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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Objective</th>
<th>Client</th>
<th>Common Style</th>
<th>Time Constraints</th>
<th>General Weakness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic</strong></td>
<td>Construct theories for understanding society</td>
<td>“truth”, other scholars, journals</td>
<td>Rigorous methods for constructing and testing theories</td>
<td>Tenure!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy Research</strong></td>
<td>Predict impacts of changes in variables that can be altered by public policy.</td>
<td>Actors in the policy arena</td>
<td>Application of formal methodology to policy relevant questions</td>
<td>Some deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
<td>Define and achieve desirable future state for society</td>
<td>The public interest as professionally defined</td>
<td>Established rules and professional norms</td>
<td>Long term future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Admin.</strong></td>
<td>Efficiently execute programs established by political process</td>
<td>The public interest as embodied in mandated program</td>
<td>Managerial and legal</td>
<td>Tied to budget cycles / policy details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Journalism</strong></td>
<td>Focus public attention on societal problems</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Deadline issue, topical window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Systematic comparison and evaluation of alternatives available to public actors for solving social problems</td>
<td>Specific person or institution as decision maker.</td>
<td>Synthesis of existing research and theory to predict consequence of alternative policies</td>
<td>Analysis deadline tied to implementation schedule of policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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/cprr20/current

http://planningcommission.gov.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/welcome.html

(from Wikipedia – 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/

Journalism

www.washingtonpost.com

www.nytimes.com

http://newhouse.syr.edu/
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/  
America’s Health Insurance Plans  
http://www.ahip.org/  

Office of the Assistant Secretary, Planning and Evaluation.  
https://aspe.hhs.gov/
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.
A side tour of the language of logic and how we speak; the logical implications used in policy analysis.

Logical conditions: Necessary conditions and Sufficient conditions.

Is one thing a precondition for another thing to happen? How one condition is logically related to another condition. The first condition can be:

1) Necessary but not sufficient.
2) Sufficient but not necessary
3) Necessary and sufficient.
4) (neither necessary nor sufficient)

for the second condition to occur.

How is implementation of policy B logically related to outcome A?
A necessary condition is in the nature of a prerequisite.

Statement A is true only if another statement B is true, then “A only if B” or “If A, then B”.

If we want policy outcome A to become ‘true’, then we need to do action B to get that to happen.

B is a necessary condition for establishing the truth of A.

B is the condition, A is what we are trying to find out about.

A, our outcome, is establishing the truth of a person being a father.

If a person is a father (A), then they are a male (B).

Being male (B) is a necessary condition for being a father (A).

We are trying to find out something about what it means to be a father, B is a condition that goes along with being a father.

Being a father (A) is not required for you to be a male (B)
If Felix is a cat (A), then Felix hates baths (B).

Felix is a cat only if he hates baths.

If A (cat), then B (hates baths).

Hating baths is a necessary condition for being a cat.

Can we turn it around: If B (hates baths), then A (cat)?

If Felix hates baths, can we assume Felix is a cat?

No, Felix might be a four year old boy for example.

Felix hating baths is a necessary condition for Felix to be a cat, but it is not sufficient. It is one characteristic of being a cat, but this characteristic is shared by non-cats as well.

B must be true for A to be true but B alone being true does not guarantee us that A will be true.

Is our policy (Say Yes to Education - B) a necessary but not sufficient condition for college completion rates of City of Syracuse students to improve (A)?
Sufficient but not necessary.

Consider the situation where A is true if B is true, but A can be true when B is not true.

B is a sufficient condition for A, but B is not a necessary condition for A.

A if B.

If B, then A.

A is “one can get to Chicago from Syracuse”, B is “There is a plane that flies to Chicago from Syracuse”,

The truth of B (there is a plane) suffices for the establishment of the truth of A (one can get there from here), but B (there is a plane) is not a necessary condition for A (one can get there) to be true.

B is a sufficient condition for A but not a necessary one.

A sufficient but not necessary condition.

B is a military invasion. A is the fall of an undesirable regime. B might be sufficient but not necessary condition to achieve A. Or perhaps it is what we turn to next….
Consider where A and B imply each other. A is “it is the month of February”. B is “there are less than 30 days in the month”.

A is a necessary and sufficient condition for B, and vice versa.

A if and only if B.

There is no way for A to be true without B being true. There is no way for B to be true without A also being true.

If A is false, there is no way B is true. If B is false there is no way A is true.

It is a definition.

A necessary and sufficient condition.

The only way the regime will fall is military intervention. Military intervention is the only way to make the regime fall.