to know whether a problem has been solved, resolved, or unsolved not only requires information about

policy outcomes; it is also essential to know whether these outcomes have contributed to the attainment of values that originally gave rise to a problem. Information about policy performance, which is designative and evaluative in character, may be used to develop new policy alternatives or to restructure policy problems.

d) The Politics of Information Utilization

The use of multiple methods to produce policy-relevant information and reasoned arguments does not guarantee that the products of policy analysis will be utilized by policy makers. Policy analysis is essentially a *cognitive* process, while policy making is a *political* one. Many factors other than methodology shape the ways that policy analysis is utilized by policy makers: the structure of political power; the political feasibility of recommended alternatives; time and resource constraints; the form and content of information; and the characteristics of policy makers themselves. Under such conditions the analyst must not only make appropriate use of policy-analytic methods (**problem structuring, forecasting, monitoring, evaluation, recommendation**), but may also be required to function as an agent of planned social change. To do so the analyst must win the cooperation and assistance of persons who affect and are affected by a given policy; produce recommendations that are politically acceptable to policy makers, target groups, and beneficiaries of a policy; and design recommendations with a view toward their implementability. In short, the analyst must plan for the utilization of policy analysis in the policy process. (Dunn. P46)

-
-
-

The Elements of a Policy System

In effect, policy analysts are but one among many different types of actors in a policy system. A *policy system*, or the **overall institutional pattern** within which policies are made, involves interrelationships among three elements: **public policies, policy stakeholders, and policy environments** (fig. 12.0). *Public policies*, which are long series of more or less related choices

(including decisions not to act) made by governmental bodies and officials, are formulated in *issue* areas which range from defense, energy, and health to education, welfare, and crime control.

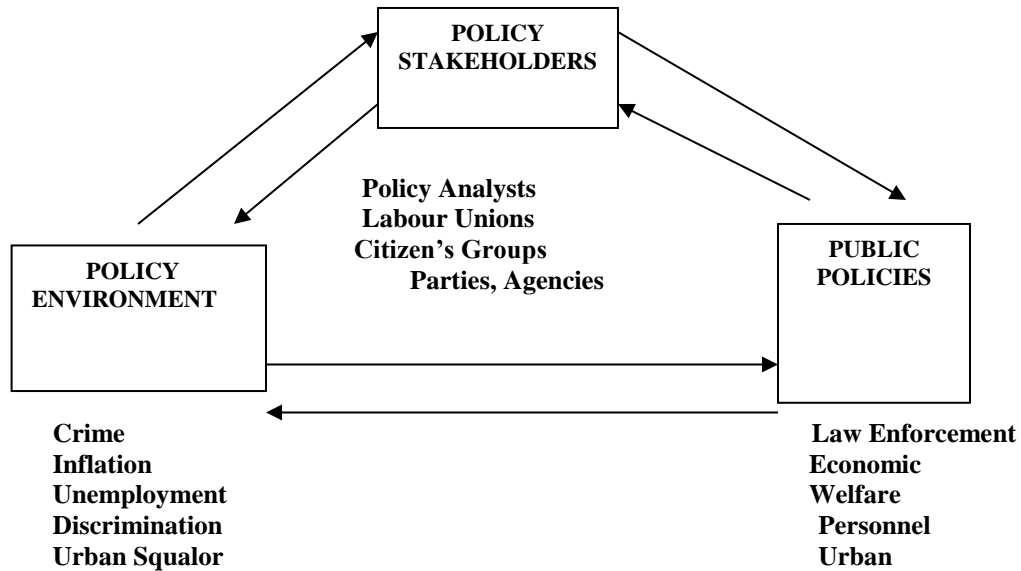


Figure 12.0 showing three elements of a policy system:(Dunn. P46)

In any one of these areas there are many different policy issues, that is, actual or potential courses of government action that involve conflicts among different segments of the community. A given policy issue is usually the result of conflicting definitions of a policy problem. For example, most segments of society view crime as a policy issue; yet crime as a problem involving unattained values of law, order, and security may be defined as a social problem, an economic problem, an educational problem, or a problem of individual motivation. In reality, crime is all of these problems and more.

