P141 / The Production and Use of Evidence in the Policy Process

Topic : Knowledge, Science and Expertise in Policy Process

Chair : Johanna Hornung (University of Lausanne)

Second Chair : Julián Salazar (University of Bern)

Third Chair : Fritz Sager (University of Bern)

Fourth Chair : Bettina Stauffer (University of Bern)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Research on the production and use of evidence in the policy process is thriving. The COVID-19 pandemic has put the influence of scientific policy advice on crisis responses center-stage (Hornung & Trein, 2025; Lemor & Montpetit, 2024; Schlaufer et al., 2025). Policy advisory system research is experiencing its third wave, reflecting not only on the location and dynamics of policy advice, but also on its quality (Migone & Howlett, 2025). The distinction between evidence and expertise (Hadorn et al., 2022) and the role of evaluation (Bundi & Pattyn, 2026) in the policy process refine what counts as substance of knowledge, while typologies of actors investigate its senders and receivers (Ingelbeen et al., 2026; Koiranen & Christensen, 2026; Migone et al., 2022; Valin & Huitema, 2023).

However, studies are not always clear about the terminology of information, knowledge, expertise, and evidence and how it is produced and used in the policy process. The proposed panel aims to address this conceptual and intellectual lacuna and provides a platform for dialogue on how different forms of evidence and knowledge more generally are produced, under which conditions they are used, and by which actors. It therefore seeks to contribute to answering the following research questions: What counts as evidence in the policy process? Which different forms of knowledge are produced for and in the policy process? By which actors? Under which conditions and in what ways are different forms of knowledge produced and used in the policy process? By which actors?

Bundi, P., & Pattyn, V. (2026). It Does Matter. A New Framework on the Influence of Policy Evaluation. Policy Studies Journal, 54(3), e70149.
Hadorn, S., Sager, F., Mavrot, C., Malandrino, A., & Ege, J. (2022). Evidence-Based Policymaking in Times of Acute Crisis: Comparing the Use of Scientific Knowledge in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. Politische Vierteljahresschrift, 63(2), 359–382.
Hornung, J., & Trein, P. (2025). Policy advisory system quality under multilevel governance: the German COVID-19 experience. Policy and Society, puaf005.
Ingelbeen, J., Haesevoets, T., & Wauters, B. (2026). Academic Experts in Policymaking: Divergent Patterns but Persistent Profiles Across Parliament, Government, and Media. Public Administration, n/a(n/a).
Koiranen, I., & Christensen, H. S. (2026). Experts, Experts Everywhere! Survey Experimental Evidence on How Involving Expertise Affects Decision-Making Legitimacy. Political Studies, 00323217261450951.
Lemor, A., & Montpetit, É. (2024). Exploring the role of uncertainty, emotions, and scientific discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic. Policy and Society, puae010.
Migone, A., & Howlett, M. (2025). Kicked cans and poison pills: third generation policy advisory system studies and the management of quality political advice. Policy and Society, puaf002.
Migone, A., McGregor, M. R., Brock, K., & Howlett, M. (2022). Super-users and hyper-experts in the provision of policy advice: Evidence from a survey of Canadian academics. European Policy Analysis, 8(4), 370–393.
Schlaufer, C., Mavrot, C., Hornung, J., & Sager, F. (2025). Challenges to the Legitimacy of Scientific Policy Advice in Three Swiss Crises: Can Institutionalization Shield Against Politicization? Policy Studies Journal, n/a(n/a).
Valin, N., & Huitema, D. (2023). Experts as policy entrepreneurs: How knowledge can lead to radical environmental change. Environmental Science & Policy, 142, 21–28.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The panel invites papers that contribute to better understanding the production of evidence for and in the

policy process, as well as to explaining the conditions under which it is used. Papers can address one or several of the following sub-topics and questions directly, or focus on related issues:

Production of Evidence
· Which different types of knowledge exist in the policy process and what counts as evidence?
· How are the terms of evidence, expertise, information, knowledge, science, research, evaluation conceptually and empirically distinguished?
· How are different types of evidence produced across different stages of the policy cycle?
· What role do different types of actors play in the production of evidence?
· How do these dynamics differ according to political, administrative, institutional, capacity-related conditions?
· How is scientific and evaluative evidence on the effectiveness of public policies generated across political systems and sectors?

Use of Evidence
· When and how is evidence used for and in policy processes across different stages of the policy cycle?
· What counts as “evidence use” and how can “use” be categorized?
· Which types of actors use evidence and for what purposes?
· How is scientific and evaluative evidence on the effectiveness of public policies fed back into the policy process?
· How do these dynamics differ according to political, administrative, institutional, capacity-related conditions?
· To what extent does the use of evidence differ by political systems and policy sectors?
· What is the influence of evidence on policy change?
While contributions on different types of knowledge for and in the policy process are welcome, the panel title and outline suggest a certain focus on systematically produced evidence, either through scientific activity or policy evaluation, which will be the core themes on which the panel focuses. Of particular interest are the channels through which scientific and evaluative evidence is produced and finds their way into the policy process, as well as to what ends it is used and to what extent it influences public policy.