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The Research-to-Policy Gap

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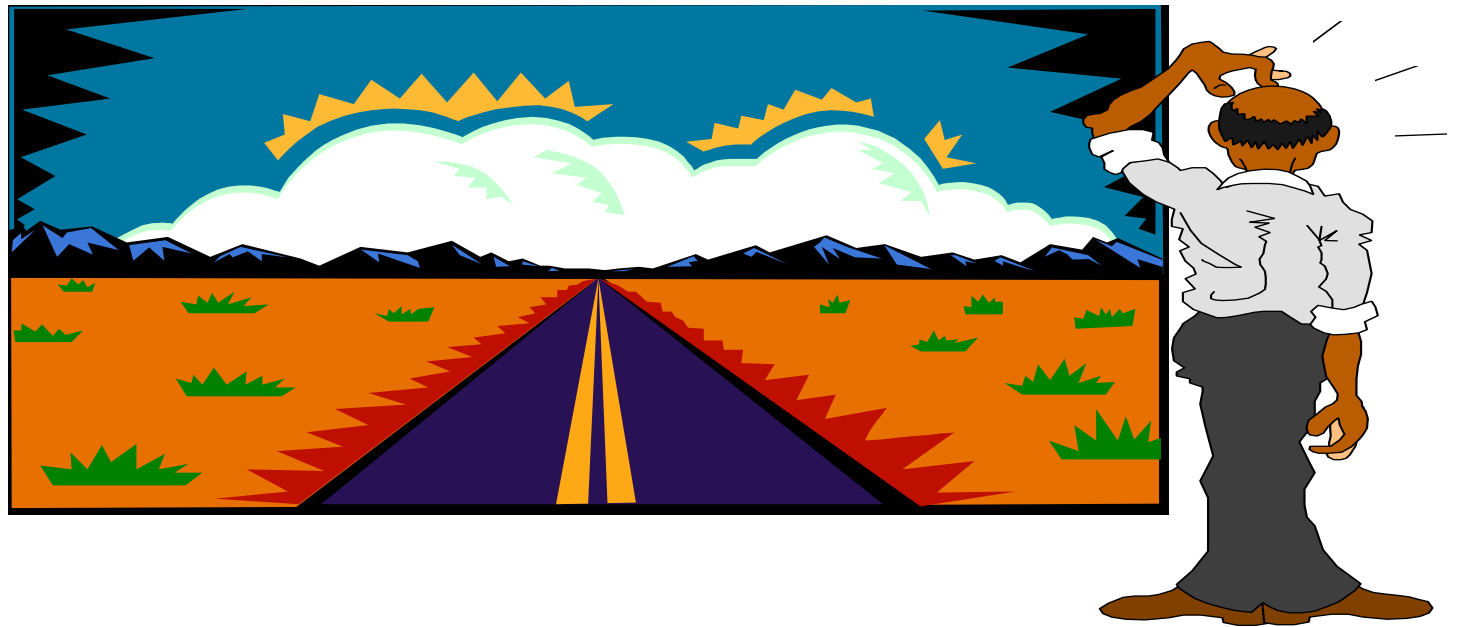


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"The road to inaction is paved with research reports"





Why should we be concerned about the gap?

- Large investment in data collection and research
- Researchers and decisionmakers working in different spheres
- Opportunities for increasing knowledge and putting data to use are often lost
- The gap can be reduced...



Research-to-Policy Gap

- Assumptions
 - Researchers
 - Policymakers
 - Decision-making
- Barriers and solutions to the use of data



Research-to-Policy Gap

- How the gap is manifested

- **Assumptions about policymakers and researchers**



Researchers' Stereotypes of Policymakers

- Uninterested or too busy to read
- Reach hasty conclusions
- Actions unsubstantiated by data
- Distrust survey and research findings
- Limited perspective
- Responsible for drawing implications from the data

“The resistance is big basically because most policymakers don’t think that research is essential for their policies. There is a general feeling among policymakers that as far as policymaking goes they are the experts. If you want to bring in researchers, they are just there to punch in the numbers.”

