

Energy policy making: understanding effectiveness and the role of evidence

Niall Kerr and Mark Winskel, University of Edinburgh

Paul Cairney, University of Stirling

Jan Rosenow, University of Sussex

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Energy and Society, University of Edinburgh

ClimateXChange



Scotland's centre of expertise connecting climate change research and policy

Panel discussion and open meeting

2 – 3.30 pm: 9th June 2017

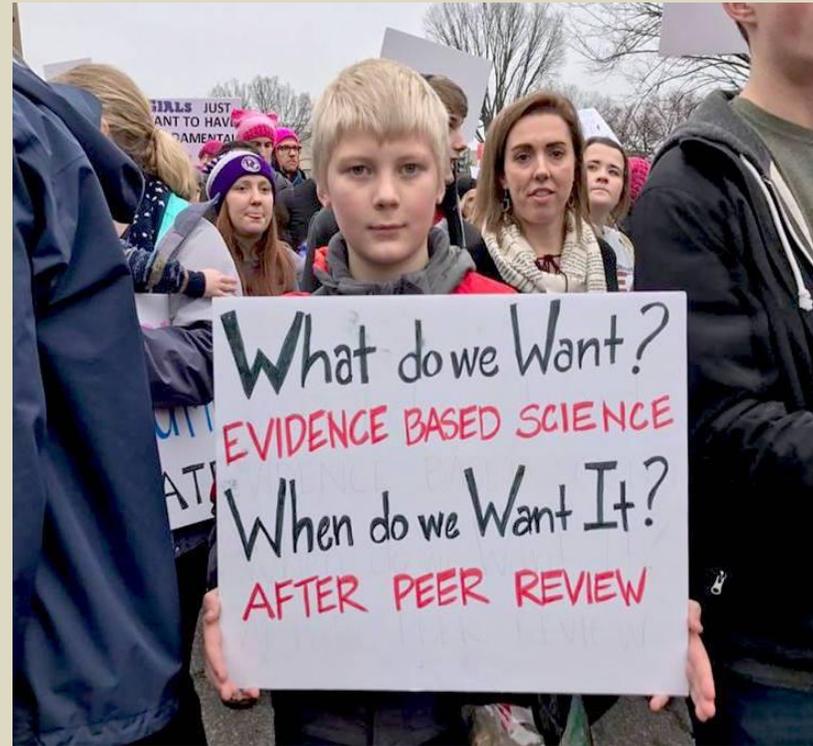
Energy policy making: understanding effectiveness and the role of evidence

- **Niall Kerr and Mark Winskel:** introduction to a new project on energy policy effectiveness
- **Jan Rosenow:** evidence and expertise in energy efficiency policy making
- **Paul Cairney:** politics and evidence based policy making
- **Questions and open discussion ...**

Evidence based.....

- **Evidence** based science
- **Evidence** based policy making
- **Evidence** based decision making in general

But what is meant by evidence based....?



Evidence Based Policymaking

Is there a **hierarchy of evidence...**?



Evidence Based Policymaking

Evidence: *“that which tends to prove or disprove something”*

Applies to...

1. What issues reach the political agenda?

- Policy issues are not self-evident: they are subjective, contested, socially constructed
- Time on the political agenda can be limited

2. What is the best policy solution? ‘What works?’

- Complex interventions, introduced into complex social systems
- What is the evidence?

Example of evidence use in policy

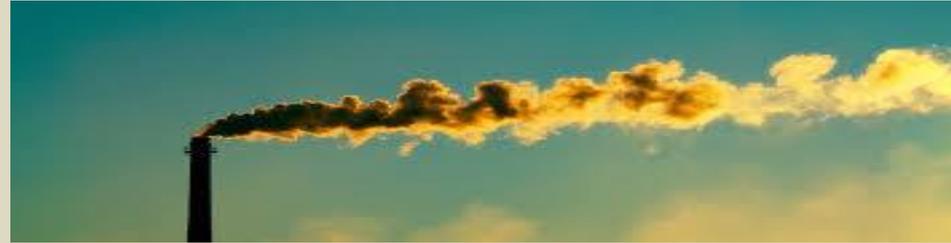
Climate change

Climate change on the political agenda

- Substantial scientific consensus
- IPCC reports, 97% of scientific evidence, the Stern Review

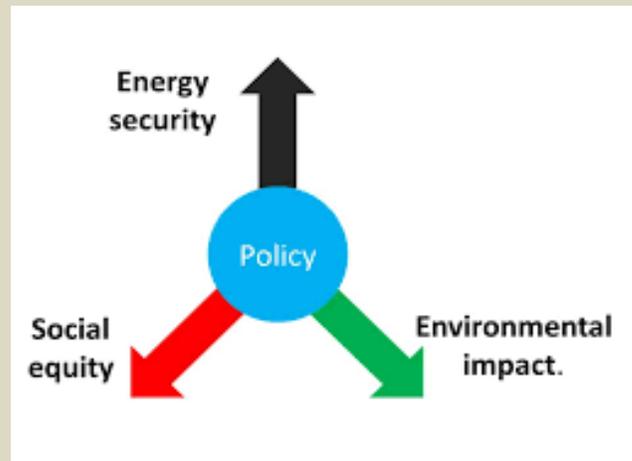
Evidence based solutions to climate change

- How should we reduce our carbon emissions and adapt to climate change?
- Solutions to climate change are deeply contested.



Energy and climate policy making

Political agenda with competing objectives



Multi-level governance



EU Directives

UK national policies

Scottish policy

Choosing a policy solution: assessment of evidence

Policy making culture

- New Public Management: a more 'business-like' approach to policy making
- Scottish approach to policy making: more collaborative and less centralist ??

Policy effectiveness assessments

- Before (ex-ante): inform policy design but lack evidence
- After (ex-post): use actual data but lack ability to impact policy

Project perspective

Evidence and policy

What is a policy issue?

What is chosen as a policy solution?

Policy effectiveness

How effective was the chosen policy solution?

How effective was the process of choosing the policy solution?

Evidence Based Policymaking

Energy efficiency: Green crap or the First Fuel?*

Evidence

- Energy bills have fallen between 2008-2016 (CCC, 2017)

Policy

- Energy bill price cap introduced (All political party manifestos, 2017)

Ambiguity - Why are energy bills lower?

- Higher per unit prices meaning people are using less?

or

- More efficient appliances and energy efficient retrofit of building fabric?

Or

- Both?

*Prime Minister Cameron and the International Energy Agency respectively