

Creating Public Value in the Policy Advice Role

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Dr David Bromell

Chief Policy Advisor (acting), Ministry of Social Development
david.bromell001@msd.govt.nz

Senior Associate, Institute for Governance and Policy Studies,
School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington
david.bromell@vuw.ac.nz

Three drivers of inquiry

1. Title, State Sector Act 1988

An Act—

(a) to ensure that employees in the State services are imbued with the spirit of service to the community ...

2. "... we thought of calling this book 'Evidence-based Politics'"

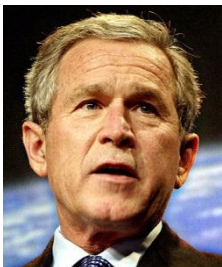
– Wilkinson and Pickett (2010), preface to the Penguin edition of *The Spirit Level*, p ix

cf. Weber's caution against technical rationality (rationality without morality)

"Treasury takes a positive approach to distribution as opposed to a normative, value-based one. This approach is appropriate to Treasury's policy advisory role, as it allows the organisation to provide advice on the distributional priorities of the government of the day, while maintaining an apolitical position that is grounded in empirical economic analysis."

– NZ Treasury Paper 11/02, *Towards Higher Living Standards for New Zealanders*, p 28

3. 'wicked issues' that cannot be solved by government acting alone



New Zealand

"America needs more than taxpayers, spectators and occasional voters. America needs full-time citizens."

– George W. Bush, to Ohio State University graduating class, 2002

Creating public value

"The public sphere can be thought of as the web of values, places, organizations, rules, knowledge, and other cultural resources held in common by people through their everyday commitments and behaviours, and held in trust by government and public institutions"

"Public value provides a conceptual framework within which competing values and interests can be expressed and debated, in a deliberative democratic process, by which the question of what constitutes value is established dialectically."

– John Benington (2011) 'From private choice to public value?', pp 43, 50

An approach to public policy making that:

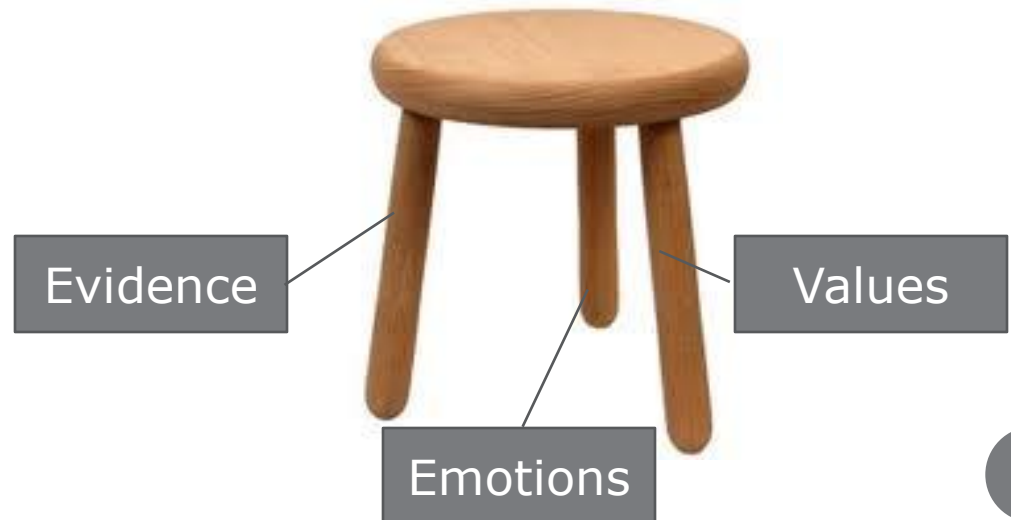
- preserves constitutional conventions and a politically neutral, professional public service
- makes better use of evidence, and also explicitly factors emotions and values into policy making
- builds trust in government and deepens the practice of democracy, by how we work with others to create public value

Policy making in a democracy

1. Sound public policy is informed by relevant evidence about 'the facts' and 'what works'.
2. In a democracy, effective policy making involves and requires the art of public persuasion.
3. People aren't persuaded solely by reason and 'the facts'.
(Relying only on empirical analysis is like trying to sit on a one-legged stool.)