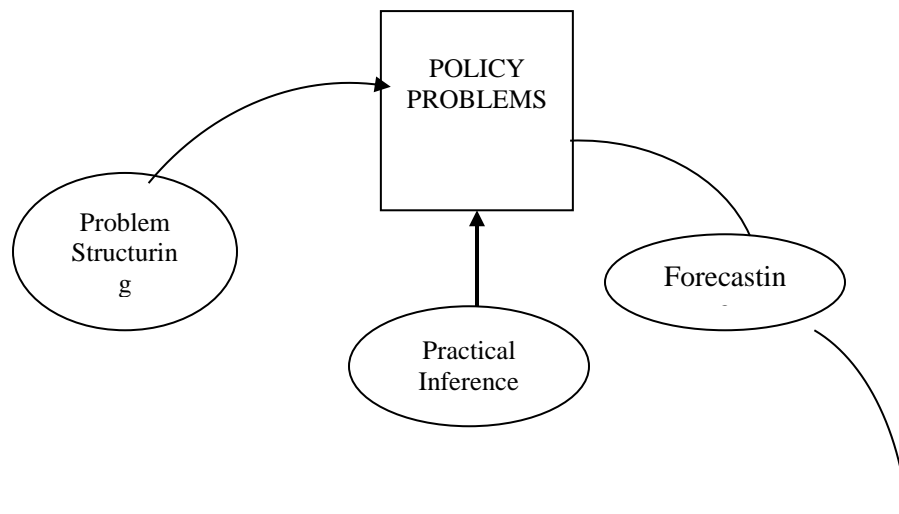
The definition of a policy problem depends on the pattern of involvement of particular *policy stakeholders*, that is, individuals or groups which have a stake in policies because they affect and are affected by governmental decisions. Policy stakeholders – for example, citizens’ groups, labor unions, political parties, government agencies, elected leaders, and policy analysts themselves – often respond in markedly different ways to the same information about a policy environment. A *policy environment*, which is the specific context in which events surrounding a policy issue occur, influences and is in turn influenced by policy stakeholders and public policies. Hence, policy systems contain processes which are *dialectical* in nature, meaning that objective and subjective dimensions of policy

making are inseparable in practice. Policy systems are subjective human products created by the conscious choices of policy stakeholders; policy systems are an objective reality manifested in observable actions and their consequences; policy stakeholders are products of policy systems. Policy analysts, no less than other policy actors, are both creators and products of policy systems.

e) An Integrated Framework for Policy Analysis

Policy analysis may be viewed as a process of inquiry which involves five *policy-informational components* that are transformed into one another by using *six policy-analytic methods*. The use of policy-analytic methods (*problem structuring, forecasting, monitoring, evaluation, recommendation*) permits the analyst to transform one type of information into another. Information and methods are interdependent; they are linked in a dynamic process of change which involves *policy-information transformations*. Hence, **policy-information components**, namely **policy problems, policy alternatives, policy actions, policy outcomes, and policy performance**, are transformed one into the other by the appropriate use of policy-analytic methods.

