



Why might policymakers ignore your evidence? How can you respond?

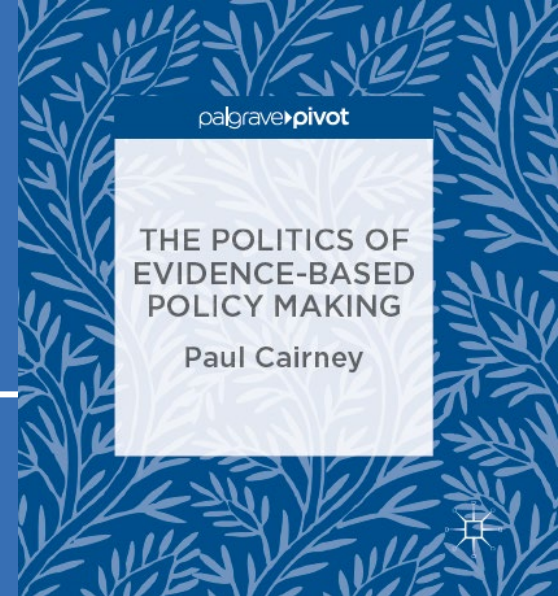
Paul Cairney

1. 'The evidence' is contested

Policymakers and researchers have different ideas about what counts as good evidence

There are many legitimate sources of policy relevant knowledge

There are many 'policymakers' spread across many levels and types of government





ARTICLE

DOI: 10.1057/s41599-017-0046-8

OPEN

How to communicate effectively with policymakers: combine insights from psychology and policy studies

Paul Cairney¹ & Richard Kwiatkowski²

2. Policymakers must ignore almost all evidence

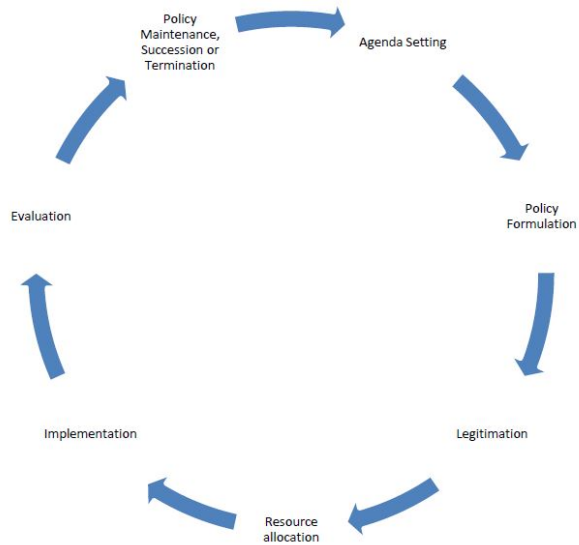
‘Bounded rationality’ prompts 2 shortcuts:

1. to set goals and identify the best sources of information

2. to use gut-level, habitual, emotional, or belief-driven short cuts

1 reduces uncertainty. 2 reduces ambiguity?

3. They do not control the policy process: it is not a simple cycle or set of linear stages



ALL FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES IN THE POLICY CYCLE



Roadmap and impact assessment: The Commission announces upcoming work on policies and legislation.

4 weeks

Roadmap: The Commission announces an evaluation of an existing individual policy (evaluation) or a whole policy area (fitness check).

4 weeks

Public consultation of citizens and stakeholders on how well the policy worked on the ground.

12 weeks (online questionnaire)

Lighten the load: Citizens and stakeholders can share ideas at any time on how existing EU laws and initiatives can be simplified and improved to be more effective and reduce the burden.

Always open

Public consultation of citizens and stakeholders on the scope, priorities and added value of EU action for new initiatives.

