

## APPENDIX B      PROBLEM DEFINITION ASSIGNMENT

POL 406/466  
Shumavon

SPRING 2005  
W/F 9:00-12:00

I want a 4-5 page paper that identifies the problem that your group is addressing. I expect the paper to identify the different ways in which one might identify the problem. I expect that your paper will be able to identify how others have defined the problem.

I want a thorough explanation of why you have defined the problem the way that you have. What is the rationale? What is the logic? I expect that you would offer arguments as to why your definition is appropriate and why other definitions are inadequate. I also expect that you would be able to anticipate the challenges from others and counter those.

The definition of the policy problem can be defined as a detailed and operational description of the difference between the existing situation and the desired situation. This description should be made as concrete and detailed as possible, as to allow for a good referencing. When a quantitative description is not (fully) possible, the differences should be expressed qualitatively.

There are several sources that might help you in your problem definition. Three are listed below:

- Review Pages 1-10 in Bardach (Step One: Defining the Problem)
- Review Dunn (handout: "Elements of a Policy Paper" Numbers 8-18)
- A shorter list of questions from E. S. Quade offers an additional set of questions to address:
  - 1 How did the situation arise? Why is it a problem?
  - 2 Who are the people who believe it to be a problem?
  - 3 Why is a solution important? If an analysis is carried out, what will be done with it? Will anybody be able to act on the recommendations?
  - 4 What should a solution look like? What sort of solution is acceptable?
  - 5 Is it the right problem anyway? Might it not be just a manifestation or a symptom of a much larger or deeper problem? Would it be better to tackle this larger problem if there is one?
  - 6 Analytic resources are always limited; at this stage does it seem that there would be a return from the study effort that would be justified, or would the analytic effort be better applied elsewhere?