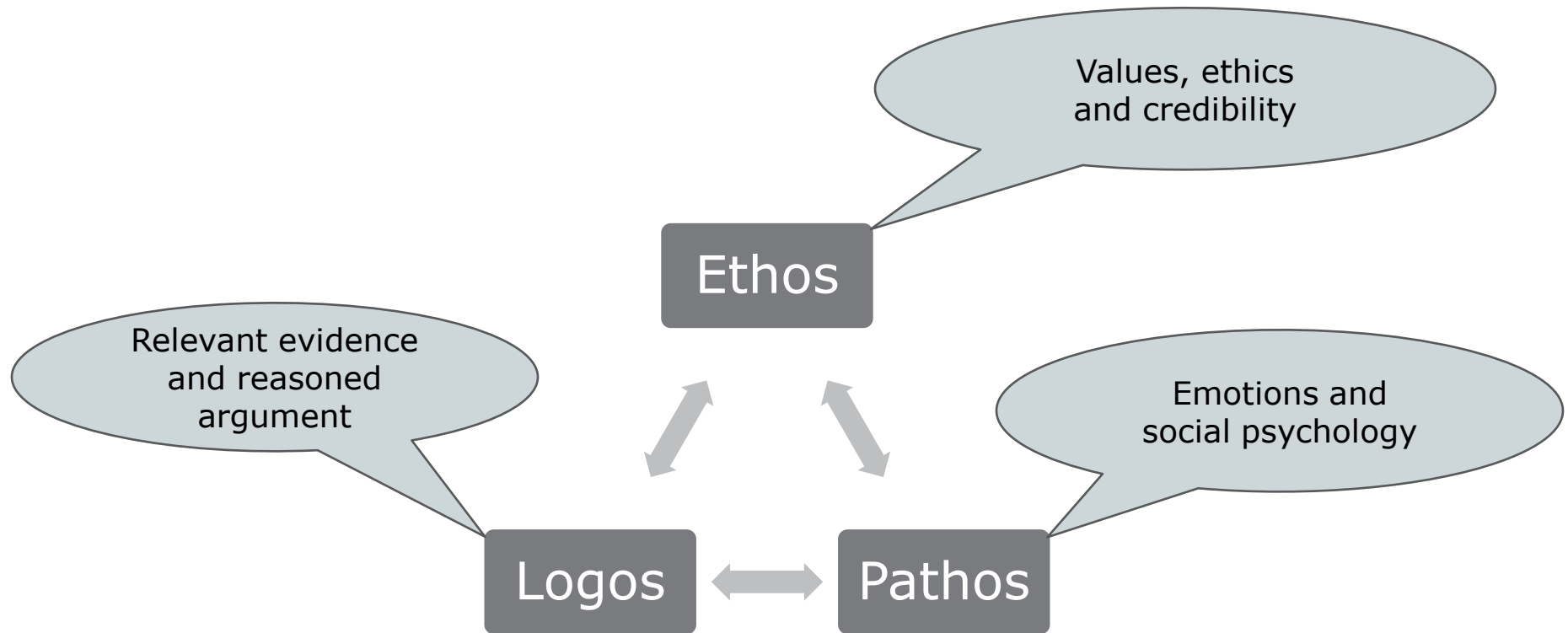


4. Public persuasion involves:



The art of public persuasion

- **rhetoric** is the ability in any particular case to identify and use the available means of persuasion (Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*)

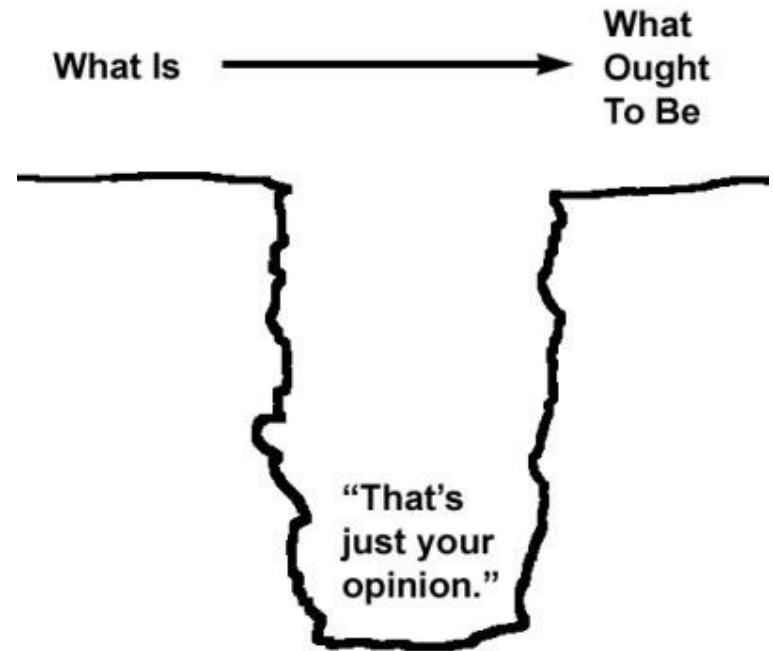
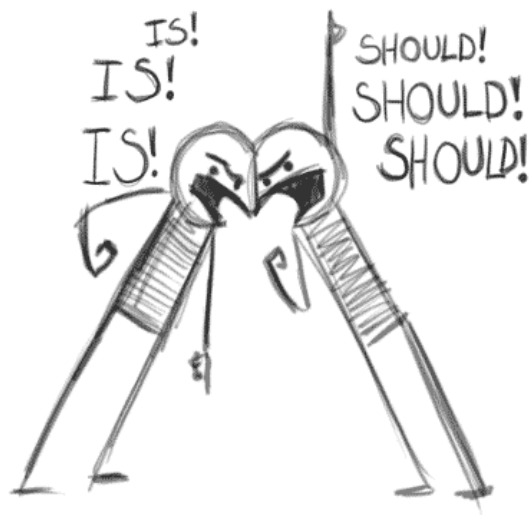


