Assessing political acceptability through an analysis of the actors involved

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Why learn to assess political acceptability?

« The effects of alcohol on health are very important and well documented… if decision-makers knew they would prohibit publicity and marketing of alcohol. »
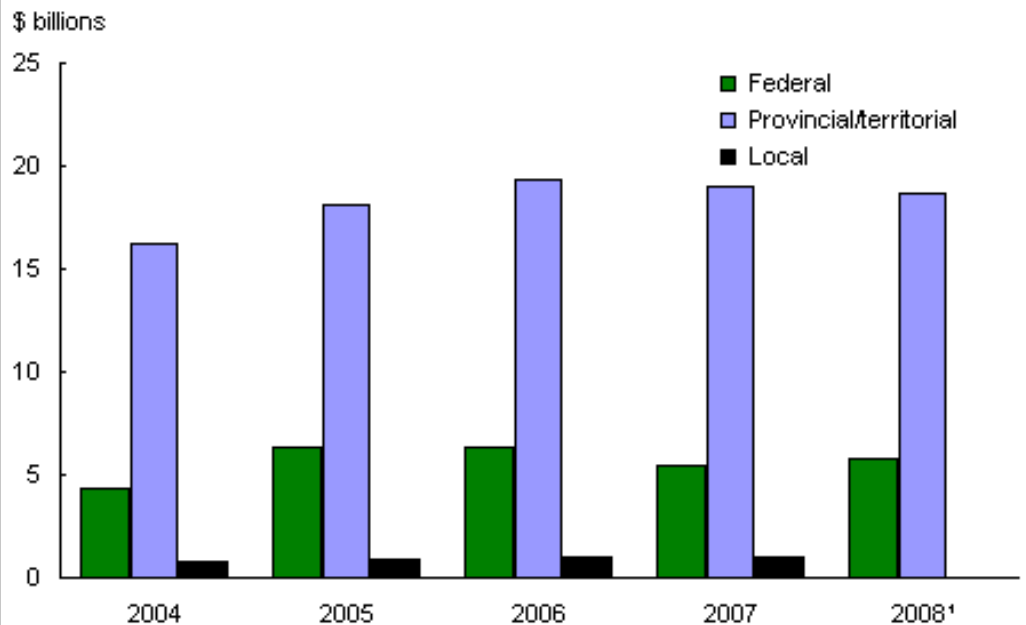
Evidence transfer is conceptually flawed

Leads to effectivity limitations

If they knew… would they?

Vested interests

Chart 16.3 After-tax profits of government business enterprises
$ billions

- Federal
- Provincial/territorial
- Local

Note: Fiscal year ending closest to December 31.
1. Local government data unavailable.
Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM tables 385-0015, 385-0030 and 385-0031.

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If they knew… would they?

Stabilized governmental rationalities

- The problems of alcohol

- Goals and effects of policies

- Role of State/individual responsibility

"Ultimately, minimum pricing punishes the vast majority of Canadians who enjoy their beer in an entirely responsible manner by reducing choice and raising cost."

http://www2.macleans.ca/2011/01/19/from-the-editors-2/

In other terms
public policies…

Can best be approached as a product and
catalyst of power relations between actors
with varying interests and rationalities

These power relations work to
define the problem at hand
and the appropriate solutions

Practical Exercise

Assess the political acceptability of traffic-calming measures by examining the position of various actors involved, their definition of the problem, their preferred solutions and the solutions that might be acceptable to them.

Traffic calming (TC)

Interventions that include engineering measures to slow or reduce motorized traffic at specific points of the street network or in an area

Goal of the exercise

NOT to promote the interventions or debate the pertinence of traffic calming

NOT to produce a comprehensive analysis nor design a comprehensive strategy

But rather practice a style of analysis and explore its strategic implications

What to do?

- 1. Make a list of possible stakeholders

- 2. Analyze:
  - Their interests/conceptions of the problems
  - How they see TC as a solution
  - And evaluate what could be acceptable to them