

## CHAPTER 1

### POLICY ANALYSIS: WHAT GOVERNMENTS DO, WHY THEY DO IT, AND WHAT DIFFERENCE IT MAKES

#### CHAPTER OUTLINE AND SUMMARY

##### I. What Is Public Policy?

- A. Public policy examines what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes.
- B. Definition of Policy  
Public policy is defined as what governments chose to do or chose not to do.
- C. Policy Expansion and Government Growth  
The size of government can be measured in relation to the size of the economy. As government has grown in the last century, the scope of public policy has also expanded.
- D. Scope of Public Policy  
The scope of public policy is reflected in government spending but also includes regulatory activities whose costs are not shown in government budgets.

##### II. Why Study Public Policy?

- A. Political science goes beyond an understanding of governmental institutions and processes. It also includes public policy, which focuses on the causes and consequences of government actions.

##### III. What Can Be Learned from Policy Analysis?

- Policy analysis is finding out what governments do, why they do it, and what difference, if any, it makes.
- A. Description  
The first step of policy analysis consists of careful description of current policy.
- B. Causes  
Having described the components of a given public policy, policy analysis then moves to those factors that impact public policy.
- C. Consequences  
Finally, policy analysis includes an examination of the effects of public policy.

##### IV. Policy Analysis and Policy Advocacy

- A. Policy analysis is contrasted with policy advocacy: policy analysis seeks to explain, while policy advocacy prescribes actions. Policy analysis is a prerequisite to advocacy.

##### V. Policy Analysis and the Quest for Solutions to America's Problems

Policy analysis should not assume that all of America's problems can be solved. There are many reasons for this:

A. Limits on Government Power

Governments are constrained by many social forces—family, class structure, religion, and so forth. Many of society's problems are intractable.

B. Disagreement over the Problem

Where no consensus exists concerning a problem, the search for a public policy answer is greatly hampered.

C. Subjectivity in Interpretation

Values inevitably come into play in the interpretation of research.

D. Limitations on Design of Human Research

Research in the social sciences is fraught with limitations and difficulties, simply because human subjects are involved.

E. Complexity of Human Behavior

The behavior of groups and even individuals is so complex that social scientists are unable to make accurate predictions about the impact of proposed policies.

## VI. Policy Analysis as Art and Craft

Policy analysis is both an art—requiring insight and creativity—and a craft—requiring knowledge of applied sciences. Aaron Wildavsky was firm in asserting that no one model can be used, and no model of choice will be presented in this text.

## TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. Define public policy and its scope
2. Explain the need to study public policy
3. Classify three learning's from policy analysis
4. Distinguish between policy analysis and policy advocacy
5. Evaluate policy analysis as a solution to America's problems
6. Explain why policy analysis is both an art and a craft

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Consider the use of government spending as a measure of what governments do and their priorities. What other measures might replace or complement this one?
2. Taking any governmental body, discuss what could be learned about it through policy analysis.
3. Compare the approaches of "traditional" and "behavioral" political science, using specific examples, such as education or transportation policy.
4. Apply the three-way relationship between public policy and its causes and outcomes pictured on page eight to a current public policy question.
5. How can policy analysts overcome some of the problems inherent in policy analysis?

## LECTURE LAUNCHERS

1. Begin with the text's question "Why study public policy?" and solicit student responses, leading into an examination of the possibilities and limitations of forming public policy.
2. Using a policy institute—for instance the Brookings Institution or the Heritage Foundation—use the institute to begin a lecture focusing on the functions of public policy analysis, policy formation, and policy advocacy.
3. Use an historical example—such as the Tea Act of 1773—that had egregious unintended consequences. Begin with an examination of the difficulties of public policy.

## MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. According to the text, \_\_\_\_\_ is a common indicator of governmental functions and priorities.
  - a. policy advocacy
  - b. government spending
  - c. regulatory activity
  - d. policy analysis

Correct Answer: b

LO#/text: 1.1: Define public policy and its scope

Topic/Concept: What Is Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understand

2. Government's responsibilities have generally
  - a. grown in recent years.
  - b. Constricted in recent years.
  - c. stayed about the same in recent years.
  - d. varied greatly in recent years.

Correct Answer: a,

LO#/text: 1.1: Define public policy and its scope

Topic/Concept: What Is Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understand

3. Governmental growth during the twentieth century may be attributed to all BUT WHICH of the following?
  - a. World War I and World War II
  - b. the Great Depression

- c. massive immigration
- d. Great Society programs

Correct Answer: c

LO#/text: 1.1: Define public policy and its scope

Topic/Concept: What Is Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understand

4. Total government spending (state, local, and federal) currently accounts for about what percentage of the gross domestic product?
- a. 37
  - b. 25
  - c. 45
  - d. 15

Correct Answer: a

LO#/text: 1.1: Define public policy and its scope

Topic/Concept: What Is Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understand

5. The most expensive undertaking of the federal government is
- a. education.
  - b. national defense.
  - c. Social Security and Medicare.
  - d. interest on the national debt.

