

Evidence of What? A Framework for Analyzing Public Policies

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National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCHPP)

Our mandate

- Support public health actors in their efforts to promote healthy public policies

Our areas of expertise

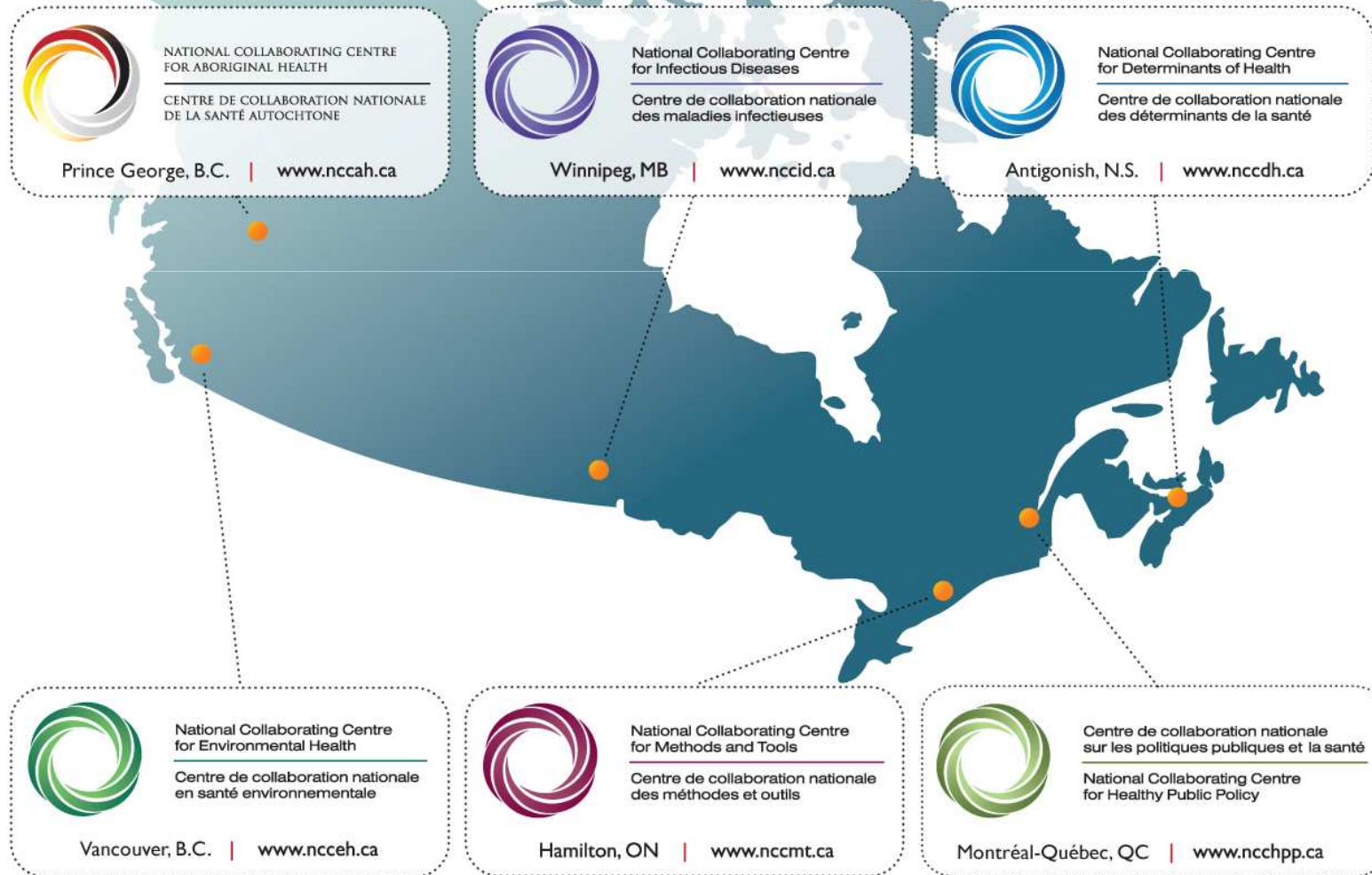
- The effects of public policies on health
- Generating and using knowledge about policies
- Intersectoral actors and mechanisms
- Strategies to influence policy making



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The National Collaborating Centres for Public Health



Objectives of the workshop

This is a **practically-oriented, interactive** workshop with **small group exercises**.

