# T07P12 / Practices of evidence use: empirical insights from different policy-making contexts

**Topic :** T07 / POLICY DESIGN, POLICY ANALYSIS, EXPERTISE AND EVALUATION
**Chair :** Eleanor MacKillop (Cardiff University)
**Second Chair :** James Downe (Cardiff University)
**Third Chair :** Hannah Durrant (Wales Centre for Public Policy, Cardiff University)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The belief that improved use of evidence, or knowledge, will lead to better policy is often taken for granted and has been a powerful rallying point for decades across academia and policy. Many countries have attempted to put in place systems and practices for evidence to inform policy, with some Anglo-Saxon countries investing vast resources in this area (e.g., What Works Clearinghouses in the US and What Works Centres in the UK to name a few).

Despite decades of research and investment, practical examples of evidence use and evaluation of its impact on policy continue to raise thorny questions and are relatively underexplored outside health. Although there is a growing scholarship on Evidence Informed Policy Making (EIPM), it is generally situated in a positivist tradition, which often mutes or ignores the role of politics, framing policy-making as a mechanistic and objective process. The meaning of evidence and its use are often seen as being unproblematic. The critical empirical research which does exist is often based on a single policy area e.g., clinical research, health care, or social work – which makes it difficult to generalise (Smith, 2013; Bache, 2020; Cairney, 2016; Parkhurst et al., 2018).

This panel will discuss and examine how evidence is currently being used in different contexts across the world, so that we can build better understanding of the practices and systems of evidence use. Many scholars in the field – and practitioners – recognise that evidence use can be difficult and is subject to multiple pressures – e.g., political agendas, elections, time, costs and other resource issues – and that evidence should be understood as one cog amongst many others in the making of policy. By drawing on research from different contexts and perspectives, especially with comparative analyses, we aim to reflect on the different practices of evidence use and their impact.

We welcome papers that advance understanding of the practices of evidence use in any way, providing either new empirical, theoretical, methodological, or comparative insights. Papers might examine the practices and/or politics of evidence use, and questions relating to the impact of evidence on policy. Questions include:

o What are the practices of evidence mobilisation and wider systems of evidence use that currently exist in different contexts – country, government setting, different levels of government – and how do they work? (Comparative papers are particularly welcome).
o How do different political systems and cultures influence how evidence is used?
o How is evidence reconciled with other factors in the policy-making process such as resources, political agendas, and competing interests?
o How have perceptions of evidence use in different contexts been challenged, adapted and/or changed during or following the Covid-19 pandemic?
o What innovative methods are currently being used in different countries to measure the impact of evidence use?

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

Despite decades of research and investment, practical examples of evidence use and evaluation of its impact on policy continue to raise thorny questions and are relatively unexplored outside health. We are interested in different perspectives and practices of evidence mobilisation and use in policy which do not sit strictly fit within the EIPM tradition and reflect a critical understanding of how the policy process works.

Papers may discuss any question relevant to the panel's topic, for instance including some of those below:

o What are the practices of evidence mobilisation and wider systems of evidence use that currently exist in different contexts – country, government setting, different levels of government – and how do they work? (Comparative papers are particularly welcome).
o What are the main issues relating to the systems of evidence use in generating, synthesising and/or implementing evidence in different countries?
o How do different political systems and cultures influence how evidence is used?
o How is evidence reconciled with other factors in the policy-making process such as resources, political agendas, and competing interests?
o How have perceptions of evidence use in different contexts been challenged, adapted and/or changed during or following the Covid-19 pandemic?
o What innovative methods are currently being used in different countries to measure the impact of evidence use?
o How can learning from different theories and disciplines – e.g., political science, public administration, science and technology studies – help improve understanding of evidence use in practice?
This panel aims to start a conversation with interested academics in the field on developing a publication such as an edited book – on the practices of evidence use – which would include critical insights and case studies of evidence use in practice.