Logos

Relevant evidence, reasoned argument

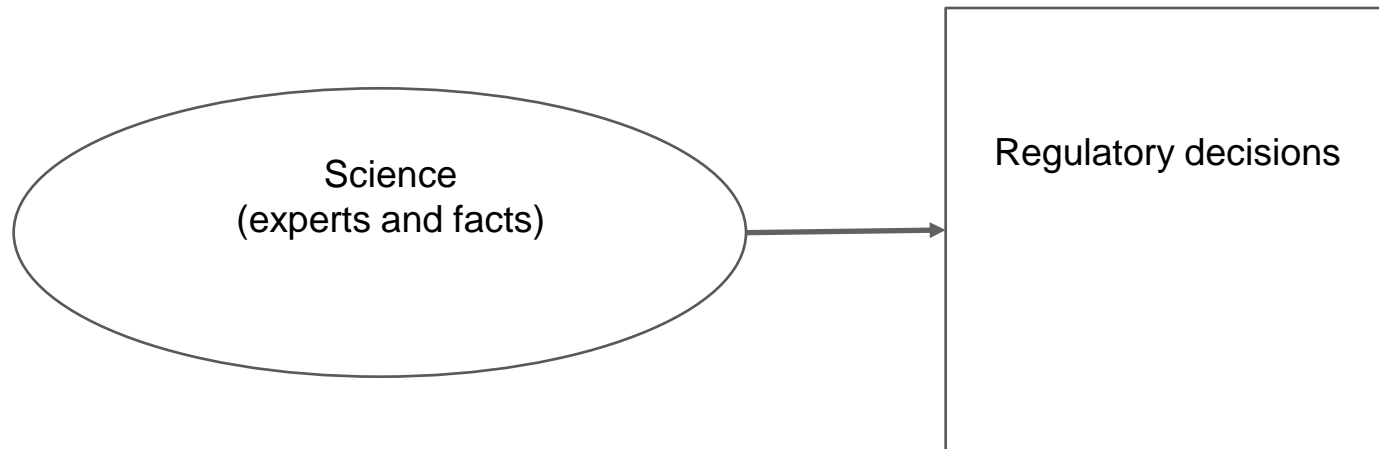
'Evidence-based policy'?

- yes, we must make better use of evidence in policy making
 - Peter Gluckman (2011) *Towards Better Use of Evidence in Policy Formation*
- but in a context where people have different values and conceptions of 'the good', we cannot simply leap-frog moral argument by direct appeal to 'the facts' and 'what works'



Models of science and governance

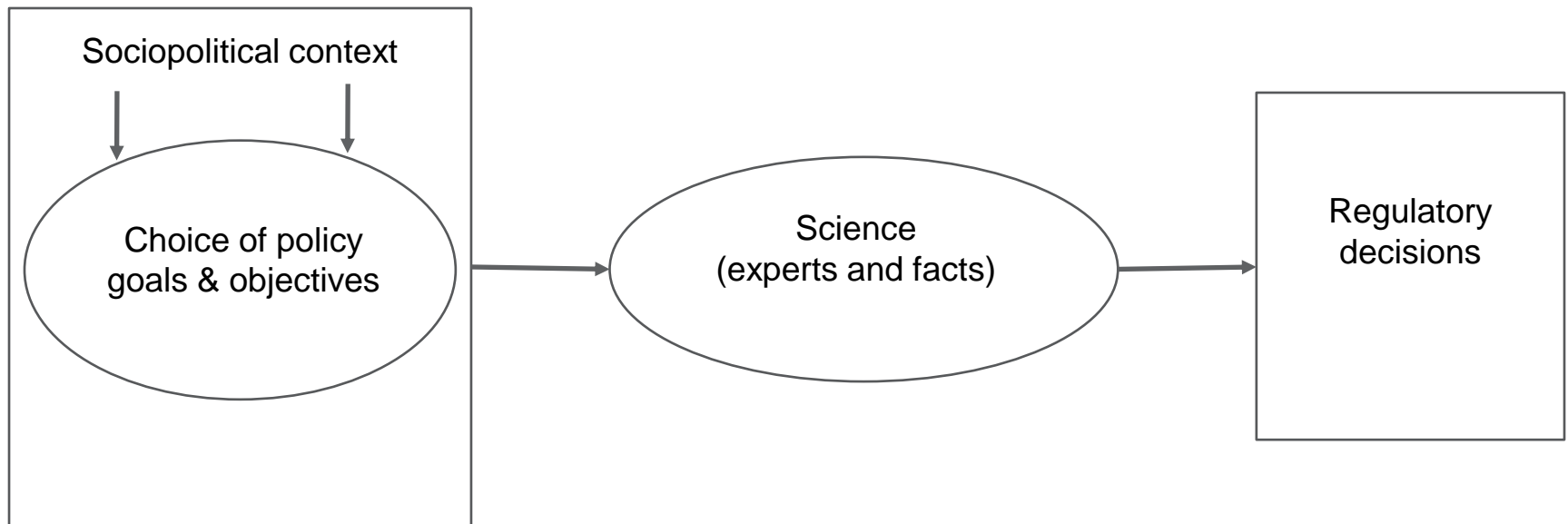
Technocratic model (Saint-Simon / Comte)



