

Deliberative processes in the NCCHPP's method for synthesizing knowledge about public policies

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Centre de collaboration nationale
sur les politiques publiques et la santé
National Collaborating Centre
for Healthy Public Policy

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Why knowledge syntheses about public policies?

- Public policies are levers for action on the determinants of health
- Public health professionals are called upon to inform policy making

Why a specific method applicable to public policies?

- **A policy is not a simple intervention**
 - The decision maker is a public authority who is accountable
 - Applied at the population level
- **Beyond effectiveness**
 - Policy makers are interested in implementation issues
- **Beyond the literature**
 - Sometimes few studies have been published
 - Need to contextualize the data

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**METHOD FOR SYNTHESIZING KNOWLEDGE
ABOUT PUBLIC POLICIES**

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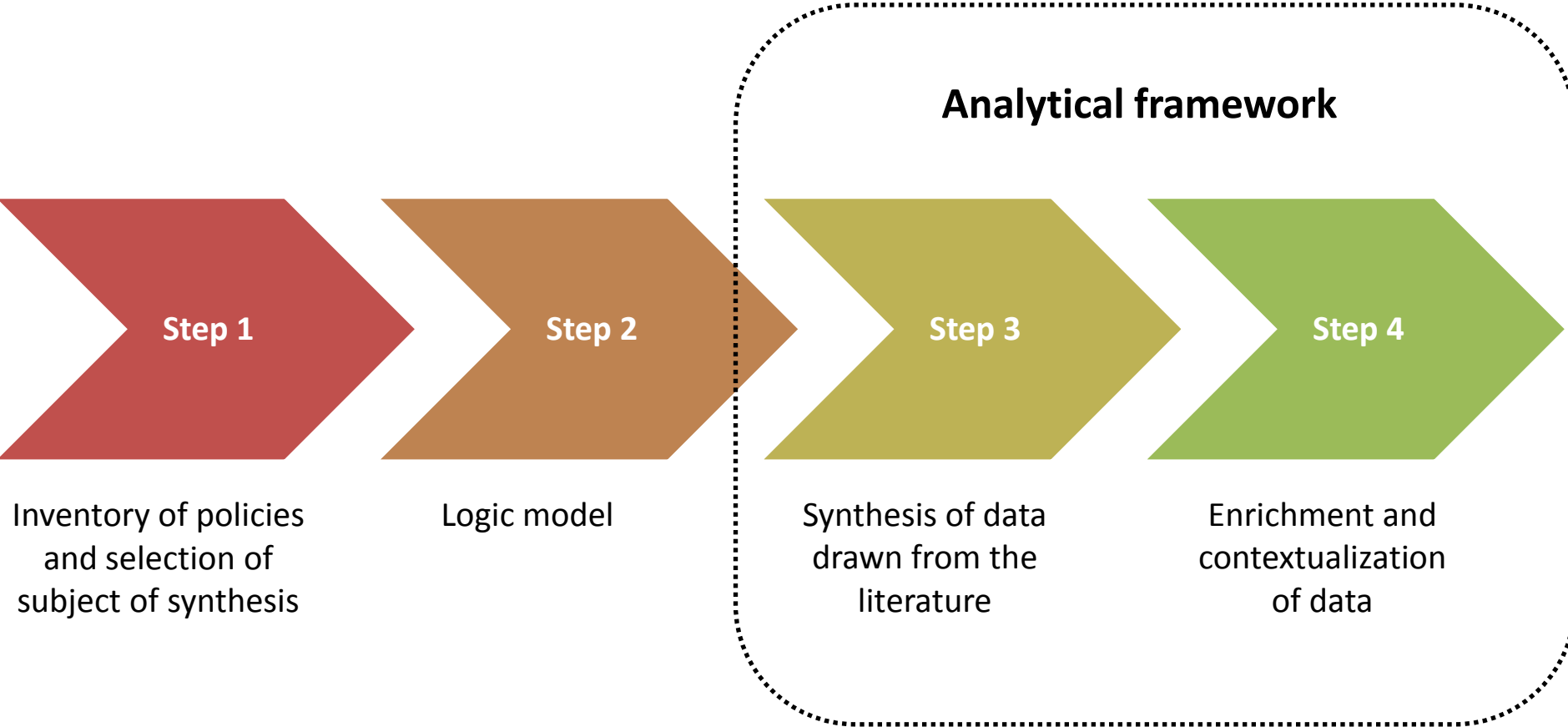
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Available at:

http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/MethodPP_EN.pdf

A synthesis in four steps



The NCCHPP's analytical framework

Effects	Effectiveness
	Unintended effects
	Equity
Implementation	Cost
	Feasibility
	Acceptability

Major sources of inspiration: Salamon, 2002; Swinburn et al., 2005

A framework for guiding data collection
Literature review & deliberative processes

What do we want to know about the policy under study?

