

TABLE 4-2 Steps in the Policy Analysis Process

Steps	Type of Questions	Illustrations
Define and analyze the problem	<p>What is the problem faced? Where does it exist? Who or what is affected? How did it develop? What are the major causes? How might the causes be affected by policy action?</p>	<p>How is cell phone use related to auto accidents? What is the potential to reduce accident rates through policy action? How does cell phone use compare to other distractions while driving?</p>
Construct policy alternatives ^a	<p>What policy options might be considered for dealing with the problem?</p>	<p>To reduce drivers' cell phone use, should state governments institute fines? Should states try to educate drivers on cell phone use? Is it technologically feasible to disable cell phones in a moving car?</p>
Develop evaluative criteria	<p>What criteria are most suitable for the problem and the alternatives? What are the costs of action? What is the likely effectiveness? Social and political feasibility? Equity?</p>	<p>What criteria are most important for regulation of cell phones? What options might be most effective in discouraging drivers from using phones? Will people find these options acceptable? Is it ethical to restrict individual behavior to achieve a social goal?</p>
Assess the alternatives	<p>Which alternatives are better than others? What kind of analysis might help to distinguish better and worse policy alternatives? Is the evidence available? If not, how can it be produced?</p>	<p>Are fines or education more likely to reduce drivers' cell phone use? How successful are the efforts of states and localities to regulate cell phone use? What evidence is needed to answer these questions?</p>
Draw conclusions	<p>Which policy option is the most desirable given the circumstances and the evaluative criteria? What other factors should be considered?</p>	<p>Should state governments impose stiff fines? Would fines be accepted as a legitimate action? How might the action be made more acceptable?</p>

^aMost models of the policy analysis process place the task of developing policy alternatives after the stage of identifying evaluative criteria. See Carl V. Patton and David S. Sawicki, *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1993). The precise order may not matter because the two stages tend to occur together anyway, but we think most analysts would think about policy alternatives first and then about the criteria to use in judging their merits. Studies of the policymaking process, such as John Kingdon's book, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2d ed. (New York: HarperCollins College, 1995), suggest that alternative policies are discussed in various policy communities and then judged according to various criteria to determine their acceptability and which are likely to make it to a short list of ideas to be taken seriously.