Learning objectives:

- **Define** six dimensions for analyzing public policies through theory and examples
- **Use** a list of questions related to these six dimension in order to generate relevant information about a particular healthy public policy



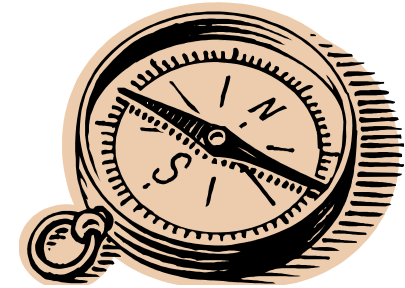
But what exactly is a “public policy”?



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The quest for a definition



- No agreed-upon definition
- NCCHPP: “A **strategic action** led by a **public authority** in order to limit or increase the presence of certain **phenomena within the population**”

➤ Public authority:

Any government at the federal, provincial, regional or municipal level

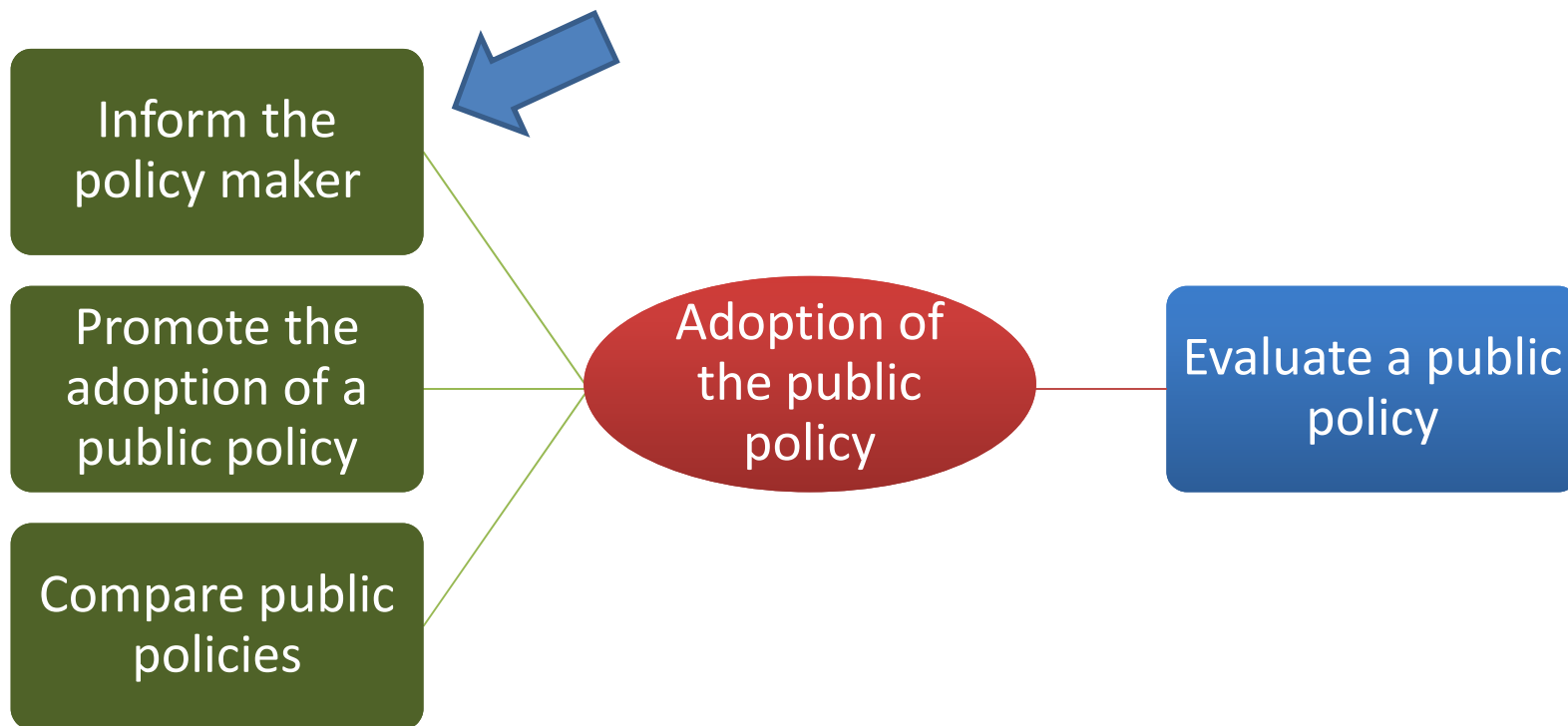
Source: NCCHPP, 2012, http://www.ncchpp.ca/62/What_We_Do.ccnpps



