

PLS 505 – Policy Analysis
Mark T. Imperial

Exercise: The Policy Process & Rationales for Government Intervention

Directions: Using your policy project problems as a starting point, as a group try to answer the following questions. Appoint someone from your group to report out the conclusions of your analysis.

- Are your policy project problems on the institutional/governmental agenda or the systemic/noninstitutional agenda?
 - What will it take to elevate the problems higher on the institutional agenda?
 - Do pluralist or elitist models do a better job of explaining agenda setting for these problems?
 - Were any triggering or focusing events involved in elevating these issues? Can you think of a potential focusing event that might help elevate the issue?
 - What role if any has the media played in elevating the issue?
 - Are there any policy entrepreneurs/saboteurs (or interest groups) that are influencing agenda setting?
- Use the typology in table 3.2 in the reserve reading that looks at the costs and benefits of policies and whether they are specific or diffuse to answer the following
 - Place all of your problems in the proper cell in table 3.2. Keep in mind that competing policy solutions to address your problem might be located in different cells
 - If any of your cells are empty, identify a problem that could fit in the cell and the type of agenda it resides on
 - Do you agree with the findings? In other words, if the cell suggests inaction do you agree with the conclusion?
 - What role does the timing of costs and benefits play in the policy process?
 - What does this typology suggest about the importance of framing policy problems?
- For each activity, describe the rationale(s) that support government action in each case.
 - What are the main reasons that these are problems that “government” should do something about?
 - If government does act, how might it make the problem worse?
 - What role could other institutions play in addressing these problems?