Adapted from van Zwanenberg & Millstone (2005) 'Analysing the role of science in public policy-making'

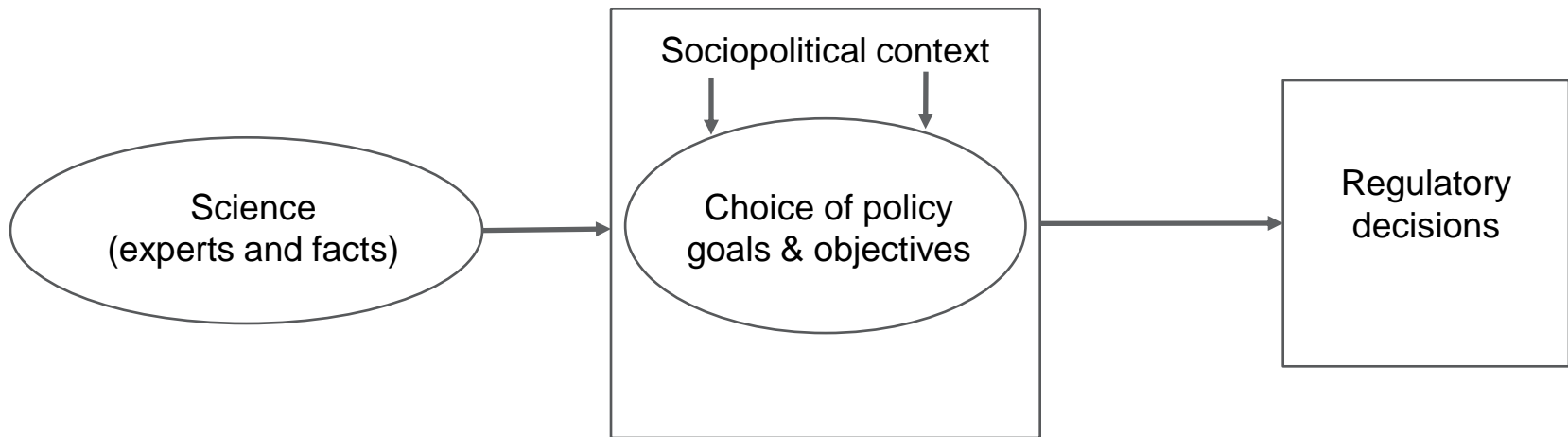
Models of science and governance

Decisionist model (Weber / Durkheim)



