



WHAT'S THE EVIDENCE ON EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY? REFLECTIONS ON KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION IN PROVINCIAL RURAL POLICY

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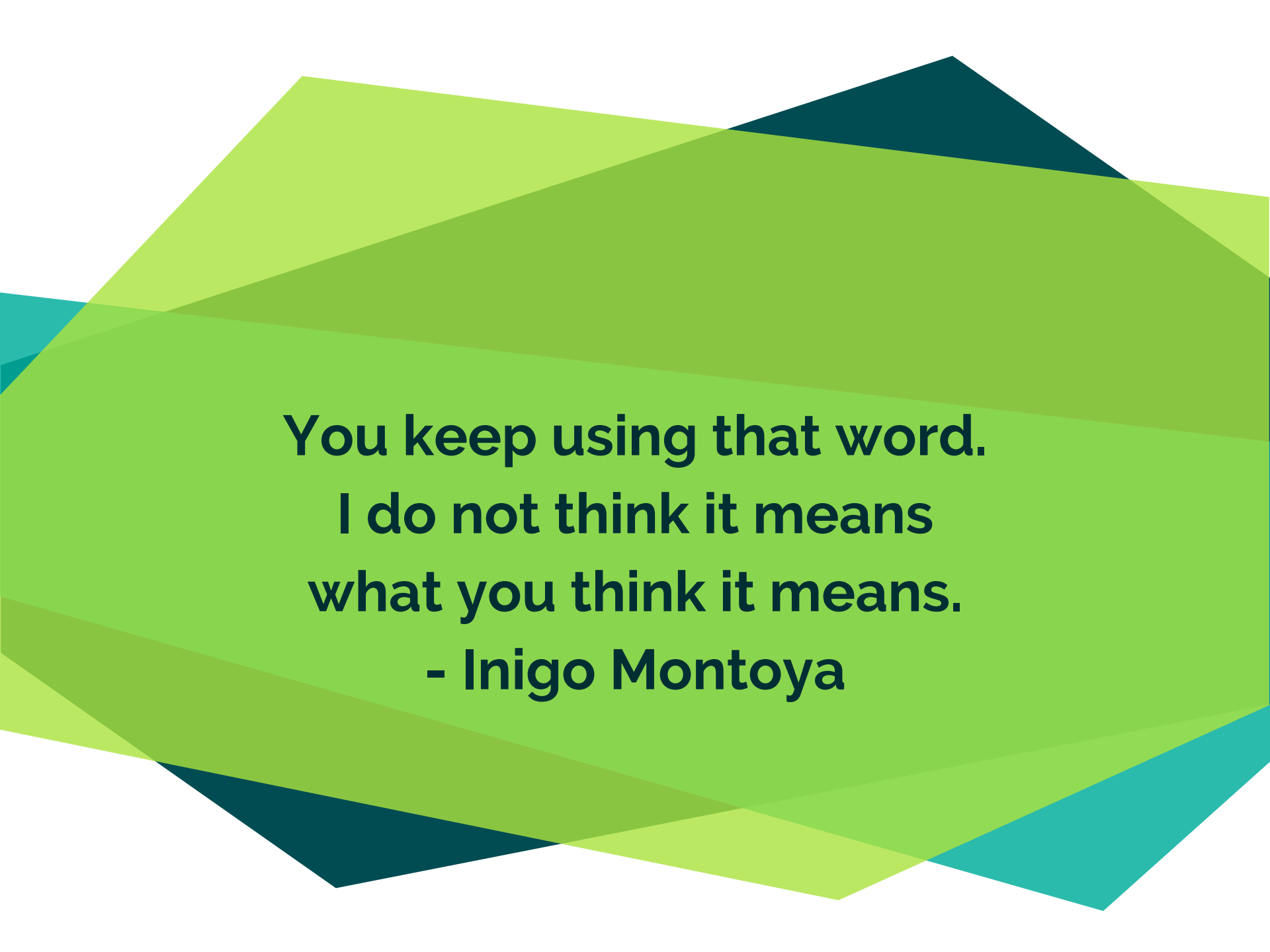
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HOW WE STUDY POLICY.... ...AND HOW IT ACTUALLY GETS MADE