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## Session 1 Practices of knowledge mobilisation

Wednesday, June 28th 08:00 to 10:00 (POD367)

### (Virtual) The potential of research-practice collaborations in supporting evidence mobilisation: Preliminary insights from the Glasgow Child Poverty Pathfinder

Magriet Cruywagen (University of Glasgow)

Des McNulty

This paper draws together preliminary insights from an ongoing research-practice collaboration between a team from the University of Glasgow and the Glasgow City Council with partners from across the public and third sector as part of a Scottish Government Child Poverty pathfinder. The pathfinder was developed based on learning from earlier projects including Glasgow Helps, Financial Inclusion Support Officers (FISO) in schools and other interventions which departed from conventional forms of service delivery in response to contextual changes such as the effects of the pandemic, cost of living pressures and other emerging challenges that are affecting families and children.

Prior to the pathfinder, the research team had worked with Council staff, delivery partners and service users, as part of commissioned evaluations and service design studies, to better understand their experiences of the Glasgow Helps and FISO interventions. This research enabled quantitative measures of impact such as the financial gain of increased take up of entitlements such as free school meals to be supplemented through qualitative and organisational learning approaches, including the systematic gathering of tacit and explicit knowledge generated through the piloting processes, which was fed into service design and evaluability assessments, creating a culture of continuous improvement.

The pathfinder's research-practice collaboration, which builds on these evaluations and service design studies, seeks to anchor learning, reflection and systematic evidence-gathering and mobilization across the pathfinder's programme of work by combining mixed methods social research with systemic coaching, capacity-building and consulting. As the research-practice collaboration has evolved, the research team have worked closely with the pathfinder's delivery team to critically engage with existing practices of evidence gathering and mobilisation as well as wider systems of evidence use in the Glasgow City Council and other organisations involved in the pathfinder, while exploring how these approaches could be challenged, adapted and/or transformed through multi-agency collaboration.

Key aspects that will be highlighted are:
- How disruption of patterns of systems delivery through the pandemic has, after nearly a decade of little progress, enabled innovation and enabled application of the Christie principles in service design through the pathfinder – including a focus on prevention and person-centred delivery of public services
- The role of relationship- and trust-building in establishing a foundation for sustainable evidence mobilisation beyond specific interventions, programmes of work or campaigns
- Preliminary evidence on how broadening shared operational definitions of data and evidence and integrating the gathering of evidence in every part of public service design, delivery and evaluation can translate barriers to change into enablers
- The potential of conversation-led policymaking and service delivery: investing time in listening to citizens and actors across different sectors, building shared understandings and ensuring that the advantages of collaboration are made explicit allows better targeting of resource, improving outcomes and bolstering efficiency in public services delivery
- Changing mindsets and fostering this discipline within and across organisations and specific services, activities and/or interventions

## Practices of knowledge mobilisation in local policymaking and public service delivery

Rosie Havers (Cardiff University)

Hannah Durrant (Wales Centre for Public Policy, Cardiff University)

James Downe (Cardiff University)

Steve Martin (Cardiff University)

This paper provides an empirical analysis of knowledge mobilisation processes in local policy and practice contexts, to critically assess whether existing literature adequately describes what actually happens on the ground. We conducted interviews which employed a storytelling approach with individuals from 15 UK knowledge brokering initiatives working across diverse policy areas at the interface of research and local policy/practice settings. Our analysis demonstrates the importance of informal, iterative and relational processes in creating and mobilising evidence that is deemed usable in local policy/practice contexts. This involves early, active and continuous engagement with the local policymakers, practitioners and contexts for which evidence is being produced. The subsequent integration of different evidence types (e.g., research-based, professional, lived experience) was considered essential to effective local knowledge mobilisation but challenged engrained, positivist conceptions of what counts as evidence. These findings have practical and epistemological implications – both for the work of knowledge brokers and for our understanding of the complexities of local knowledge mobilisation.