The Process of Policy Analysis



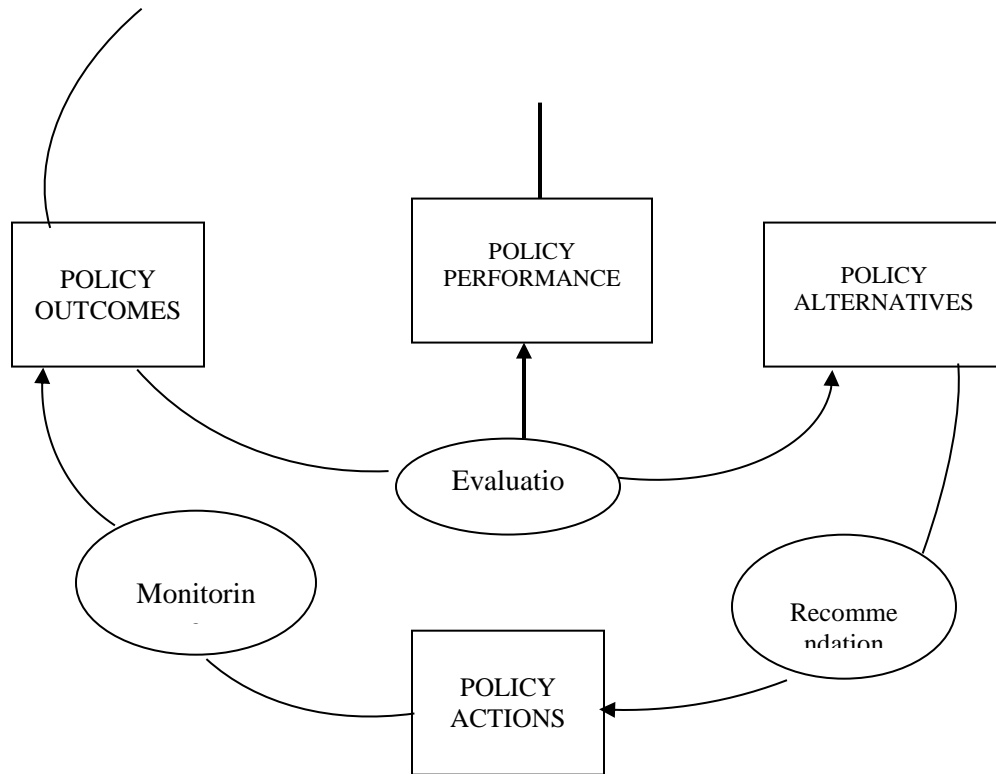


Figure 13.0 showing an integrated framework for policy analysis

f) FORMS OF POLICY ANALYSIS

I) Prospective Policy Analysis

The relationship between policy-informational components and policy-analytic methods provides a basis for distinguishing three major forms of policy analysis: **prospective**, **retrospective**, and **integrated analysis**. Prospective policy analysis, which involves the production and transformation of information *before* policy actions are initiated and implemented, tends to characterize the operating styles of economists, systems analysts, and operations researchers. Prospective policy analysis is perhaps best illustrated by the description of policy analysis provided by Walter Williams, former Chief of the Research and Plans Division of the Office of Economic Opportunity. Policy *analysis*, observes Williams, “is a means of synthesizing information to draw from it policy alternatives and preferences stated in comparable, predicted quantitative and qualitative terms as a basis or guide for policy decisions; conceptually it does not include the

gathering of information.” Policy *research*, by contrast, refers to “all studies using scientific methodologies to describe phenomena and/or determine relationships among them.”

Prospective analysis often creates large gaps between preferred solutions to problems and the efforts of governments to resolve them. Thus, for example, political scientist Graham Allison estimates that perhaps no more than 10 percent of the work required to achieve a desired set of policy outcomes is carried out *before* policy actions are initiated.

II) Retrospective Policy Analysis

Retrospective policy analysis conforms in major respects to the description of policy *research* offered earlier. Retrospective analysis, which is confined to the production and transformation of information *after* policy actions have been taken, typifies the operating styles of three major groups of analysts:

1. ***Discipline-Oriented Analysts:*** This group, comprised largely of political scientists and sociologists, seeks primarily to develop and test discipline-based theories and describe the causes and consequences of policies. This group seldom attempts to identify specific goals and objectives of policy makers and makes no effort to distinguish “policy variables which are subject to policy manipulation, and situational variables which are not.” For example, the analysis of the effects of party competition on levels of government expenditures provides no information about specific goals and objectives of policy makers; nor is party competition a manipulable variable that policy makers may use to produce changes in expenditures.
2. ***Problem-Oriented Analysts:*** This group, also composed largely of political scientists and sociologists, likewise seeks to describe the causes and consequences of policies. Problem-oriented analysts, however, are less concerned with the development and testing of theories deemed important in social science disciplines than with identifying variables that may be manipulated by policy makers to resolve problems. Yet problem-oriented analysts seldom provide information about specific goals and objectives of policy makers, chiefly because

the practical problems they analyze are usually of a general nature. For example, the analysis of the effects of public investments in education on the achievement levels of students in the United States provides information about potentially manipulatable policy variables (public investment) but does not provide information about the specific goals and objectives of policy makers and other stakeholders who affect and are affected by educational policies.