- Public policy = anything governments do or do not do (Reimer & Bollman, 2009)
- Policy analysis can be for policy or of policy and seeks to provide alternative choices for policy makers (Colebatch, 2016; Gill & Saunders, 1992)
- Relatively recent endeavour, stemming from large-scale planning & public financial management of 1960s (Gill & Saunders, 1992)
- Often focused on macro-level processes that don't capture the micro-level human activities that underpin the mechanics of policy formation (Dunlop & Radaelli, 2017)
- **We tend to focus on the engine and not on the mechanics that maintain it**

WHAT'S THE EVIDENCE ON EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY?

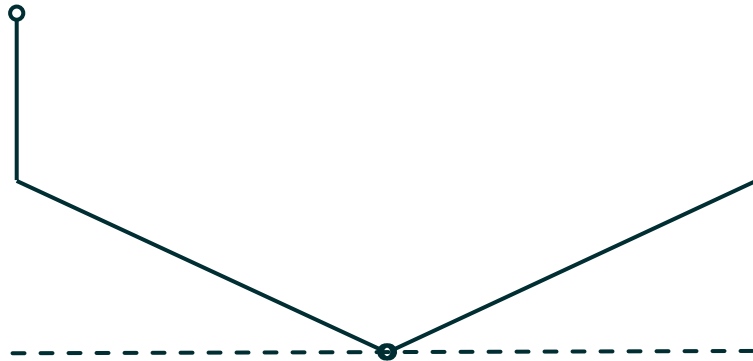
- Policy making neither begins nor ends with seemingly straightforward decisions about allocating resources: policy choices in the face of competing needs, goals & aspirations influences both the means and the ends of the policy process (Atkinson & Chandler, 1983)
- Very few studies that assess the practical importance of influence of what enables or creates barriers to knowledge mobilization in public policy (Oliver et al., 2014)
- Collectively, we're often fuzzy on what we mean by policy, evidence, policy-makers, policy-making, and the specific mechanics of a given policy cycle at each jurisdiction



**You keep using that word.
I do not think it means
what you think it means.
- Inigo Montoya**

INFORMATION

DATA



KNOWLEDGE

The background consists of several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in various shades of green and teal. The shapes are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The central text is placed on a light green shape that is prominent in the middle.


**Everybody wants to be
the first to go second.**

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CANADIAN PROVINCIAL RURAL POLICY?

- Interviewed policy makers from Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador
- Interviewees included former senior policy makers, junior policy analysts, and policy advocates external to government
- **Five key challenges identified to effectively using research evidence:**
 - **Difficulty accessing research evidence**
 - **Ineffective knowledge translation tools**
 - **Misalignment of academic research with policy needs**
 - **Slow research cycle versus fast policy cycle**
 - **Lack of political will to implement research findings**

RECONSIDERING EVIDENCE-BASED RURAL POLICY

- Interviews reinforce broader literature findings that: **“timely access to good quality and relevant research evidence, collaborations with policymakers and relationship- and skills-building with policymakers are reported to be the most important factors in influencing the use of evidence.”**
(Oliver et al., 2014)
- Evidence-based policy analysis seeks to avoid or limit policy failures generated from disconnects between government expectations and actual conditions in communities
- **However: movement to incorporate more and better evidence in the policy process hasn’t effectively altered the policy cycle**
(Newman, 2017; Newman, Cherney, & Head, 2017)
- **Need to develop clarity & consistency in terms of what constitutes evidence and matching program goals with policy instruments**



**We're not going to save the world by email,
you really have to come over
and say "hello."
- Robert Swan**

QUESTIONS?

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