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When do we need to analyze public policies?



Imagine the following scenario...

You are a provincial Minister of Health.

You are concerned about the consumption of energy drinks by young people.



Your government is weighing the idea of banning the sale of energy drinks to those under 18 years old

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Small Group Exercise (10 minutes)

Your government is weighing the idea of **banning the sale of energy drinks to those under 18 years old**

Write down **ONE** question you are asking yourself about this policy proposal.

Be original!



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Evidence of What?

- Whether it is **effective** => Classic focus in public health

Will it work?

- Policy makers also want to know about the **implementation issues**

How can we make it work?



The NCCHPP's analytical framework

Effects	Effectiveness
	Unintended effects
	Equity
Implementation	Cost
	Feasibility
	Acceptability

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

List of elements to consider for each dimension



Using the analytical framework

- To guide data collection
 - In a literature review: scientific and grey literature
 - In a deliberative process
- To summarize informal or expert knowledge possessed about a policy
 - Assists reflection (individual or group)



Using the analytical framework (cont'd.)

- List of key questions for each dimension

List is **indicative**; answers to everything are rarely found

- Structuring: Extraction table

Reference	Characteristics of document	Status	Effectiveness	Unintended effects	Equity	Cost	Feasibility	Acceptability



Effectiveness

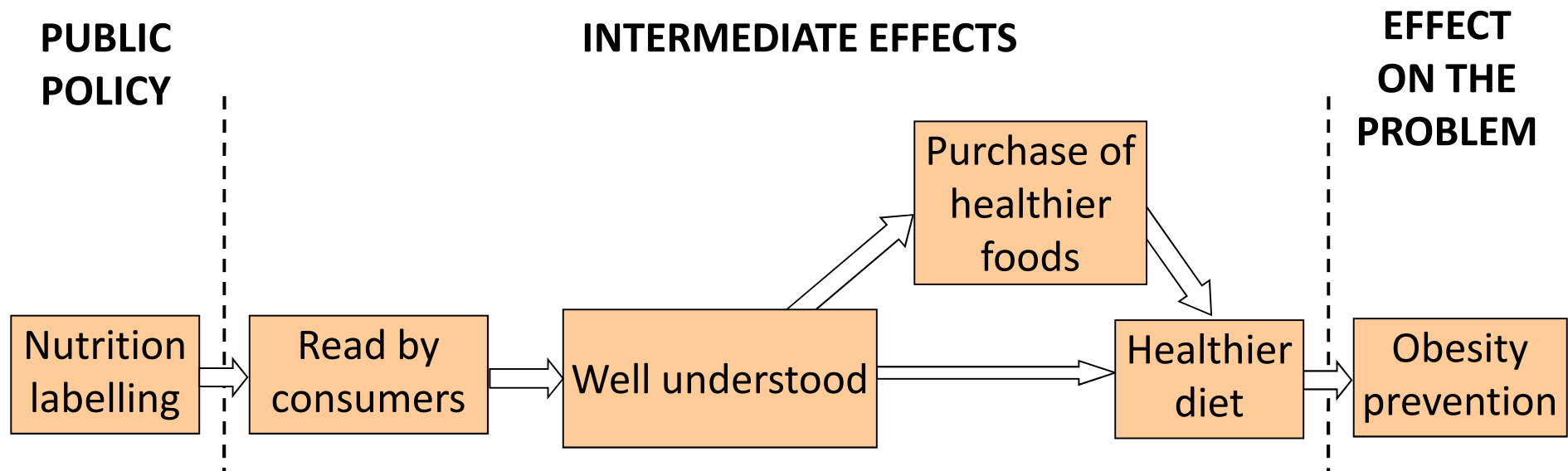
Remains the most important dimension of the analysis