Correct Answer: c

LO#/text: 1.1: Define public policy and its scope

Topic/Concept: What Is Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understand

6. The most expensive undertaking of state and local governments is
- a. highways.
  - b. education.
  - c. national defense.
  - d. welfare.

Correct Answer: b

LO#/text: 1.1: Define public policy and its scope

Topic/Concept: What Is Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understand

7. The study of politics is the study of
  - a. causes of government activity.
  - b. who gets what, when, and how.
  - c. the institutional structure of government.
  - d. the consequences of societal policies.

Correct Answer: b

LO#/text: 1.2: Explain the need to study public policy

Topic/Concept: Why Study Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understanding

8. The study of public policy focuses on governmental
  - a. structure.
  - b. theory.
  - c. activity.
  - d. institutional history.

Correct Answer: c

LO#/text: 1.2: Explain the need to study public policy

Topic/Concept: Why Study Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understanding

9. Studying what the Civil Rights Act of 1964 actually says about discrimination in employment is an example of policy
  - a. description.
  - b. advocacy.
  - c. implementation.
  - d. evaluation.

Correct Answer: a

LO#/text: 1.3: Classify three learnings from policy analysis

Topic/Concept: What Can Be Learned from Policy Analysis?

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understanding

10. When we ask why public policy is what it is, we are looking at the
  - a. effects.
  - b. evaluations.
  - c. causes.
  - d. descriptions.

Correct Answer: c

LO#/text: 1.3: Classify three learnings from policy analysis

Topic/Concept: What Can Be Learned from Policy Analysis?

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand

11. Examining the consequences of public policy is often referred to as policy
- advocacy.
  - evaluation.
  - analysis.
  - description.

Correct Answer: b

LO#/text: 1.3: Classify three learnings from policy analysis

Topic/Concept: What Can Be Learned from Policy Analysis?

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understanding

12. When using test scores to measure the impact of education policy, we are taking part in
- policy analysis.
  - policy evaluation.
  - policy description.
  - behavioral science.

Correct Answer: b

LO#/text: 1.3: Classify three learnings from policy analysis

Topic/Concept: What Can Be Learned from Policy Analysis?

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Apply

13. Prescribing a direction in public policy is referred to as
- agenda setting.
  - policy advocacy.
  - policy evaluation.
  - policy analysis.

Correct Answer: b

LO#/text: 1.4: Distinguish between policy analysis and policy advocacy

Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis and Policy Advocacy

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understanding

14. The work of a policy analyst includes all of the following except
- rigorous examination of the causes of public policy.
  - systematic examination of the impact of public policy.
  - prescribing policy preferences.
  - scientifically studying public policy.

Correct Answer: c

LO#/text: 1.4: Distinguish between policy analysis and policy advocacy

Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis and Policy Advocacy

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Apply

15. Which of these would typically be the work of a policy advocate, but not a policy analyst?
- explanation
  - prescription
  - research
  - modeling

Correct Answer: b

LO#/text: 1.4: Distinguish between policy analysis and policy advocacy

Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis and Policy Advocacy

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Apply

16. Policy \_\_\_\_\_ requires the skills of rhetoric, persuasion, organization, and activism.
- analysis
  - evaluation
  - advocacy
  - expansion

Correct Answer: c

LO#/text: 1.4: Distinguish between policy analysis and policy advocacy

Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis and Policy Advocacy

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understanding

17. One problem that researchers have in their attempt to find solutions for public problems is a(n)
- inability to quantify data.
  - lack of understanding of the scientific method.
  - disagreement about what the problems are.
  - lack of understanding of the social and economic environment.

Correct Answer: c

LO#/text: 1.5: Evaluate policy analysis as a solution to America's problems

Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis and the Quest for Solutions to America's Problems

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understanding

18. In scientific terms, when we study the causes of public policy, policies become the \_\_\_\_\_ variables and their determinants become the \_\_\_\_\_ variables
- evaluation; recommendation
  - independent; dependent
  - cause; consequences
  - dependent; independent

Correct Answer: d

LO#/text: 1.5: Evaluate policy analysis as a solution to America's problems

Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis and the Quest for Solutions to America's Problems

Difficulty Level: Medium

Skill Level: Apply

19. The most serious reservation about policy analysis is the inability to make accurate predictions because of
- lack of accurate data.
  - The complexity of human behavior.
  - value conflicts among researchers.
  - the Hawthorne effect.

