



# What does Pawson (2006) mean by 'evidence-based policy'?

*Luke Griffin*

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Essay aus dem Jahr 2011 im Fachbereich Politik - Politische Theorie und Ideengeschichte, Macquarie University, Sprache: Deutsch, Abstract: Evidence-based policy (EBP) is a reoccurring theme in political rhetoric. Whenever a new policy is announced, it is invariably accompanied by a myriad of studies from various academic fields that are utilised to underline the necessity of the policy as well as why it is likely to have the desired effect. Using empirical evidence in order to formulate and justify public policy seems self-evident. However, many prominent social researchers, such as Ray Pawson, are critical of the way in which evidence-based policy is defined and, more importantly, of the current approach to using evidence within the policy-making process. This essay will begin by offering a critical overview of the interventionist approach that is currently applied to EBP. A comparison will then be made between 'interventionism' and Pawson's 'realist' approach, before examining Pawson's assertion that realism is essential to achieving good policy. This comparison will also be accompanied by some relevant examples that have arisen as a result of these different approaches. These examples, along with various critical assessments of interventionism will be used as a foundation for arguing in favour of an incremental shift towards a realist approach to EBP. Finally, potential problems and insufficiencies in Pawson's specific approach to EBP within a broader political context will also be highlighted.

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