The messy processes and practices highlighted in our research are reflected in knowledge mobilisation literature which has moved from describing linear, transactional processes of evidence delivery, to complex, interactive processes through which evidence is (re)produced or transformed (Best and Holmes 2010). However, this literature often remains underpinned by positivist notions of evidence – assumptions pervasive in discussion of evidence-based policy/practice in the UK – that objective evidence is achievable, desirable and impactful. Our research exposes a key tension between such assumptions and complex, interactive processes local knowledge mobilisation, which limits our ability to uncover and understand these, and to capture and improve their impact. Knowledge brokers described how practices they considered important to making evidence 'usable' in local policy/practice contexts (e.g., integrating different forms of evidence and expertise), conflicted with (primarily external) expectations that evidence rigour equated to 'objectivity'. This implied a need to avoid or ignore complex, interactive processes. Subsequently, participants called for a reconceptualisation of rigour, not as the absence of these processes, but the need to explicitly capture and codify them and their influence. This extends existing critiques of commitment to evidence-based policymaking in pursuit of a non-ideological assessment of 'what works', which suggest that it might not work, because of the politics and wider factors shaping decision making and evidence itself (Boswell 2017; Boaz et al 2008). Rather, our research suggests that this starting point supports a reconceptualisation of rigour fundamental to understanding how evidence-informed policy making works, whether it works, and how it might work better.

This research looks in-depth at practices of knowledge mobilisation at local level but lacks direct comparison to national policymaking contexts. This could shed light on what (if anything) is different at local level and what (if any) learning might be more widely applicable. Further, this research has only captured perspectives from one type of actor among many involved in highly interactive knowledge mobilisation processes. Future research exploring how these are experienced from policymaker and practitioner perspectives would be valuable for better understanding the role(s), perception(s) and ultimately impact(s) of evidence in practice.

## An exploratory study of the use of evidence in policy making in South Africa

Tyanai Masiya (University of Pretoria)

Adeline Sibanda (University of Pretoria)

**An exploratory study of the use of evidence in policy making in South Africa**

This paper examines the use of evaluative evidence in policy making in South Africa. Extant research reveals that there is limited documentation on how evidence is accessed, examined and synthesised to inform policy making in the South African context. However, studies in the past two decades have established that use of evaluative evidence increases transparency and accountability in policy making. It also provides information and data for policy makers to learn what worked or did not work in previous programmes and policies, resulting in the development of improved policies for better results. In view of the developmental challenges facing South Africa, the use of evaluative evidence is critical because it can

contribute to accountability, transparency as well as equality and equity in the distribution of resources. However, to be meaningful, evaluative evidence should contribute to evidence-based decision making that reflects the context and lived realities within the African public policy environment. The research utilised a qualitative approach which permits "in-depth and interpreted understanding" of the policy making process and the use of evidence. The case study of South Africa was used, which allowed in-depth analysis of specific policies to understand the processes, complexities and peculiarities of each policy in the way evidence has been used. Secondary documents were drawn from academic sources, policy documents, evaluation reports among other sources. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. This paper reveals that there are weaknesses in the systematic collection and use of evidence in the policy process which affects the effectiveness of service delivery by the South African Government. There is also a limited understanding of the value of evidence and identification of evidence gaps to inform policy by policy makers. Furthermore, there is mistrust between "evidence generators" such as research institutions and evaluators which emanates from the selective use of evidence in policy making. The paper concludes that the use of evidence in South Africa remains a challenge, despite the developments that are taking place in the supply side of evidence and the considerable investment in its evaluation system.

## (Virtual) Organizational and individual determinants of Evidence Informed Policy Making. Empirical insights from Belgium

Pieter Raymaekers (Public Governance Institute KU Leuven)

Koen Migchelbrink (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

Valerie Pattyn (Institute of Public Administration - Leiden University)

Peter De Smedt (Flemish Adminstration)

Contemporary policy-making contexts are complex and put additional demands on public officials to use the best available evidence to guide decisions about policies (Head, 2016; Heinrich, 2007; Jennings & Hall, 2012; OECD, 2020). A large body of conceptual literature and systematic reviews shows that there are a myriad factors influencing the process and practices of evidence use in policy (Cairney, 2016; Newman et al., 2017; Parkhurst, 2017). However, the relationships between barriers, facilitators and evidence use are not always clear (Capano & Malandrino, 2022) With empirical studies often focusing on a subset of variables, and dealing with different policy-making settings (with a bias to Anglo-Saxon contexts though), it is difficult to accurately assess the relative importance of specific determinants, especially those relating to the meso (organizational) and micro (individual) levels of analysis.