12 weeks (online questionnaire)

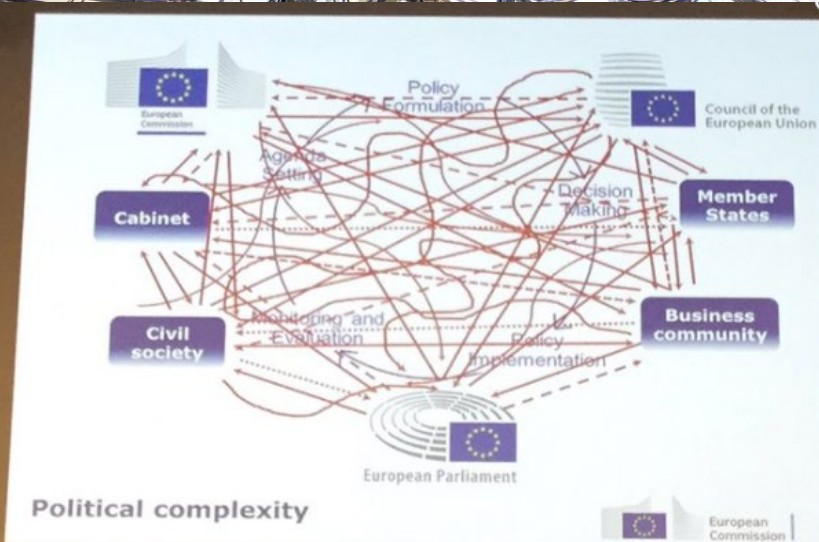
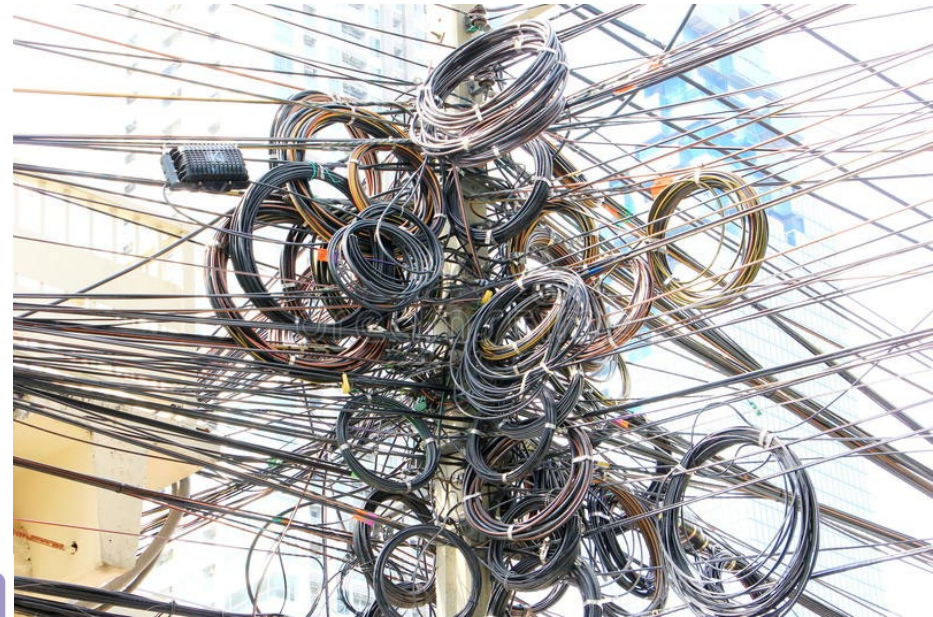
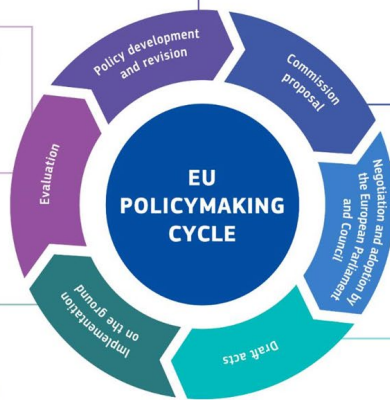
Once adopted by the College of Commissioners it is open for feedback, which is then shared with the European Parliament and Council.

8 weeks

Implementing act: Set conditions that ensure that EU laws are applied uniformly.

