

From Weimer and Vining, *Policy Analysis*, 5th edition:

**Table 2.1** *Policy Analysis in Perspective*

<b>Paradigm</b>	<b>Major Objective</b>	<b>“Client”</b>	<b>Common Style</b>	<b>Time Constraints</b>	<b>General Weakness</b>
<b>Academic Social Science Research</b>	Construct theories for understanding society	“Truth” as defined by the disciplines; other scholars	Rigorous methods for constructing and testing theories; usually retrospective	Rarely external time constraints	Often irrelevant to information needs of decision makers
<b>Policy Research</b>	Predict impacts of changes in variables that can be altered by public policy	Actors in the policy arena; the related disciplines	Application of formal methodology to policy-relevant questions; prediction of consequences	Sometimes deadline pressure, perhaps mitigated by issue recurrence	Difficulty in translating findings into government action
<b>Classical Planning</b>	Defining and achieving desirable future state of society	“Public interest” as professionally defined	Established rules and professional norms; specification of goals and objectives	Little immediate time pressure because deals with long-term future	Wishful thinking in plans when political processes ignored
<b>The “Old” Public Administration</b>	Efficient execution of programs established by political processes	“Public interest” as embodied in mandated program	Managerial and legal	Time pressure tied to routine decision making such as budget cycles	Exclusion of alternatives external to program
<b>Journalism</b>	Focusing public attention on societal problems	General public	Descriptive	Strong deadline pressure—strike while issue is topical	Lack of analytical depth and balance
<b>Policy Analysis</b>	Systematic comparison and evaluation of alternatives available to public actors for solving social problems	Specific person or institution as decision maker	Synthesis of existing research and theory to predict the consequences of alternative policies	Strong deadline pressure—completion of analysis usually tied to specific decision	Myopia resulting from client orientation and time pressure

**Table 1: Taxonomy of “Policy Analysis”**

		CLIENT VERSUS SOCIETAL FOCUS	
		Client Focus	Academic/Societal Focus
<b>SUBSTANTIVE VERSUS PROCESS FOCUS</b>	<b>Substantive Policy/ Policy Analytic Focus</b>	<p><b>Policy Analysis (narrowly defined)</b></p> <p>Problem-solving focus</p> <p>Economics pre-eminent</p> <p>Comprehensive: problem analysis (market &amp; government failure, synthesis, solution analysis (alternatives, goals, assessment)</p> <p>Goals clear, or at least emergently clear; efficiency (cost-benefit) or efficiency, equity, government revenue-expenditure (multi-goal)</p>	<p><b>Policy Research/Policy Sciences</b></p> <p>Social science research on policy problems</p> <p>Policy problem discovery/exploration</p> <p>Solution (policy) discovery/exploration</p> <p>Broad range of social sciences, but economics, political science dominate</p> <p>Partial or fragmentary (in terms of policy problem)</p> <p>Goals contestable</p>
	<b>Policy Process Focus</b>	<p><b>Political/Organizational Analysis (or Stakeholder Analysis)</b></p> <p>Political, organizational, and inter-organizational analysis (including networks)</p> <p>Relevant for both adoption and implementation</p> <p>Strategic client focus</p> <p>Often informal and unwritten</p> <p>Primarily descriptive and predictive, rather than normative: goal is adoption and implementation</p>	<p><b>Policy Process Research</b></p> <p>All social science research, but dominated by political science research</p> <p>Distributional and re-distributional focus (iron triangles, etc)</p> <p>Theory somewhat contestable: interest group theory, advocacy coalition, path dependency, etc, but converging on contingent and comprehensive theory</p>

Source: Authors.