In this study, we address this caveat by systematically and empirically investigating the role of a wide range of meso and micro level determinants on evidence informed policy making. We rely on a cross-sectional online survey among all public officials with policy responsibilities employed at the Flemish (Belgian) government (N = 1550). The Flemish government has a classic Napoleonic administrative tradition (Kuhlmann & Wollmann, 2019; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017) and can be conceived as a case of a consensus-style knowledge regime with neo-corporatist traits (Pattyn et al., 2022; Strassheim & Kettunen, 2014). Respondents (n = 438) cover a wide range of policy domains and government departments, such as budget, education, environment, health, work and mobility. We use and conceptually replicate the Norm of Evidence and Research in Decision-making (NERD-6) scale, developed by Hall & Van Ryzin (2019), to capture the level and the nature of evidence informed policy making across organizational and functional settings. In regard to explanatory variables we investigate the role of organizational culture, capacity and context as institutional determinants and we use public officials' individual capabilities, personal beliefs, professional characteristic and personal characteristics as individual determinants.

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## Session 2Politics of evidence use

### (Virtual) The politics behind evidence use: an analysis of policy post-exceptionalism in Swiss Pesticide Policymaking

Eva Lieberherr (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology)

Evidence-based policymaking (EBPM) assumes a direct link between scientific evidence, policy decisions, and outcomes (Cairney, 2016). The "ideal-type"-EBPM typically presumes a mechanistic process between evidence use by policymakers and improved policy, whereby it is assumed that policymakers can easily gather and understand scientific information and make informed decisions (ibid). However, constraints faced by policymakers such as their capacity to process scientific evidence, having enough time, or their uncertainty affect their capability of using scientific evidence. While their impacts might vary depending on actors' motivation, these constraints can also cause policymakers to take shortcuts by drawing on familiar sources or aligning information to their beliefs (Hofmann et al., 2022). EBPM is particularly interesting to study in contexts of (de)politicization, where the latter relates to the process or strategy of making something the subject of public policymaking (or not) (Feindt, Schwindenhammer and Tosun, 2020). We thus focus on policy (post) exceptionalism, a concept describing the political (de)legitimization for the (non)special ("exceptional") treatment of a sector, for example agriculture (Daugbjerg and Feindt, 2017). Policy post-exceptionalism characterizes the partial departure of exceptionalist policies and the emerging politics in the analytical dimensions ideas, interests, and institutions (Daugbjerg and Feindt, 2017). Actors wanting to influence policy may have different opportunities to use scientific evidence as a means to pursue (de-)politicization strategies as the different legislative and executive phases of the policy process might enable different actors to engage. However, it remains unclear how these phases differ in terms of how scientific evidence is used in the analytical dimensions regarding (de-)politicization. Therefore, we study the question of how scientific evidence is used in relation to ideas, interests, and institutions for different phases of a policy process in the context of (de-)politicization? We answer this question by analyzing Swiss agricultural policy and more specifically the case of a Swiss parliamentary initiative aiming at pesticide risk reduction. The analysis reveals that scientific evidence was used in connection with ideas, interests, and institutions that either justify or challenge the exceptional status of the agricultural sector fostering high-intensity agricultural production. However, the evidence base itself was not debated extensively. Instead, we find that the actors gather evidence that highlights a certain aspect of reality that is in line with their ideas and beliefs. Additionally, we see that some actors collaborate in the executive phase of the parliamentary initiative, citing the same publications and using similar arguments in their consultation responses. However, especially in the legislative phase, we find that scientific evidence is one of many sources of information that policymakers draw upon. We finally argue that the critical examination of the meaning of scientific evidence under different lenses (e.g. by different actors) is valuable and necessary, as scientific evidence use by itself, is a political act.