Delegated act: Supplement or amend non essential parts of EU legislative acts.

4 weeks





Initial take-home message:

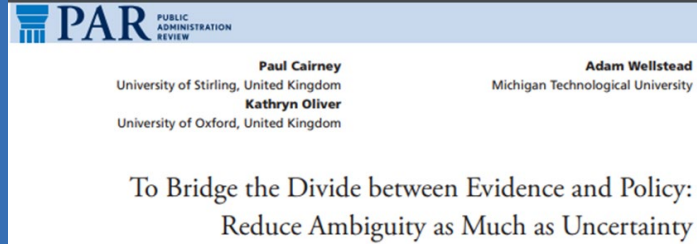
1. the politics of policymaking
2. the complexity of policymaking systems



IQWIG Question: what can you do?

How can scientists effectively incorporate evidence-based insights into political decision-making processes, given the complexity and dynamics of political systems?





Simple responses, also known as Herculean tasks

Find out where the action is ('actors')

Learn the rules ('institutions')

Learn the language/ currency ('ideas')

Build trust and form alliances ('networks')

Exploit changing conditions, crises, or events





Learning from policy analysis texts

1. Address a problem *defined by your client*
2. Generate solutions that are *politically feasible*
3. Select criteria (*value choices*) to evaluate (e.g. equity, efficiency)
4. Predict their outcomes (*manage uncertainty*)
5. Recommend a solution (i.e. *give clear advice*)

(and keep it catchy, concise, timely, etc.)



IQWIG Question: how can you be relational?

How can scientists establish long-term relationships and networks to maximise the impact of their research on policy?

How to be an insider: 1. What does it mean?

-
1. Core insider
 2. Specialist insider
 3. Peripheral insider
 4. Outsider by (a) choice, or (b) ideology

2. What influences insider status?

1. Support a government's frame or policy
2. Develop resources: representation, importance to economy/ society/ delivery
3. Following the 'rules of the game' in each venue ...

3. Examples of 'rules of the game' (from studies of interest groups)

1. Define a problem narrowly (limit participation)
2. Keep debates in-house
3. Present modest demands
4. Accept short-term losses
5. Do not criticise the outcomes in public

Questions for reflection

How do these 'rules of the game' relate to:

1. Rules followed by researchers?
2. Principles of science advice?

E.g. independence, integrity, openness,
responsibility and accountability



IQWIG Question: should you tell stories?

What role do narratives and emotional appeals play in communicating scientific findings to policymakers?