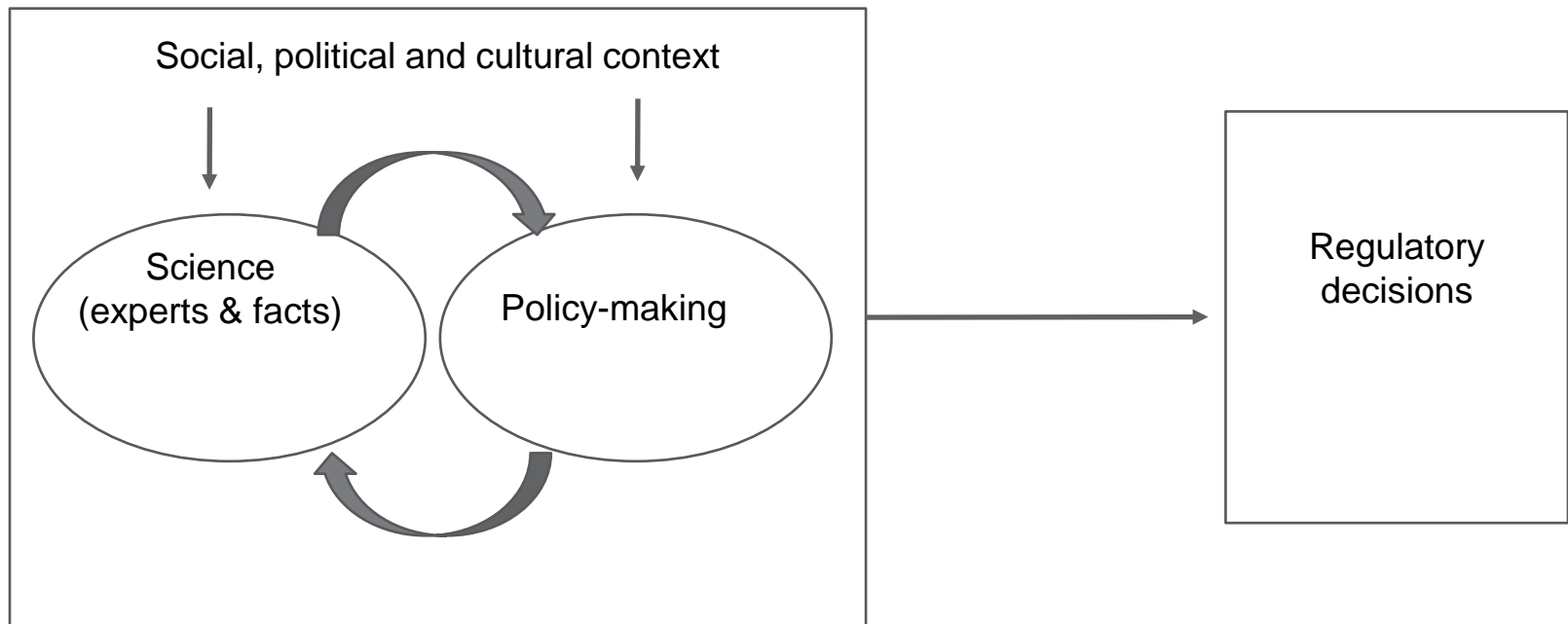
Models of science and governance

Inverted decisionist model



Models of science and governance

Co-evolutionary / co-production model



Science, policy and politics:

Four idealised roles

Imagine that a visitor has come to town for a conference and asks you for advice on where to go for dinner. How might you respond?

Pure Scientist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• gives the visitor a copy of guidelines for nutrition and healthy eating (what the visitor does with that information is their responsibility)
Science Arbiter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• answers factual questions that the visitor thinks are relevant, like 'Where can I find a steakhouse with mid-range prices?', but does not tell the visitor what they should prefer
Issue Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• tries to convince the visitor to eat at a particular restaurant or type of restaurant, making a case for one alternative over others
Honest Broker of Policy Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• provides information on restaurants in the area to clarify the scope of choice for the visitor, taking into account questions of preference and value

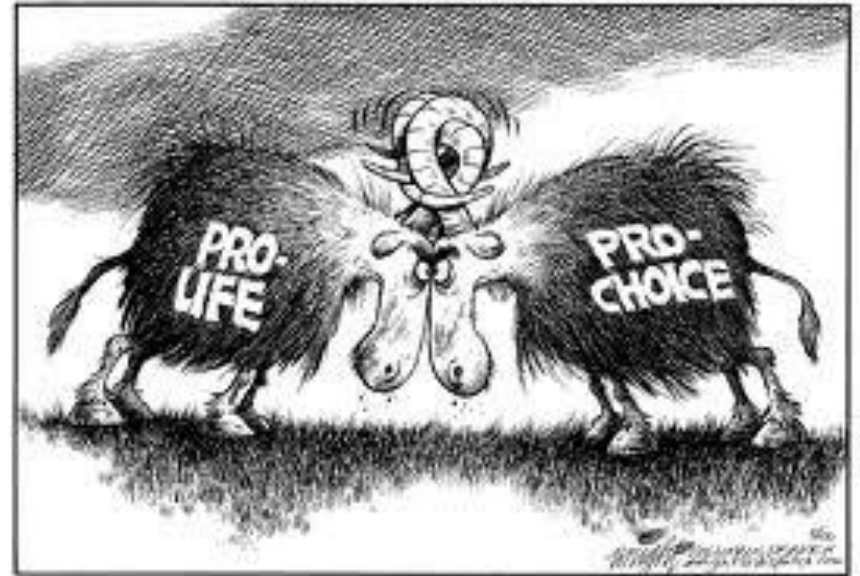
Science, policy and politics

Tornado Politics



- consensus on values and desired outcomes
- certainty about the facts and 'what works'