3. ***Applications-Oriented Analysts:*** This third group of analysts includes sociologists and some political scientists but also persons from professions such as social work and public administration and such fields as evaluation research. This group also seeks to describe the causes and consequences of public policies and programs but is not concerned with the development and testing of discipline-based theories. Moreover, this group is not only concerned with policy variables but also with the identification of goals and objectives of policy makers and other stakeholders. Information about these goals and objectives provides a basis for monitoring and evaluating specific policy outcomes, which may in turn be used by practitioners of *ex ante* analysis to structure policy problems, develop new policy alternatives, and recommend courses of action to resolve problems. Thus, for example, applications-oriented analysts may provide a rich account of the many factors that influence the success and failure of early childhood educational programs, even though their analysis ends just short of restructuring problems and developing and synthesizing new solutions for policy problems.

The operating styles of these three groups of retrospective analysts reflect characteristic strengths and weaknesses. Discipline-oriented policy analysts seldom produce information which is directly useful for devising solutions for policy problems, chiefly because variables of most relevance for the construction and testing of general scientific theories are rarely capable of manipulation by policy makers. Even when problem-oriented analysts investigate such important problems as educational opportunity, energy, or crime, the resultant information may be **macronegative**. *Macronegative* information describes the broad causes and consequences of policies and uses aggregate data to show why certain policies and programs do *not* work, as distinguished from **micropositive** information which shows what policies and programs *do* work and under what

specific circumstances. It does the policy maker little good to know that the frequency of crime is greater in urban than rural areas; but it may be very useful to know that a specific form of gun control legislation reduces the commission of serious crimes, or that intensive police patrolling is a deterrent to crime.

III) Integrated Policy Analysis

Integrated policy analysis is a more comprehensive form of analysis which combines the operating styles of practitioners concerned with the production and transformation of information both *before* and *after* policy actions have been taken. Integrated policy analysis not only requires that analysts link retrospective and prospective phases of inquiry but also demands that analysts continuously produce and transform information over time. This means that the analyst may engage in the clockwise transformation of policy-informational components many times before a satisfactory resolution of a policy problem is found. Integrated analysis is therefore continuous, iterative, and unlimited, at least in principle. The analyst may initiate the production and transformation of information at any point in the analytic cycle, either before or after action, and the relation between any two “phases” of policy analysis – for example, between problem structuring and forecasting – is best viewed as a dialectical “moment” where it is impossible to say with certainty where the use of one policy-analytic method begins and another ends.

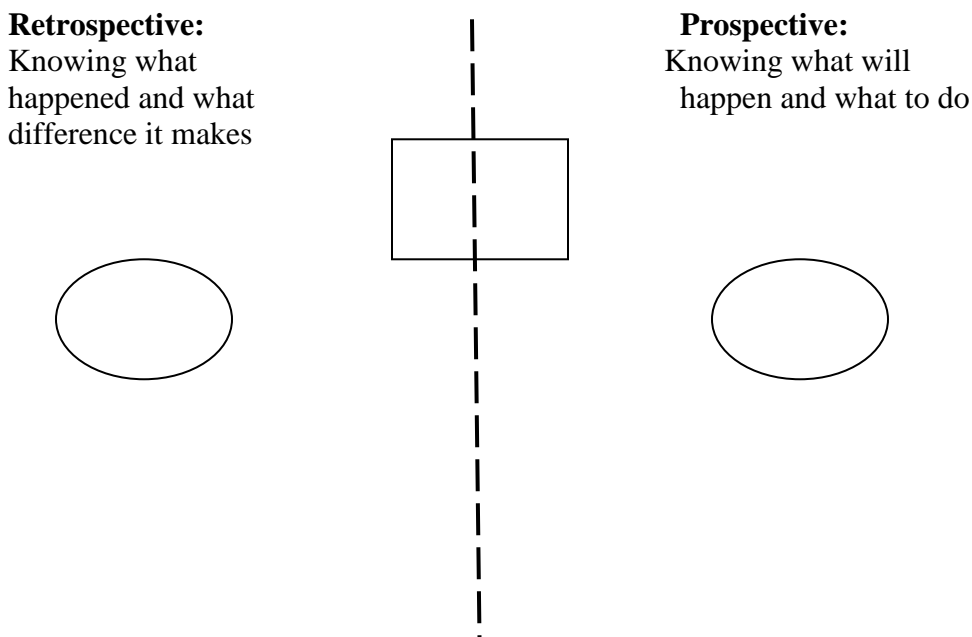
Integrated analysis may be illustrated by contrasting retrospective evaluations of public policies, on the one hand, and policy-program experiments on the other. Retrospective evaluation of policies and programs in areas such as education, health, and social welfare typically assesses the performance of *existing* policies and programs. Policy and program experiments, by contrast, assess the performance of *new* policies and programs in terms of their actual outcomes. In order to assess new forms of policy action under realistic political and administrative conditions, it is necessary to produce information at each phase of policy analysis: problem structuring, forecasting, recommendation, monitoring, evaluation, and practical inference. Prospective and retrospective policy analysis, although initiating and terminating analysis at different points, require merely that the analyst complete part of the analytic cycle.