Figure 3.1 The Policy Cycle

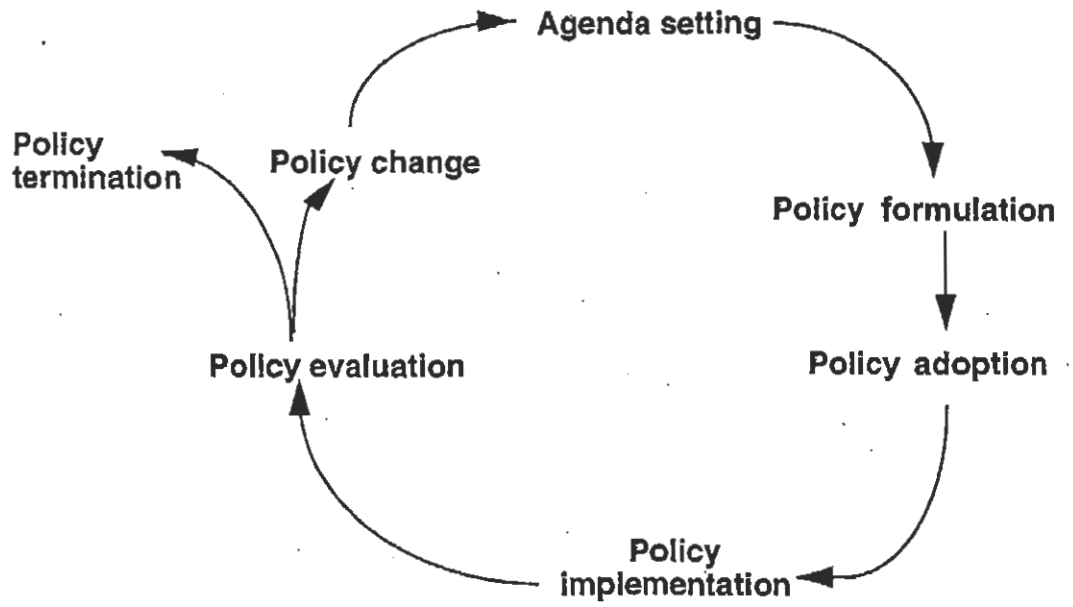


TABLE 3-1

The Policy Process Model

Stage of the Process	What It Means	Illustrations
Agenda setting	How problems are perceived and defined, command attention, and get onto the political agenda.	Energy problems rose sharply on the agenda in 2001. The Bush administration defined them in terms of an insufficient supply requiring more oil and gas drilling rather than conservation to reduce demand.
Policy formulation	The design and drafting of policy goals and strategies for achieving them. Often involves the use of policy analysis.	The 2001 tax cut reflected conflicting economic assumptions and forecasts and differing estimates of future impacts on domestic programs.
Policy legitimation	The mobilization of political support and formal enactment of policies. Includes justification or rationales for the policy action.	The 2002 farm bill reflected intense lobbying by farming interests and environmentalists to build a compromise bill all could support.
Policy implementation	Provision of institutional resources for putting the programs into effect within a bureaucracy.	Implementation of the federal Endangered Species Act has lagged for years because of insufficient funding, which reduced its effectiveness.
Policy and program evaluation	Measurement and assessment of policy and program effects, including success or failure.	Efforts to measure the effectiveness of the 1996 welfare reform policy and of the experimental use of vouchers to improve public education have produced mixed results.
Policy change	Modification of policy goals and means in light of new information or shifting political environment.	Adoption of new national security, airport security, and immigration reforms following the terrorist attacks of 2001.

Sources: Drawn primarily from Charles O. Jones, *An Introduction to the Study of Public Policy*, 3d ed. (Monterey, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 1984); and Garry D. Brewer and Peter deLeon, *The Foundation of Policy Analysis* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1983). The original policy process model can be traced to Harold Lasswell's early work on the policy sciences, "The Policy Orientation," in Daniel Lerner and Harold D. Lasswell, eds., *The Policy Sciences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1950).

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Questions for Policy Analysts at Each Stage of the Process

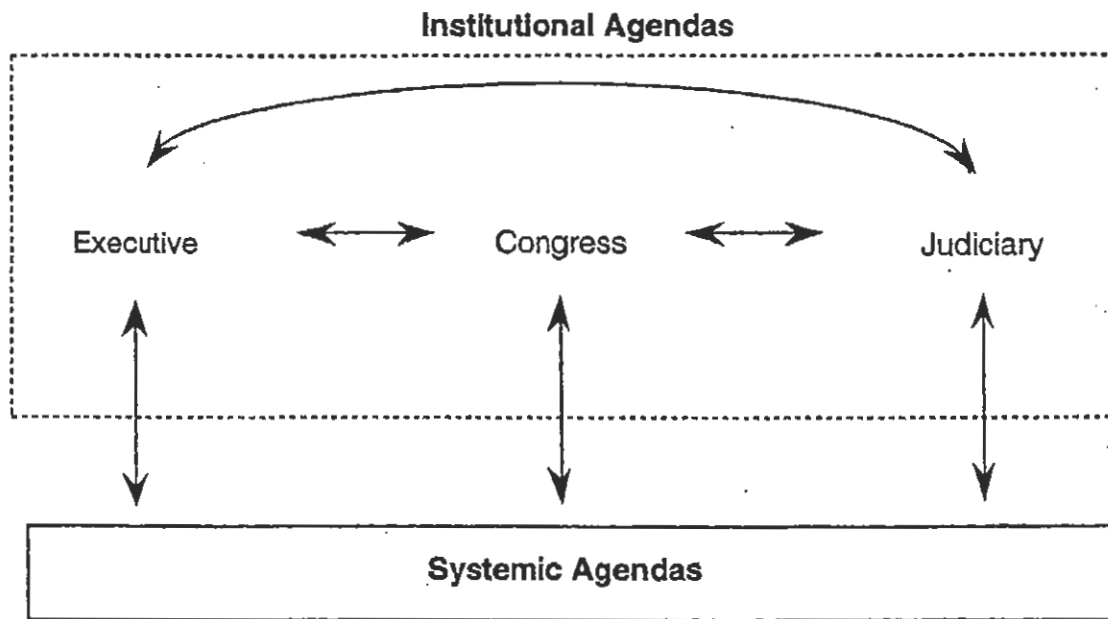
Stage of Policy Process	Policy Analysis Questions
Problem Identification	What is the problem? What will happen if we do nothing?
Evaluating Alternatives	What should the goals be? What option or mix of options offers the greatest benefits at the least cost?
Selecting Alternatives	Which option is the most viable? Which is the most cost-effective? Which is the most feasible?
Implementation	What is necessary to obtain successful implementation?
Evaluation	Is it working? Is the program cost effective? Are the outcomes equitable? Are the goals and objectives being accomplished?
Policy Change	Do the current programs need to be changed? Are new policies needed?
Termination	Is the program worth keeping?