Abortion Politics



- no consensus on values and desired outcomes
- little or no certainty about the facts, and 'what works'

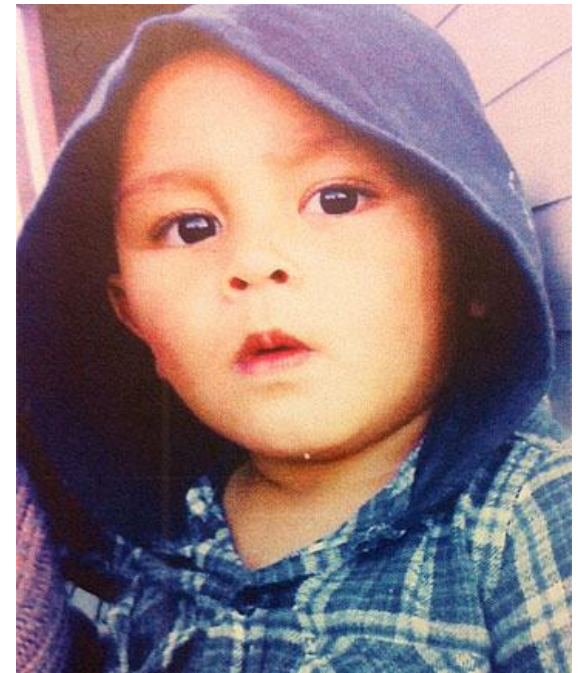
Pathos

Emotions and social psychology

A.



B.



C.



D.



'Moral reasons are the tail wagged by the intuitive dog.'



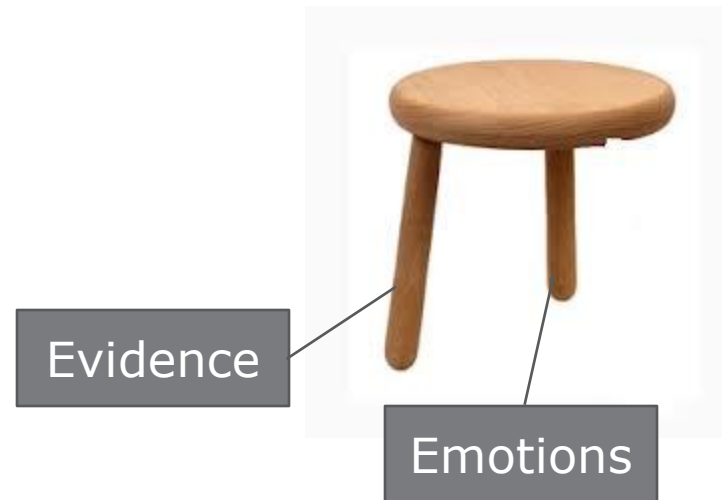
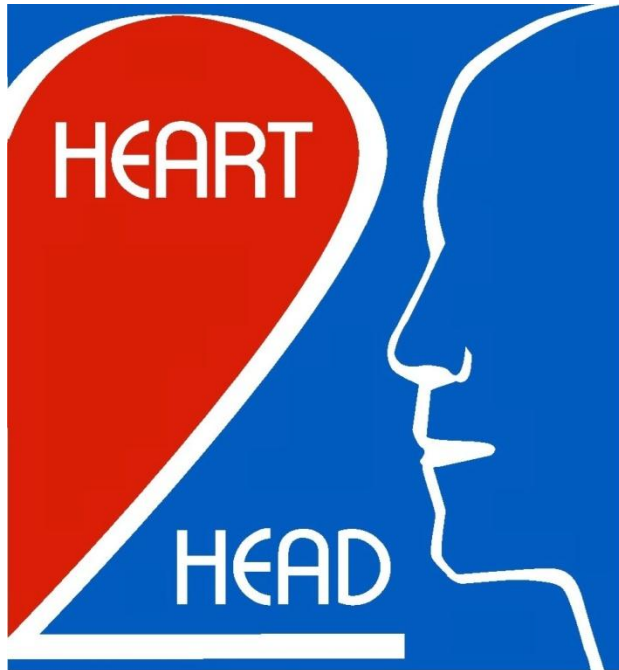
– Jonathan Haidt (2012) *The Righteous Mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion*

Our moral intuitions can be informed and shaped by evidence and reasoned argument, but we are not as reasonable as we like to think.

"And as reasoning is not the source, whence either disputant derives his tenets, it is in vain to expect that any logic, which speaks not to the affections, will ever engage him to embrace sounder principles."

– David Hume (1777) *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Pt 1, opening paragraph

Persuade using both head and heart



But to be persuasive in public life, we need a third leg ...