### (Virtual) Rent control policy: can the tension between democracy and expertise be reconciled?

Alex Marsh (University of Bristol)

Households across the globe are facing substantial housing affordability pressures. Many of those living in the private rental sector are carrying a substantial rent burden, which has implications for their ability to maintain an adequate standard of living after meeting their housing costs. Many national (eg Scotland), state (eg Oregon), and municipal (eg Berlin, Paris, Barcelona) governments have not only faced popular

pressure to introduce or strengthen systems of rent regulation but have acted in the face of such pressures to change policy to seek greater control over rents. Yet, at the same time, expert opinion among housing economists is, at most, cautious and, at least, overtly hostile towards rent control as a policy intervention. This position is not typically founded on disagreement with the objective of improving housing affordability. Rather it flows from concerns that rent control is not an effective mechanism for doing so and can have substantial negative side effects on the housing market. While the evidence base regarding rent control is more equivocal, nuanced and contestable than many summaries would suggest, there appears to be a fundamental tension here between policy that responses directly to popular pressure and policy that seeks to be "evidence-based". Rent control therefore provides a vivid contemporary example of the tensions that can exist between potential influences on the policy process. This paper explores these tensions, drawing on theories of the policy process and of evidence use, to reflects on whether – or under what circumstances – they might be reconciled. It draws on recent debates over the introduction of greater rent regulation in Scotland and the work of the Living Rent City Commission in Bristol.

## The effects of political attention and conflict on the use of information in the European Commission's Directorates-Generals

Lise Frehen (University of Portsmouth)

The last years have seen a growth in the evidence-based policymaking movement, both in the literature and in policy practices. This trend emphasizes the use of credible evidence in policymaking, which poses the question of what counts as evidence for policymakers, but also who provides it, and how it fits into the policymaking process that often contains a political dimension. Moreover, while the literature on evidence-based policymaking draws particular attention to the use of science to design more effective policies, at the same time there is an emphasis on the importance of involving stakeholders in policy decisions, with the goal of improving their implementation once adopted. In sum, the evidence-based trends raise several questions. First, what kind of evidence is used and who provides it? Second, what weight is given to other types of information besides evidence? Finally, how does the weight given to different types of information vary and how can this variation be explained?

In this paper, we study the use of information by EU policy officers during the Juncker Commission (2015-2019). To do so, we use impact assessment reports, which contain the policy analysis leading to policy proposals. Following the Better Regulation guidelines, EU policy officers are expected to adopt 'a way of working to ensure that political decisions are prepared in an open, transparent manner, informed by the best available evidence and backed by the comprehensive involvement of stakeholders' (European Commission, Better Regulation Guidelines, 2017, p.4). To this end, they are officially expected to combine different sources of information when conducting their policy analysis. We built a dataset containing the footnotes of impact assessment reports (N=188) and coded them in two ways. First, the nature of a piece of information, i.e., its function for policymaking (evidence, law, stakeholder opinions). Second, the origin of the information, i.e. the actor who provided the information to the policy process.

Our results show that the use of evidence and scientific research varies across proposals and Directorate-Generals. In a second step, we also investigate the effect of political attention and conflict on the use of information. In doing so, this paper contributes to a better understanding of a crucial component of the EU legislative process, namely the formulation of policy proposals. In addition, we also improve knowledge about impact assessments in general by describing the weight and sources of information and comparing them across policy areas. More generally, we contribute to the literature on the use of evidence and other sources of information by examining the effect of political attention on it.

## (Virtual) Evidence uses for the adoption of the Sugar Tax and Front-of-Package food labelling systems in Mexico

Anette Bonifant Cisneros (City University of London)

How evidence is used for policy formulation is subject to longstanding disputes. According to Boaz et al. (2019) how science made its way into society began with the seminal contribution of Thomas Kuhn's (1962) The structure of scientific revolutions, and Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar's (1979) Laboratory life. These publications 'have challenged [the] understanding of how research or science create knowledge and have had an impact way beyond their primary fields' (p.6). Contributions made by Everett Rogers (1962) and Carol Weiss (1979) added to Kuhn and Latour's work with the application of evidence in society and public policy. In particular, Weiss' (1979) publication of *The many meanings of research utilization* offered a better understanding of the uses of evidence in public policy and continues to be one of the most cited publications in the area.

Based on Weiss's (1979) work, Weible (2008) advanced on the uses of evidence within the Advocacy

Coalition Framework (ACF), a theory of the policy processes which emphasizes that evidence is a political resource that can be 'acquired, learned, and applied in policymaking' (Weible, 2008, p.619) politically by advocates. Moreover, evidence has learning, political, and instrumental uses but is also utilized for awareness-raising by policymakers (Funke et al., 2021).