Correct Answer: b

LO#/text: 1.5: Evaluate policy analysis as a solution to America's problems

Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis and the Quest for Solutions to America's Problems

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understanding

20. Policy analysis is an art and a craft. It is an art because of the need for
- specialist knowledge of economics.
  - knowledge of public administration.
  - creativity in dealing with public issues.
  - statistical expertise.

Correct Answer: c

LO#/text: 1.6: Explain why policy analysis is both an art and a craft

Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis as Art and Craft

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understanding

## TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS

1. Public policy focuses on support for legislation and other government actions.

Correct Answer: False

LO#/text: 1.1: Define public policy and its scope

Topic/Concept: What Is Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understanding

2. The Great Society resulted in a dramatic shrinking in the size of the U.S. government.

Correct Answer: False

LO#/text: 1.1: Define public policy and its scope

Topic/Concept: What Is Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understanding

3. Gross domestic product is a common measure indicating a government's size.

Correct Answer: True

LO#/text: 1.1: Define public policy and its scope

Topic/Concept: What Is Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Medium

Skill Level: Apply

4. "Traditional" political science centers on behaviors such as voting and lobbying.

Correct Answer: False

LO#/text: 1.2: Explain the need to study public policy

Topic/Concept: Why Study Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Medium

Skill Level: Apply

5. The study of public policy is an aspect of political science.

Correct Answer: True

LO#/text: 1.2: Explain the need to study public policy

Topic/Concept: Why Study Public Policy?

Difficulty Level: Medium

Skill Level: Apply

6. An examination of the impact of economic policies on the president's popularity is an example of policy description.

Correct Answer: False

LO#/text: 1.3: Classify three learning's from policy analysis

Topic/Concept: What Can Be Learned from Policy Analysis?

Difficulty Level: Medium

Skill Level: Apply

7. When we study the consequences of public policy, the impacts on society are the independent variables.

Correct Answer: False

LO#/text: 1.3: Classify three learning's from policy analysis

Topic/Concept: What Can Be Learned from Policy Analysis?

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Apply

8. Policy advocacy is essentially persuasion in favor of a given public policy.

Correct Answer: True

LO#/text: 1.4: Distinguish between policy analysis and policy advocacy

Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis and Policy Advocacy

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Understanding

9. Policy analysis can be used to put an end to differences in values.

Correct Answer: False

LO#/text: 1.5: Evaluate policy analysis as a solution to America's problems

Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis and the Quest for Solutions to America's Problems

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Apply

10. Measurement of test results as a consequence of the No Child Left Behind Act is an example of the art of understanding the causes of public policy.

Correct Answer: False

LO#/text: 1.6: Explain why policy analysis is both an art and a craft

Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis as Art and Craft

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Apply

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Understanding public policy is both an art and a craft. Provide a public policy scenario—actual or imagined—and illustrate how these two modes of thought might provide solutions.

LO#/text: 1.6: Explain why policy analysis is both an art and a craft  
Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis as Art and Craft  
Difficulty Level: Moderate  
Skill Level: Analyze

2. Policy analysis is finding out what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes. Choose a governmental entity—such as the Department of the Interior—and outline what you would hope to learn about it from policy analysis.

LO#/text: 1.3: Classify three learnings from policy analysis  
Topic/Concept: What Can Be Learned from Policy Analysis?  
Difficulty Level: Moderate  
Skill Level: Apply

3. What overlap, if any, exists between the tasks of the policy analyst and the policy advocate?

LO#/text: 1.4: Distinguish between policy analysis and policy advocacy  
Topic/Concept: Policy Analysis and Policy Advocacy  
Difficulty Level: Moderate  
Skill Level: Apply

4. Why study public policy?

LO#/text: 1.2: Explain the need to study public policy  
Topic/Concept: Why Study Public Policy?  
Difficulty Level: Moderate  
Skill Level: Apply

5. Evaluate the use of government spending as an indicator of priorities.

LO#/text: 1.1: Define public policy and its scope  
Topic/Concept: What Is Public Policy?  
Difficulty Level: Difficult  
Skill Level: Evaluate

## WEBSITES

Office of the President. White House home page, with president's policy positions, speeches, press releases, etc. [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

U.S. House of Representatives. Official House Website, with links to individual House members' Websites. [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

U.S. Senate. Official Senate Website, with links to individual senators' Websites. [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

U.S. Congress on the Internet. Library of Congress Thomas search engine for finding bills and tracing their progress through Congress. <http://thomas.loc.gov>

U.S. Census Bureau. The official site of the Census Bureau, with access to all current reports—population, income and poverty, government finances, etc. [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

First Gov. U.S. government's official portal to all independent agencies and government corporations. [www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov)

Federal Judiciary. U.S. judiciary official site, with links to all federal courts. [www.uscourts.gov](http://www.uscourts.gov)

Library of Congress. Compilation of the laws of the United States. <http://thomas.loc.gov>