Ethos

Values, ethics and credibility

The problem of pluralism

"Since every activity involving some acquired skill or some moral decision aims at some good, what do we take to be the end of politics – what is the supreme good attainable in our actions? ... 'It is happiness,' say both intellectuals and the unsophisticated, meaning by 'happiness' living well or faring well. But when it comes to saying in what happiness consists, opinions differ."

– Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, I.4

"Denique non omnes eadem mirantur amantque."
(Not everyone admires and loves the same things.)

– Horace, *Epistles* II:2.58

"Conflicts of values may be an intrinsic, irremoveable element in human life."

– Isaiah Berlin (1969) *Four Essays on Liberty*

'Reasonable pluralism'

"The political culture of a democratic society is always marked by a diversity of opposing and irreconcilable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines. Some of these are perfectly reasonable, and this diversity among reasonable doctrines political liberalism sees as the inevitable long-run result of the powers of human reason at work within the background of enduring free institutions."

John Rawls (2005) *Political Liberalism* (expanded edition), p 4

Conflicts within ourselves

"Many of our most serious conflicts are conflicts within ourselves."

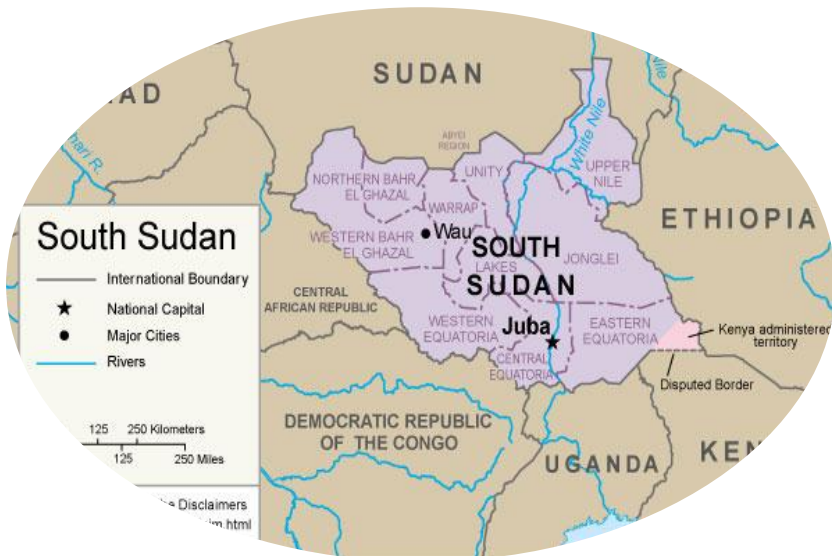
John Rawls (2001) *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, p 30

Freedom to change our minds

Part of what it means to be free is *"the exercise of citizens' powers of practical reason in forming, revising, and rationally pursuing such a conception [of the good] over a complete life."*

John Rawls (2001) *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, p 113

Resolving conflicts of values politically



Moral foundations of politics

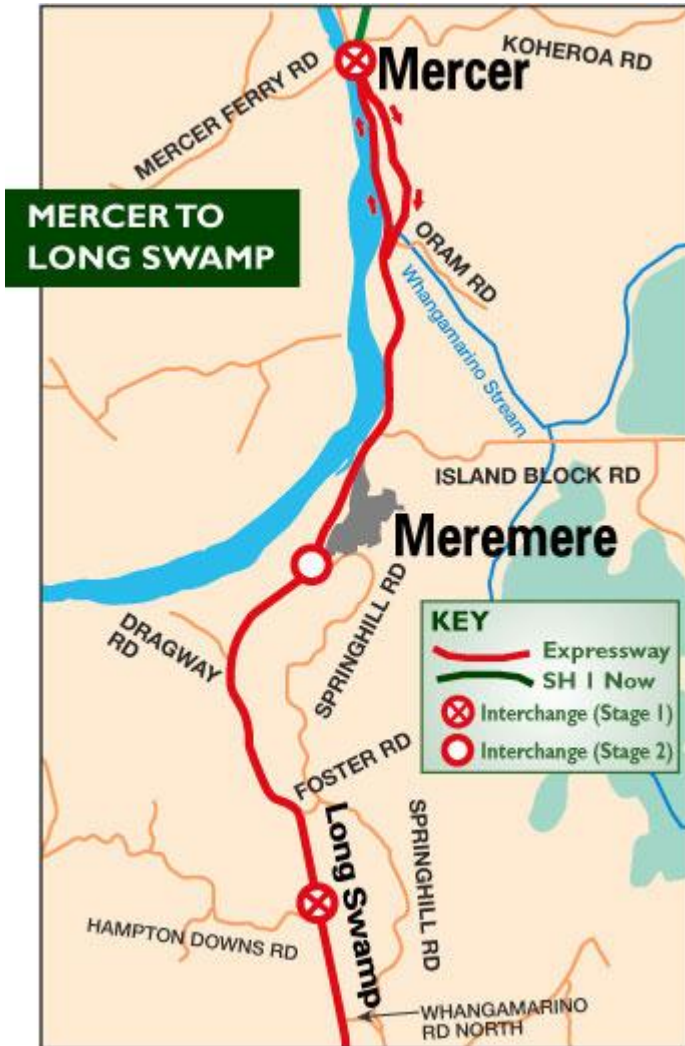
Liberty	Care	Fairness	Loyalty	Authority	Sanctity
Safeguard freedom	Care for the vulnerable	Ensure equality; fair exchange; honour contracts	Form cohesive coalitions to achieve social goals	Maintain trust in social and political institutions	Preserve purity, sanctity, order, cleanliness
Control aggression, domination, abuse of power	Protect from harm	Fairness as proportionality (take out only what you put in)	Cultivate identity, belonging, group pride	Respect hierarchical relationships, traditions, institutions	Avoid shame, dirt, pollution, contaminants
Oppression	Harm	Cheating	Betrayal	Subversion	Degradation