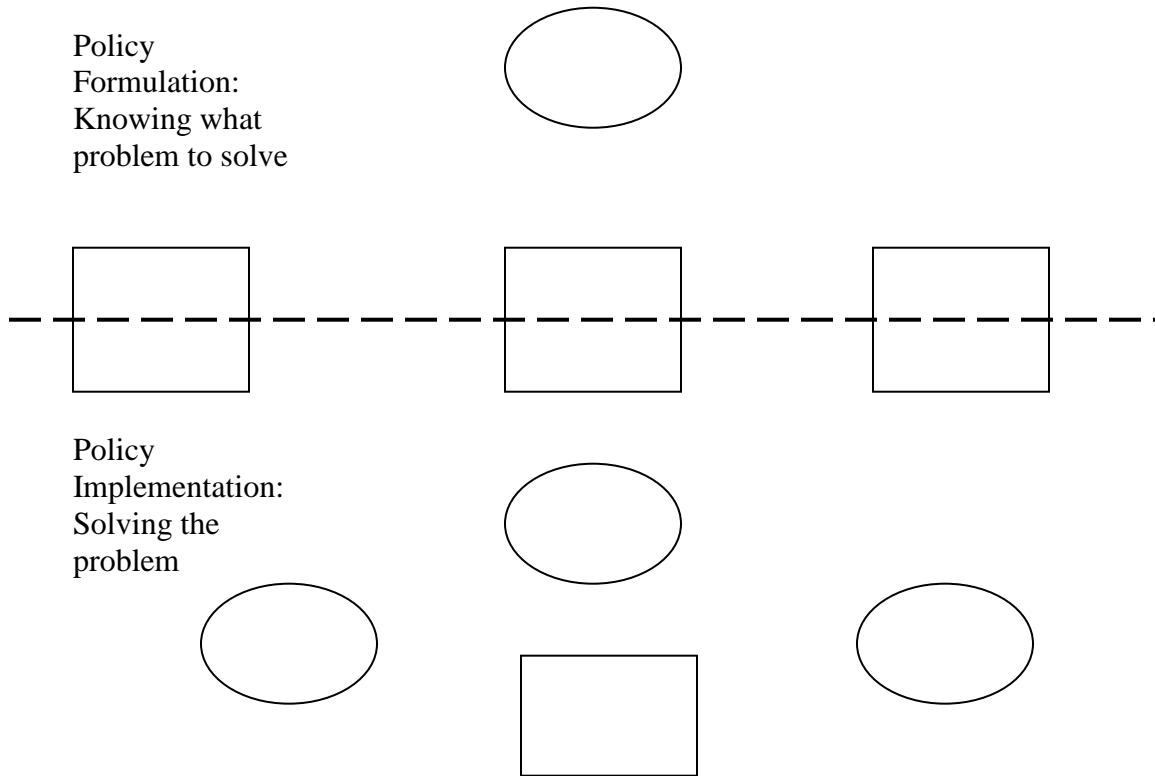
Integrated policy analysis has all the methodological advantages of prospective and retrospective analysis but none of their weaknesses. Integrated analysis provides for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of policies over time. This is not the case with prospective and retrospective analysis, which provide significantly less information. Thus, for example, prospective policy analysis typically suffers from inadequate or unreliable information about changes in values, goals, and objectives which occur after policies have been implemented. By contrast, retrospective policy analysis suffers from an inability to shape policy actions, since it is largely confined to the passive reporting of information about the consequences of policies after they have been implemented. Finally, integrated analysis builds on the strengths of disciplines that have specialized in prospective analysis (economics, systems engineering, operations research), as well as those which have placed primary emphasis on retrospective analysis (political science, sociology, law). Hence, integrated analysis is multidisciplinary in the full sense of the word.

