What Is Policy Analysis?

Overview

- Defining policy analysis
- Policy analysis in perspective
- Fundamentals of and frameworks for policy analysis

Defining Policy Analysis

- Policy analysis is client-oriented advice relevant to public decisions and informed by social values

- Three components:
  1. Scope of advice
  2. Useful for clients
  3. Decisions driven by implicit concern for the welfare of others

Policy Analysis in Perspective

- Content is the "what" and process is the "how"
- Policy researchers versus policy analysts
  - Each faces different constraints of time, audience, and client or employer needs
  - Each may have different clients, personal motivations, and networks

Creation and Application of Public Policy Knowledge

	Primary Audience		
		Client	Epistemic Community
Primary Focus	What	Policy analysis (narrowly defined)	Policy research
	How	Stakeholder analysis	Policy process research

Analytical Roles: ASPE

- Desk officer
  - Coordinates policy in a specific program area

- Policy developer
  - Develop policy positions for department

- Research overseer
  - Help plan and monitor external research

- Firefighter
  - Drop everything and respond to internal and external requests for information and analysis

Fundamentals and Frameworks

- Skills to gather, organize, and communicate information with strict deadlines and limited access to relevant actors
- Perspective for putting social problems in context
  - When is it legitimate for government to intervene?
    - Efficiency and market failures (may also include government failures)
- Technical skills to define and assess alternative policies
- Understanding of political and organizational behavior
- Ethical frameworks to guide analysis
  - Client and personal perspectives on ethical dilemmas