Salamon, M. L. (2002). The New Governance and the Tools of Public Action: An Introduction. In L.M. Salamon (Ed.), *The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance* (pp. 1-47). New York: Oxford University Press.

Swinburn, B., Gill, T., & Kumanyika, S. (2005). Obesity prevention: A proposed framework for translating evidence into action. *Obesity Reviews*, 6, 23-33.

Analytical framework - Effects

- **Effectiveness** of the policy under study at addressing the targeted problem
- **Unintended effects**: Unrelated to the objective pursued

Positive or negative

- **Equity**: Effects on different groups

Effects	Effectiveness
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Analytical framework - Implementation

- **Cost:** *Financial* cost of implementing the public policy

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- **Feasibility:** *Technical* feasibility
- **Acceptability:** Stakeholders' judgement of the public policy

Step 4. Enrichment and contextualization

- You have completed your literature review
- But you are still concerned about certain things
 - Certain issues are not identified or addressed in the literature?
 - Transferability to your own context?
- A deliberative process can enrich and contextualize your literature review



How does it work in practice?

A **meeting** (by **invitation**) of a group of **10-20 key informants**

- Able to bring forward **knowledge** about the **expected effects** or the issues surrounding the potential **application** of the policy under study in their own context

- Balanced group representing **several perspectives**

E.g.: Experts, professionals, decision makers, civil society actors

From public health and other relevant sectors

From relevant geographic zone

Determined by level at which decisions about policy under study would be made and applied

How does it work in practice? (cont.)

- Send participants a **summary of the literature review** a few weeks prior to the meeting
- Make the objective clear: to **identify and clarify issues**
- The day of the meeting: The facilitator ensures that the **discussion is organized around the six dimensions** of the analytical framework

List of questions for each dimension, e.g. Acceptability:

. Which stakeholders will be affected by this public policy?

. What are their reactions to the idea of intervening to address the targeted health problem?

. What do they think of the proposed policy? Of the degree of coercion it involves?

...

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How does it work in practice? (cont.)

- Seek a balance between transparency and confidentiality

Chatham House Rule: “When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are **free to use the information** received, but **neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s)**, nor that of any other participant **may be revealed.**”

- Ideally, exchanges are **recorded**
 - To facilitate analysis
 - To ensure accuracy
- Recordings are transcribed, a **thematic analysis and synthesis** is produced and transmitted to the participants

Integrating the different kinds of knowledge gathered



In the knowledge synthesis report:

- Transparent description of the process
- Logic model of the policy under study
- Synthesis of data drawn from the:
 - Scientific literature
 - Grey literature
 - Deliberative processes

**On the 6 dimensions
of the analytical
framework**

The benefits expected from deliberation

Better
document
certain issues

Increase the
relevance of
the synthesis
to policy
makers

Knowledge
translation*

What are the risks (real or perceived)?

- **Scientific**

- Can be perceived as a threat to the scientific objectivity of the knowledge synthesis

- **Political**

- Some policy makers may not welcome the creation of a space for deliberation on certain politically sensitive issues

- **Project management**

- Organizing deliberative processes takes time and resources

- **Deliberation**


- Deliberations are driven by complex group dynamics
 - Difficulties related to inter-disciplinarity and intersectorality
 - Power relationships among participants

Example: Our deliberative processes about obesity prevention policies

Description

- 1 deliberative process in British Columbia, 2 in Ontario
- Same set of three public policies discussed in all 3 deliberative processes:
 - Regulation of television advertising of food directed at children
 - Nutrition labelling
 - Regulation of food environment in schools
- One-day meetings => 2-3 hours per policy
- Participants involved in the fight against obesity, mainly from public and non-profit organizations
 - Sectors: Public health, agri-food, education, physical activity, children's services

Lessons learned – What could be done differently?

- Identification of participants:
 - Some things about the policies discussed are decided at the federal level
 - Invite stakeholders from food industry, media, research community?
- Involve participants at several stages in the process?
 - May make them more aware of the project, more confident to express themselves
-  At an earlier stage, gaps in the literature are not known yet, hence it is not as clear who should be invited
- Organize one meeting per topic
 - Not everybody around the table could be a specialist of all three topics
 - ⇒ Resulted in rather vague data collected about implementation issues
- Longer meeting for each policy?

Lessons learned - Advantages

- For the knowledge synthesis:
 - Literature included little Canadian data: Need to confirm its applicability
 - Deliberation brought to light knowledge that was not found in the literature
 - Several deliberative processes on the same topic: Complementarity of knowledge collected
- For participants:
 - Made aware of new aspects to address in the context of their work
 - E.g.: unintended effects, acceptability
 - Opportunity for knowledge sharing and networking among participants from different sectors
 - vs. individual consultations



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