TABLE 4-1 Orientations to Policy Analysis

Type of Analysis	Objectives	Approaches	Limitations	Examples
Scientific	Search for "truth" and build theory about policy actions and effects	Use the scientific method to test hypotheses and theories; aim for objective and rigorous analysis; policy relevance less important than advancing knowledge	May be too theoretical and not adequately address information needs of decision makers	Academic social scientists and natural scientists, National Academy of Sciences, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
Professional	Analyze policy alternatives for solving public problems	Synthesize research and theory to understand consequences of policy alternatives; evaluate current programs and their effects; aim for objectivity, but with goal of practical value in policy debate	Research and analysis may be too narrow due to time and resource constraints; may neglect fundamental causes of public problems	Brookings Institution, Urban Institute, American Enterprise Institute, General Accounting Office
Political	Advocate and support preferred policies	Use legal, economic, and political arguments consistent with value positions; level of objectivity and rigor varies; aim to influence policy debate to realize organizational goals and values	Often ideological or partisan and may not be credible; may lack analytic depth	Sierra Club, AFL-CIO, Chamber of Commerce, National Rifle Association, Heritage Foundation, CATO Institute

Source: Drawn in part from Peter House, *The Arts of Public Policy Analysis* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1982); and David L. Weimer and Aidan R. Vining, *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, 3d ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1999).

Figure 3.2 Agenda Setting in the Federal Government



Source: Adapted from Roy B. Flammig, B. Dan Wood, and John Bohte, "Attention to Issues in a System of Separated Powers: The Macrodynamics of American Policy Agendas," *Journal of Politics* 61, no. 1 (1999): 76-108.

Table 3.1 Comparison of Pluralist and Elitist Models of Agenda Setting

	<i>Pluralist model</i>	<i>Elitist model</i>
Power	Based on size of group and its access to resources	Concentrated in the hands of a few
Centers of power	Multiple	Few
Values	Shared by masses and elites	Basic consensus among elites; values of elites differ from those of masses
Social mobility	High; elites permit input from masses and confer when making a decision	Low; masses exert minimal influence over elites
Influence	Individuals can influence elites	Individuals cannot sway elites; elites are highly insulated from apathetic masses
Outcome	Depends on many compromises among competing groups	Depends on elites directing policy from top to bottom, serving their own interests

Table 3.2 Outcomes for Diffuse and Specific Costs and Benefits

<i>Costs (losers)</i>	<i>Benefits (winners)</i>	
	<i>Diffuse</i>	<i>Specific</i>
<i>Diffuse</i>	Inaction	Likely acceptance
<i>Specific</i>	Likely rejection	Conflict

TABLE 3-2 Influences on Agenda Setting

Level of Conflict	Level of Issue Saliency	
	HIGH	LOW
HIGH	Crime, gun control, abortion rights	Worst chance Population growth, energy issues, health care reform
LOW	Best chance Airline safety	Pork-barrel projects, such as research grants, water projects, agricultural subsidies