– adapted from Jonathan Haidt (2012) *The Righteous Mind*

Western liberals tend to focus on the first three: liberty, care and fairness.

But aren't all of these important (even to Westerners)?

A case study



Creating public value

in the policy advice role

An 8-fold path (1)

1. **define the public value we want to create**

- what does the public value, and how do we know?
- what are the social, cultural, economic, political and environmental dimensions of value we want to add to the public sphere?
- how can we develop common purpose out of our diverse perspectives?
- *what do we want to change, and why?*
- *what are the results we want to achieve?*

2. **set a baseline for monitoring and evaluation**

- establish 'the facts': where are we now?
- what evidence/indicators do we have to assess trends over time?
- do we have longitudinal or only cross-sectional data?
- how would we know whether we have made a difference?

3. **find out 'what works'**

- what works, for whom, and why? (systematic reviews where possible), including:
 - what have we tried in the past, and with what measure of success?
 - what have other jurisdictions tried, and with what measure of success?

An 8-fold path (2)

4. **identify interested and affected individuals and groups**

- who has an interest in this, and what is the nature of their interest?
- how do they see this problem/opportunity?
- what values are important to them?
- how might we factor emotions and moral intuitions into practical public reasoning about the right thing to do?
- how might we work together to create and re-create 'the public' and deepen the practice of democracy?

5. **determine scale and scope**

- will doing more of the same (only better) get us where we want to go (continuous improvement)?
- or do we need to do something completely different, in discontinuity with past practice (innovate)?
- can we identify a 'game changer'?



An 8-fold path (3)

6. **secure legitimacy and support**

- which options, at what cost, are most likely to secure a democratic (majority) mandate?
- how will we engage with others to build a coalition of interest and support?
- who needs to back this project, inside and outside government, so it is politically sustainable?
- who do we need to take with us, and who are we prepared to leave behind?
- how can we protect the dignity and rights of individuals and minorities while promoting the public good?

7. **build operational capacity**

- which is the best sector and agency to lead this project, and why?
- what resources do we need and when do we need them, and who might contribute these?
- what governance arrangements do we need?
- how might we mitigate identified risks?

8. **monitor and evaluate whether our actions make a difference**

- which indicators will we use to track progress?
- when, how and to whom will we provide monitoring reports?
- when and how will we evaluate effectiveness?

Ethical competencies for public office

- **civility**
 - respect constitutional conventions and the rule of law
 - demonstrate fidelity to the public good, and not only to private and sectoral interests
 - act only on the basis of principles that citizens could reasonably accept
- **confidence to engage in robust conversations about hard choices**
 - *depth* – look beneath the surface to underlying currents and trends
 - *breadth* – systemic focus, systematic thinking
 - *reach* – identify and address medium- to long-term risks and opportunities
- **commitment to a common good we can only create together**
 - facilitate public engagement and deepen the practice of democracy
 - co-create (co-design and co-produce) public value
 - develop and maintain networks and alliances that secure legitimacy and support for stable and sustainable policy
- **(un)common sense**
 - exercise practical wisdom (*phronesis*) acquired through cumulative experience
 - manage competing claims and values pluralism
 - build an overlapping consensus by means of practical, public reasoning

Creating public value

"Because of the focus on outcomes, public value focuses attention on, and is measured over, the medium to long term... Governments, dictated by electoral cycles, inevitably tend to focus on the shorter term, but public managers also have a responsibility to focus on the longer-term public interest, and to act as guardians of the public sphere in the interest of future generations yet unborn, who lack a voice in current decision-making."

– John Benington (2011) 'From private choice to public value?', p 49

"The limits of the possible are not given by the actual."

– John Rawls (2001) *Justice as Fairness: A restatement*, p 5

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