Descriptive and Normative Decision Theory

The framework of elements of the process of policy analysis not only helps us visualize interdependencies between information and methods but also assists in showing how different methods are related to major forms of policy analysis:

Figure 14.0 Forms of Policy Analysis





(Source: Dunn W.N, P55)

Retrospective, Prospective, and Integrated Policy Analysis.

When we divide this same framework into four parts we find that the left-hand portion contains methods that are normally used by practitioners of retrospective policy analysis. By contrast, the right-hand portion of the framework contains methods typically used by practitioners of prospective policy analysis. In effect, the left side of the framework is concerned with the analysis of policy *after* action, whereas the right side deals with the analysis of policy *before* action.

This particular contrast helps to understand several important distinctions made in contemporary debates about the methodology of policy analysis. For example, distinctions between descriptive decision theory and normative decision theory may be captured by the framework. ***Descriptive decision theory***, which may be defined as a set of logically consistent propositions that describe action, is essentially concerned with methods for retrospective analysis found on the left-hand side

of the framework. The analyst who is concerned with describing the causes and consequences of policy actions must of necessity conduct analyses after action has occurred. Here the primary aim of analysis is to understand a policy problem rather than to solve it.

By contrast, *normative decision theory* is a set of logically consistent propositions that provide a basis for improving the consequences of action. Normative decision theory (sometimes referred to as statistical decision theory, or the theory of rational choice in complex situations) is largely concerned with the use of prospective methods (forecasting and recommendation) found in the right-hand portion of the framework. These methods, as we have seen, are appropriate for predicting and advocating different courses of action before they have occurred. In a larger sense, that is what is meant when policy analysis is described as a “problem-solving” methodology. Whereas descriptive decision theory is oriented toward the understanding of problems, normative decision theory is largely concerned with their solution.

Policy Formulation and Policy Implementation

Policy Formulation: This involves the development and synthesis of alternative solutions for policy problems, is essentially a conceptual and theoretical activity. Here the primary concern is with questions about the nature of problems and not so much with choosing courses of action that many contribute to their resolution. How well do we understand the problem? Have we identified the right objectives? Are we solving the wrong formulation of a problem when we should be solving the right one?

Policy Implementation: This involves the execution and steering of a course of action over time. Policy implementation is essentially a practical activity, as distinguished from policy formulation, which is essentially theoretical. Here the primary concern is with choosing a course of action and seeing that it is properly followed over time and not with inquiring into the nature of problems. Analysts working in the lower half of the framework already take problems as “given,” seeking at this stage merely to select and implement the right choices. The greatest danger at this stage of analysis is choosing the “right” alternative to solve the “wrong” problem.

Unit Summary

In this last unit of this module you have seen that the public policy process is complex and integrated; that it is therefore, a misconception to say that the policy process is linear or circular. Such complexity arises from the fact that public policy takes place in a political environment. This means the various groups of actors in this environment try to influence policy at all stages of the policy process. Given this scenario there is need for you to acquire knowledge and skills in policy analysis. Thus, policy analysis skills are a tool which will make you provide maximum information with minimal cost about the likely consequences of proposed policies, and the actual consequences of the policies already adopted. Policy analysis is therefore, the process of producing knowledge 'of' and 'in' policy processes. And the characteristic feature of such policy knowledge, apart from how it may have been produced, is its fundamentally practical orientation: meaning that such knowledge is a guide to action rather than an end in itself.

Activity

1. What is policy analysis?
2. Why is policy analysis considered to be an applied social science?
3. List and explain the various policy analytic methods.
4. Identify and explain the three major components of a policy system
5. List five types of policy-relevant information and explain them.
6. Briefly describe and explain the structure of a policy argument