This paper presents a comparative-case study on the uses of evidence deployed by advocates and decision-makers for the adoption of The Sugar Tax and food labelling systems in Mexico. Sources of evidence consisted of interviews with 32 policy stakeholders and documentary materials which were thematically analyzed applying the ACF as the theoretical lens that allows for capturing the complexity of the policymaking process.

My results suggest that diverse uses of information by policymakers coexist in a policy area, moreover, the different uses of information are linked to the level of conflict and maturity of the policy discussion arena. The Sugar Tax case illustrated that when a policy problem is recently discussed in decision-making venues, evidence plays awareness-raising and political functions to gain public support and counteract opponents. However, when policies have had a long discussion process, evidence contributes to shaping decision-makers' preferences as was observed in the transition between food labelling systems.

This paper contributes to the general objectives of panel T07P12 of discussing and examining "how evidence is currently being used in different contexts (…)." Moreover, by employing the theoretical lens of the ACF it aims to contribute to the question "How is evidence reconciled with other factors in the policy-making process such as resources, political agendas, and competing interests?"

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## Session 3What counts as evidence

Wednesday, June 28th 15:50 to 17:50 (POD367)

### Academic expert engagement with policy: examining the role played by a knowledge brokering organisation.

Grace Piddington (University of Bristol)

This paper reports early findings from a study to better understand the contribution that knowledge brokering organisations – such as the Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) – make to academic expert's experience of policy engagement and research impact, and the implications for their research agenda and research productivity.

There is widespread belief that the use of research-based evidence in policy decision-making will lead to better outcomes. However, realising the assumptions of evidence-based policy making (EBPM) remains an allusive prospect, with challenges for both the research and policy side (Sanderson, 2002; Boaz et al, 2008; Boswell, 2017). Multiple barriers to EBPM have been identified, including differences in policy and research timescales; communication preferences; motivations and priorities driving research generation and use; professional incentives and rewards; skills and capacities; and responsibilities and attitudes to risk (Oliver et al, 2014; Langer et al, 2016). One well cited challenge that policymakers are purported to face is the lack of policy relevant research, leading to calls for research to be better designed and contextualised – assessed, translated, and transformed, etc. - for policy audiences and settings (Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006). Equally, questions remain about the capability and motivation of policymakers to engage with research evidence and claims of evidence-resistant policymaking persist (Cairney, 2019). Responding to these challenges has shifted attention to the role of knowledge brokers and other intermediaries (MacKillop et al, 2020) that work between the worlds of research and policy (Caplan, 1979) to bring evidence to policy settings, bring policy issues to research settings, and seek to increase both research utility and evidence utilisation.

One such intermediary knowledge broking organisation is the WCPP. Established in 2013[1], it is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (a research funding body in the UK), Welsh Government, and Cardiff University, to provide ministers, civil service, and public service providers in Wales with high quality evidence and independent advice for better policy making and public service delivery. The WCPP works with academic experts across the UK and internationally to identify, convene, and mobilise research relevant to Welsh policy and public service priorities. While there is a growing body of research on how these bodies function (MacKillop et al, 2020), less is known about their impact on both policymakers and researchers (Oliver et al, 2022). This paper focuses on the latter; specifically, academic expert's perspectives on the role the WCPP plays in brokering research to policy, their motivations for engaging, how their evidence and expertise was treated, the benefits, challenges, tensions, and compromises involved in working with a knowledge broker, and the effects on research impact and the implications for future research? We report findings from a survey and semi-structured interviews with academics that have engaged with the WCPP to influence Welsh policy and public service delivery over the last decade.

