

UNIVERSITY of  
STIRLING



50 YEARS

UNIVERSITY of  
STIRLING



---

# How can we respond to the limits of 'evidence based policy making'?

Paul Cairney, Professor of Politics and Public Policy

[p.a.cairney@stir.ac.uk](mailto:p.a.cairney@stir.ac.uk)

[@Cairneypaul](#)

<https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/>

**Measuring Development in Turbulent Times**  
**November 28-29, 2017**

BE THE DIFFERENCE

THE POLITICS OF  
EVIDENCE-BASED  
POLICY MAKING

Paul Cairney

# 1. Understand key political choices:

What counts as evidence?

Who are the policymakers and influencers?

What drives policymakers?



ARTICLE

DOI: 10.1057/s41599-017-0046-8

OPEN

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

Paul Cairney<sup>1</sup> & Richard Kwiatkowski<sup>2</sup>

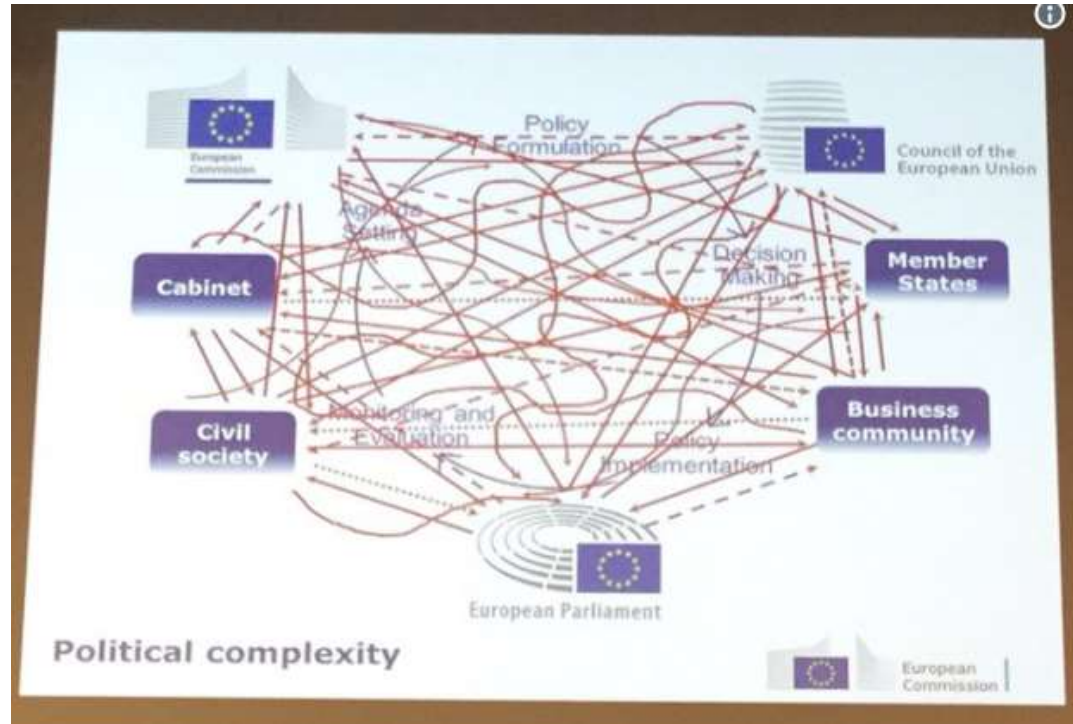
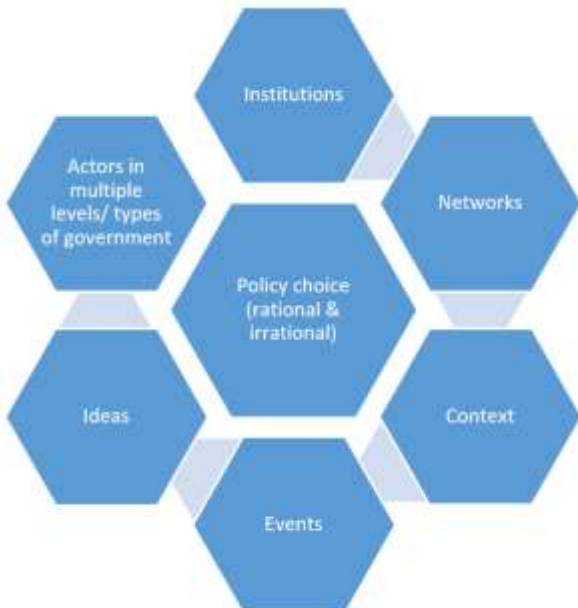
## 2. Respond to policymaker psychology:

‘Bounded rationality’ prompts 2 shortcuts, so ...