The ladder of ethical engagement



NPF and MSA: tell stories and await opportunities



ACF: romanticise your cause, demonise your opponents



2007 Advocacy Coalition Framework Flow Diagram

Policy monopolies: frame issues to limit participation

170

James L. True, Bryan D. Jones, and Frank R. Baumgartner

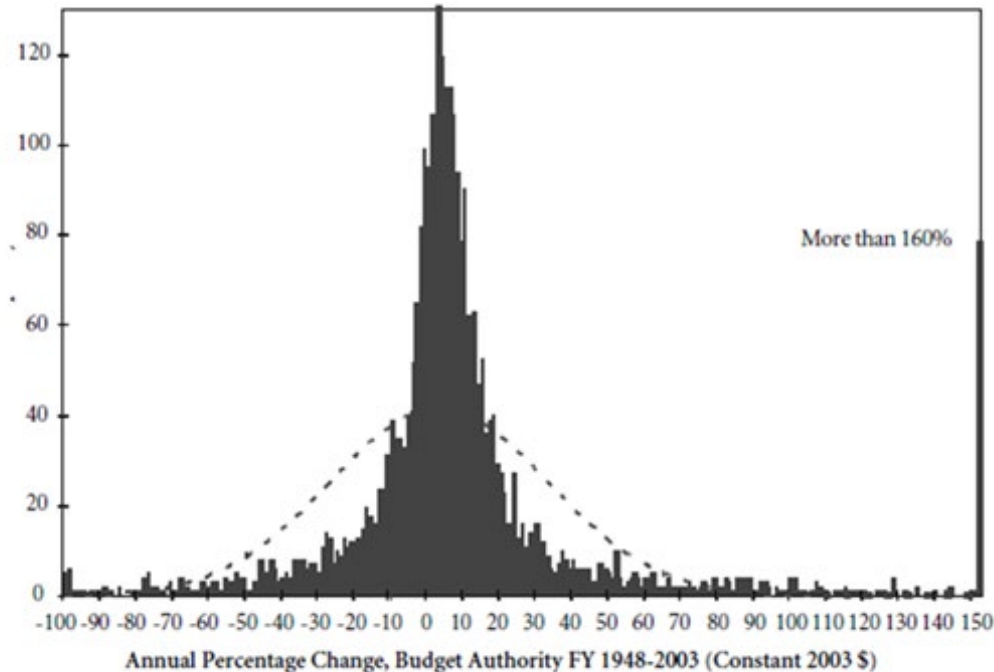


FIGURE 6.2 Annual Percentage Change in U.S. Budget Authority for Office of Management and Budget Programmatic Subfunctions, FY 1947 through FY 2003
SOURCE: Calculated from data made available through the Policy Agendas Project, Center for American Politics and Public Policy, University of Washington. (<http://www.policyagendas.org/>).

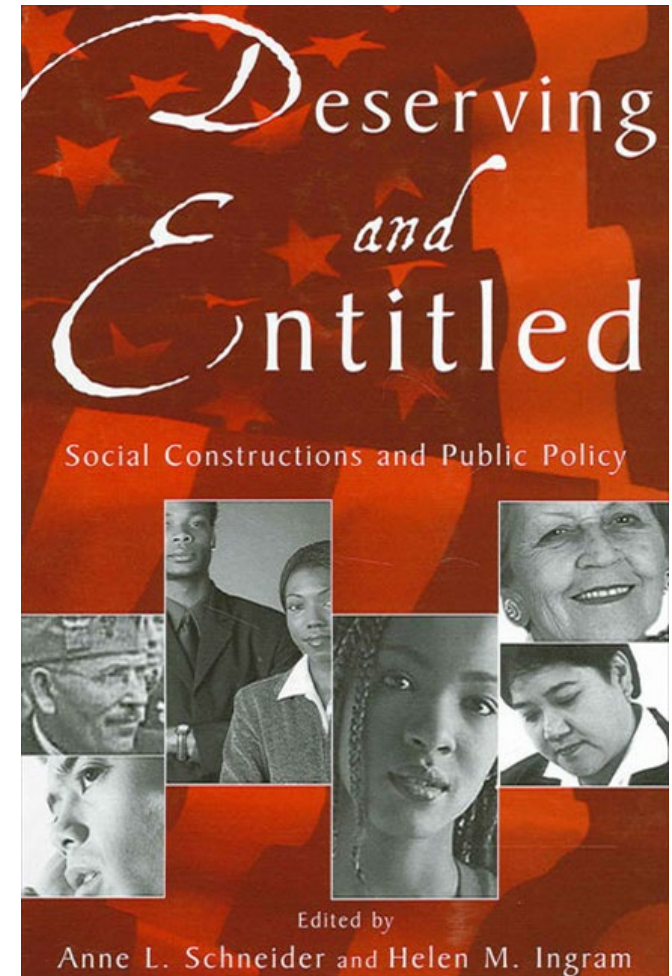
Exploit stereotypes

Cherry-pick evidence

Reward and punish

Depoliticise

Skew citizenship



IQWIG 2025

UNIVERSITY of
STIRLING



Thank you

Paul Cairney

p.a.cairney@stir.ac.uk

BE THE DIFFERENCE

Further readings recommended by Paul Cairney

What can you do when policymakers ignore
your evidence? | Paul Cairney: Politics &
Public Policy

politics of COVID-19 experts: comparing
winners and losers in Italy and the UK |
Policy and Society | Oxford Academic