- Effectiveness/ineffectiveness of the policy under study at addressing the targeted problem
- Intermediate effects

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An example of a logic model: Nutrition labelling



Effectiveness

Remains the most important dimension of the analysis

- Effectiveness/ineffectiveness of the policy under study at addressing the targeted problem
- Intermediate effects
- Plausibility of the intervention logic
- Impact of context on effectiveness
- Distribution of effects over time

Effects	Effectiveness
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Unintended effects

- Unrelated to the objective pursued
- Effects in all sorts of areas
 - Health (aspects other than the targeted problem), economic, political, environmental, tied to social relations, etc.
- Positive or negative
- Measures to mitigate negative effects?

Effects	Effectiveness
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Equity

Watch out for policies that improve the overall average but increase inequalities

- Differential effects of the policy under study on various groups

Groups defined by age, gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, residence in certain zones, sexual orientation, disabilities, etc.

- Effects on social inequalities in health

Effects	Effectiveness
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Any questions so far?

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Cost

- Costs related to implementation and gains
 - for the government
 - for other actors
- Distribution over time
 - One-time or recurrent costs
 - Immediate or deferred costs
 - Short or long-term investments
- Visibility
- Cost compared to that of other potential policies
 - Cost-effectiveness

Effects	Effectiveness
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Feasibility

- Availability of resources (human, material, "technological" ...)
- Conformity with all relevant legislation
Including: Levels of government
Mandate of sectors involved

- Existence of pilot programs
- Can the policy be administered by pre-existing mechanisms?

Effects	Effectiveness
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Feasibility (cont'd.)

- Number of actors involved in implementing the policy
- To what extent are the implementation activities being guided by the policy's promoters?
 - System of incentives and sanctions
- Quality of the cooperation among actors...
... and ability of opponents to interfere

Not necessary to document ALL these elements!



Acceptability

- How stakeholders view the policy under study
- Influenced by their knowledge, beliefs, values, interests, etc.

Effects	Effectiveness
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- Acceptability influences the adoption, implementation and potential for success of a policy
- Policy makers are subject to various forms of pressure that they wish to anticipate



Acceptability (cont'd.)

First: identify relevant stakeholders / actors:

Groups directly targeted by the policy, the wider public, gov't. ministries, municipalities, other policy makers, professionals from the relevant public sectors, funding agencies, industry, the media, political organizations, etc.

Second: For each actor concerned, as much as possible:

- Acceptability of acting on the problem—and how
- Acceptability of the policy under study:
 - Assessment of its effectiveness, unintended effects, equity, cost, and feasibility
 - Assessment of the degree of coercion involved (information vs. incentives vs. regulation)



Acceptability (cont'd.)

Second: (Continued) For each actor concerned:

- Acceptability of the conditions for adoption and implementation of a policy
Sometimes the *content* of a policy is accepted, but the *process* surrounding it is not
- Possible evolution of acceptability over time?

Low acceptability does not necessarily mean the policy should be discarded



Any questions about implementation?

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Small group exercise (10 min.)



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Where does your question fit in?



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