

## **Players in the Policy Process**

*Providers of goods, services, or activities related to a problem*

*Consumers of goods or services (whether or not they are organized)*

*Experts with specialized knowledge*

*Advocates and lobbyists representing interests*

*Officials with authority*

### **Roles in the process**

*Inside government*

*Outside government*

## **Forms of communication in the process: Inside Government**

*One pagers*

*Memos*

*White papers*

*Legislative concept proposals*

*Legislative histories (see <http://loc.thomas.gov>)*

*Committee reports (all different kinds of committees)*

*Speeches*

*Testimonies*

## **Forms of communication: Active citizens**

*Email*

*Comments about experience*

*Testify about problems in their lives*

*Letter writing, email campaigns, phone trees*

*Form coalition of "competing groups" (Smith's term is a bit misleading)*

*Lawsuits or boycotts*

*Lobby as representatives of organizations*

**I divide the process into three phases:**

***1. Pre-analysis***

***2. Analysis***

***3. Writing and explaining***

**These are *iterative* processes, not linear**

**Pre analysis**

***Prepare***

***Plan***

***Produce comes later—in Bardach's tell your story phase***

<p><b>1. Define the problem</b></p> <p><i>Think of deficits and excesses</i>  <i>The definition should be evaluative</i></p> <p>Bardach thinks it's a good thing to consider problems in terms of <i>market failure</i> or other problems</p> <p><b>Quantify if possible</b></p> <p>This doesn't mean you have to use lots of fancy statistics!</p> <p><b>Conditions that cause problems are also problems (but this is a terminological problem)</b></p> <p><i>Missing an opportunity is a problem</i></p> <p><b>Common pitfalls in problem definition</b></p> <p>Defining the solution into the "problem"</p> <p>Uncritically assuming causal claims</p>	<p><b>Definition: Frame the Problem</b></p> <p><i>How do we know a problem exists?</i></p> <p>Focusing events</p> <p>Changes in indicators</p> <p>Sometimes you get to choose the problem.</p> <p>Why problem definition is important: it frames the debate</p> <p><b>How to define a policy problem</b></p> <p>In this instance, we are assuming purpose B</p> <p>Task 1: problem and stakeholders</p>
<p><b>2. Assemble some evidence</b></p> <p><i>Think before you collect</i></p> <p>That is, carefully consider <i>why</i> you are reading and thinking about the material you need</p> <p>Hint: you will be able to write a lot sooner than you think. You might be able to write a first draft right off the top of your head!</p> <p><b>Self control</b></p> <p>Educated guessing!</p> <p>Ask:</p> <p>"How much is it worth to me to confirm the actual difference between what I can guess and what I can learn about the world by really getting the data?"</p> <p><b>Do a literature review...</b></p> <p>But avoid too much material from advocacy groups (I would avoid it almost entirely)</p> <p><b>Survey "best practice"</b></p> <p>This is known as lesson drawing</p>	

***Use Analogies***

This is the application of one idea from a seemingly unrelated policy domain to another.

***Start Early (!!!)***

<p><b>3. Construct the alternatives</b>  <i>Start comprehensive, end up focused</i></p> <p>Avoid assessing more than 3 or 4 alternatives at the end</p> <p>Where to turn for ideas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas from already existing actors</li> <li>• Try to <i>invent</i> superior alternatives</li> <li>• “Let present trends continue undisturbed”—this is <i>not</i> the “do nothing” option</li> </ul> <p>Will anything change that will affect the problem?</p> <p>Elections</p> <p>Changes in economic data</p> <p>Budget “tightness”</p> <p>Demographic changes</p> <p><b><i>Model the system</i></b></p> <p>I take this to simply mean “understand the causal relationships”</p> <p>I find that mind-mapping and flow charting are very helpful here.</p> <p><b><i>Reduce and simplify the alternatives</i></b></p> <p>Design problems: consider them, but you won’t really get a lot of feedback of the sort Bardach describes.</p>	<p><b>This corresponds to Task 2, page 27: Specify alternative solutions and relevant criteria</b></p>
<p><b>4. Select the criteria</b></p> <p>That is, select how you will weight the various features of the alternatives</p> <p><b><i>Evaluate outcomes, not alternatives</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Criteria selection build on problem definition</i></b></p> <p>That is, the process is <i>iterative</i></p> <p>Common criteria</p> <p>Efficiency</p> <p>Equality, equity, fairness, justice</p> <p><i>Be very careful about your definitional assumptions here!</i></p> <p>Political feasibility versus technical excellence</p>	

<p>Political versus technical domination of alternative selection</p> <p>Other criteria</p> <p><i>Legality</i></p> <p><i>Political acceptability</i></p> <p><i>Robustness and improvability</i></p> <p><b><i>Focusing on primary criteria</i></b></p>	
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<p><b>5. Project the outcomes</b></p> <p><i>Projection=model+evidence</i></p> <p>Attach magnitude estimates</p> <p>Avoid the optimism problem</p> <p><i>Other guy's shoes</i></p> <p><i>Undesirable side effects, such as moral hazard, over regulation, rent seeking</i></p> <p><i>Outcomes matrix</i></p>	
<p><b>6. Confront the tradeoffs</b></p>	
<p><b>7. Decide!</b></p>	<p><b>Task 3, page 27: Recommend an alternative and explain your reasoning (also in the 8<sup>th</sup> step)</b></p>
<p><b>8. Tell the story</b></p> <p><i>There's no one way to format the output of your work</i></p> <p><i>The taxi-driver test (we also call it the elevator or business card pitch)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What medium to use?</li> <li>2. Logical narrative flow</li> </ol> <p><b>Pitfalls</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Showing the 8-fold path (showing your work)</li> <li>2. Compulsive qualifying</li> <li>3. Showing your work (sort of like 1)</li> <li>4. Listing without explaining</li> <li>5. Style (!!!)</li> </ol> <p><b>Report format</b></p> <p>Executive summary</p> <p>Improve your display of tables and graphics (read Tufte's work if you need to)</p> <p>References and Sources</p>	<p><b>Task 4: Write the document</b></p>

**Data Gathering Ideas and Hints in the Analysis Phase**

***Data sources***

**The academic literature**

Google Scholar

Ebsco

Other databases

**The popular media**

Elite media

***The New Yorker, Atlantic, Harpers, National Review, Economist, etc.***

Popular media (avoid)

***Most newsmagazines***

***Most local newspapers***

**The ultimate value of the popular media: to help you find other, better sources**

**For legislation and legislative history at the federal level**

Full text Committee hearings: Lexis-Nexis

Full text legislation: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

Full text *Congressional Record*: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

Full text federal laws:

Use [www.findlaw.com](http://www.findlaw.com). Click the “for legal professionals” tab. Click cases and codes for laws, regs, caselaw

**For legislation and legislative history at the state level**

<http://www.ncleg.net/>

Data on bills back to 1989!!

General Statutes are also available

Also use findlaw.com

**Understanding Legislative History is really important**

**Telling the story**

***Addresses a specific audience***

***Has a purpose***

***Represents authority accurately***

**And you *are* an authority!**

***Uses appropriate form***

**“Use the document type, style, and tone of presentation that are expected for the purpose and that accommodate working conditions in the setting of its reception.”**

***What are your goals in writing this paper?***

**Obviously, to demonstrate learning and get a good grade!**

**But what more?**

**To demonstrate your expertise through publishing**

**To practice the use of a technique**

**To become more expert in a field to benefit your current or potential future career**

**Measures of Excellence**

***Clear***

***Correct***

***Concise***

***Credible***