-Researcher, Pakistan



“Policymakers don’t see the role that research plays in everyday situations. Senior government officials don’t appreciate the role of research in programmes.”

-Researcher, Malawi



Policymakers' Stereotypes of Researchers

- Avoid policy implications of findings
- Excessive use of technical jargon
- Inconclusive generalities about broad theoretical matters
- Little appreciation of real problems and data needs

“The research that has been conducted is usually by the academics or the universities, and is published in the international journals and so they don’t get shared at the local level or the country level.”

-Policymaker, Pakistan

“Reports are in an indigestible form without adequate analysis of policy or programmatic implications; therefore, people note the findings but don’t act on them.”

-Policymaker, Malawi

Research-to-Policy Gap

Assumptions about decisionmaking

**How are
decisions
made?**





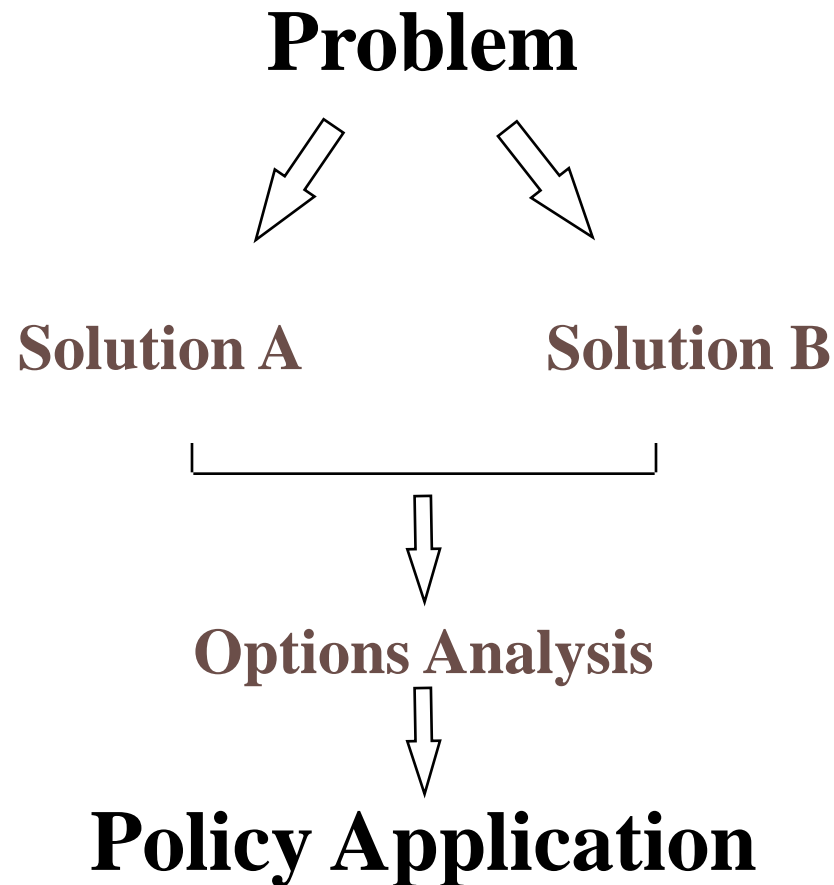
Assumptions about Decisionmaking

Researchers may assume that policymakers:

- Practice rational decision-making
- Examine alternative solutions systematically
- Choose alternatives that maximize goals

Rational Models

Problem solving approach:





Discussion: Barriers and Solutions in Research-to-Policy

- Barriers that originate with researchers or data producers
- Barriers that arise from communication between researchers and policymakers
- Barriers that are due to the decisionmaking environment
- ... And solutions for each!



Overcoming the Research-to-Policy Gap

- Recognizing the different environments between researchers and policymakers
- Accepting that policymaking is not a rational process
- Identifying barriers and making an effort to overcome them

Learn More

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