Reduce uncertainty and cognitive load: be concise

Reduce ambiguity: frame, persuade, tell stories

# 3. Reject simple models of policymaking ...

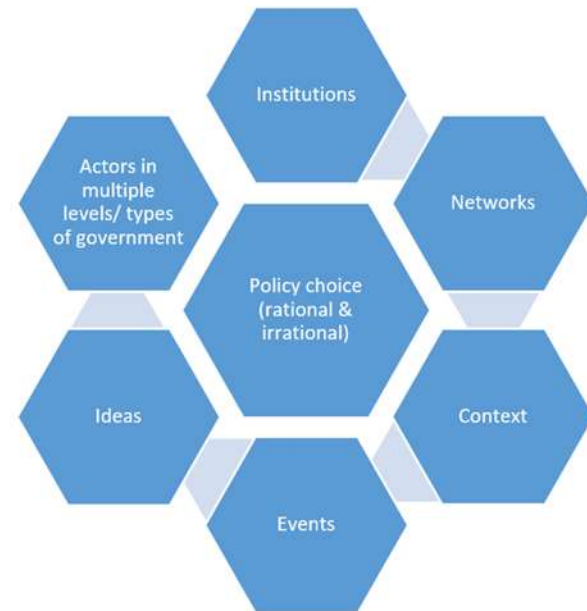


## The new policy sciences: combining the cognitive science of choice, multiple theories of context, and basic and applied analysis

Paul Cairney<sup>1</sup> · Christopher M. Weible<sup>2</sup>

### 3. ... and adapt to complex policymaking environments:

Find out where the action is (‘actors’)  
Learn the rules (‘institutions’)  
Learn the language/ currency (‘ideas’)  
Build trust and form alliances (‘networks’)  
Exploit ‘events’ (driven by ‘socioeconomic context’)



OPINION

Open Access



Evidence-based policymaking is not like evidence-based medicine, so how far should you go to bridge the divide between evidence and policy?

Paul Cairney<sup>1,2\*</sup> and Kathryn Oliver<sup>3,4</sup>

## 4. Decide how far you'll go:

There are many models of good governance (beyond EBPM)

There are many models for engaging with evidence

# More information



ARTICLE

DOI: 10.1007/s11077-017-9304-2

OPEN

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

Paul Cairney<sup>1</sup> & Richard Kwiatkowski<sup>2</sup>

Policy Sci  
DOI 10.1007/s11077-017-9304-2



RESEARCH NOTE

## The new policy sciences: combining the cognitive science of choice, multiple theories of context, and basic and applied analysis

Paul Cairney<sup>1</sup> · Christopher M. Weible<sup>2</sup>

## Joint Research Centre



	Approach 1	Approach 2	Approach 3
	<b>Policy emulation</b>	<b>Storytelling</b>	<b>Improvement science</b>
How should you gather evidence of effectiveness and best practice?	With reference to a hierarchy of evidence and evidence gathering, generally with systematic reviews and RCTs at the top.	With reference to principles of good practice, and practitioner and service user testimony.	Identify promising interventions, based on a mix of evidence. Encourage trained practitioners to adapt interventions to their area, and gather data on their experience.
How should you 'scale up' from evidence of best practice?	Introduce the same specific model in each area.  Require fidelity, to administer the correct dosage, and allow you to measure its effectiveness with RCTs.	Tell stories based on your experience, and invite other people to learn from them.	A simple message to practitioners: if your practice is working, keep doing it; if it is working better elsewhere, consider learning from their experience.
What aim should you prioritise?	To ensure the correct administration of the active ingredient.	To foster key principles, such as respect for service user experiences.	To train then allow local practitioners to experiment and decide how best to turn evidence into practice.
Illustrative example	Family Nurse Partnership	My Home Life	Early Years Collaborative

UNIVERSITY of  
STIRLING



50<sup>YEARS</sup>

UNIVERSITY of  
STIRLING



---

# THANK YOU

Paul Cairney, Professor of Politics and Public Policy

[p.a.cairney@stir.ac.uk](mailto:p.a.cairney@stir.ac.uk)

[@Cairneypaul](#)

<https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/>

BE THE DIFFERENCE