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[1] Formally the Public Policy Institute for Wales (PPIW)

## Change and contestation in knowledge cultures in employment and education policy in Denmark after 2000

Jesper Kelstrup (Roskilde University)

Jonas Joergensen (Roskilde University)

### Abstract

Knowledge cultures shape norms for evidence use in different policy domains (Fischer 2021), including the way in which political, practical, and scientific knowledge is integrated or "woven" together (Head 2008). Yet, knowledge cultures and practices can change over time in response to new public agendas or shifts in political priorities. In this study, we draw on a document analysis of policy reforms and knowledge sources as well as qualitative interviews to compare the development of knowledge cultures in employment and education policy in Denmark after 2000. We show that politicians and ministries in both domains have sought to increase the use of evidence to fulfil ambitious policy goals and deliver policies that are more efficient. Drawing on the concept of policy capacity (Parsons 2004), we illustrate how government ministries have invested in creating a basis for evidence utilization in both policy domains. Knowledge cultures, however, have developed differently: While evidence-based policies have been disseminated to and imposed on local employment policy actors, more evidence in the education area has been contested, as centrally imposed evidence is juxtaposed with professional autonomy and because of disagreements over the relative importance of different policy aims. This reflects variation in the ability of central actors to impose evidence-based policies (Weiss et al. 2005) as well as different types of reactions to efficiency-driven evidence use in the two policy domains. Our findings thus illustrate variation in the ability of central actors to change knowledge cultures in different domains of welfare policy in Denmark.

### Keywords

Knowledge culture, evidence-based policy, government ministries, education policy, employment policy, Denmark.

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## (Virtual) Data-Driven Public Policies- The Case of Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) in India

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Use of evidence for policymaking has emerged as a cornerstone of new age governance mechanisms since the 1990s. Evidence- Based Policy Making (EBPM) or Evidence Informed Policy Making (EIPM), extensions of the scientific method, has ushered in a new phase in policymaking that focuses on systematic use of evidence in the policymaking process. Drawing from the experience of the United Kingdom, many nations including India continue to embrace EBPM in their policymaking processes. However, there continues a debate on the definition and role of evidence in policy formulation and implementation in the West despite the invincibility of the approach. One can also not lose sight of how data-driven/ evidence- driven policies especially became an integral part of the policymaking processes in and after the COVID era. In India, the world's largest democracy, with hundreds of policies being introduced at the national and sub-national levels on an annual basis and trillions-worth of welfare activities, a large part of the inputs-outputs-outcomes of Indian policymaking remains unexplored. As a large part of the Indian policy research continues to be focused on the implementation of policies thus overpowering the other stages of policymaking, India's attempts to incorporate Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) has become an interesting area of academic interest. With the top political leadership in India envisioning to make EBPM an integral part of governance, it becomes imperative to gain insights into its incorporation in the Indian policymaking landscape. In this context, this paper proposes to primarily engage with the conceptualisation of evidence and its use in policymaking both theoretically and in the Indian context. Secondly, this paper focuses on identification of the gaps that exist in the use of evidence or data at various stages in Indian policymaking. This will be attempted through a case study of two major social sector policies of India factoring-in the institutional, systemic and policy perspectives while exploring the innovative methods being used. Further, this paper attempts to highlight the issues and imperatives for evidence and research in the Indian policymaking ecosystem. Lastly, it aims at proposing a way forward for enhancing the efficiency of evidence in policymaking for the Indian and the global context.

## Comparing cultures of evidence in Scotland and Wales: A Q methodology study of what evidence means

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The Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated how far evidence is seen as being part of policy and decision making. Yet, there is no agreement over how evidence is defined. What might count as evidence for one policy actor may be different for another actor. Different contexts might also lead to different definitions. We use Q methodology, a mixed method developed in psychology, to analyse attitudes and perceptions towards what evidence means for policy. We survey over 70 policy actors from government, parliament, academia and other organisations in two countries – Scotland and Wales. The results demonstrate how different cultures (including informal ways of working and patterns of behaviour) play a role in determining how evidence is perceived and mobilised in the policy process. Similar attitudes, or profiles, towards evidence exist in both Scotland and Wales. The profiles illustrate how a same notion such as expertise or lived experience can be understood as evidence, and hierarchised. Our research also highlights important differences between the two contexts [to be determined once analysis concluded in Spring 2023]. We find that different factors – organisational, career paths, time in a role, academic training, policy area – influence how evidence is shaped, defined, and mobilised. Equally however, we find that a same policy community, and even a single organisation such as government, can harbour multiple and sometimes contradictory cultures of evidence.