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PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

THIS IS NOT AN ENGLISH COURSE!

- Readings, discussions, and classes will be in English, but English is not the substance of the course

- The exam will be in the language you prefer

- My proposal is for a participatory / seminarial course and an exam based on a policy project

"GET READY FOR THE US 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS"
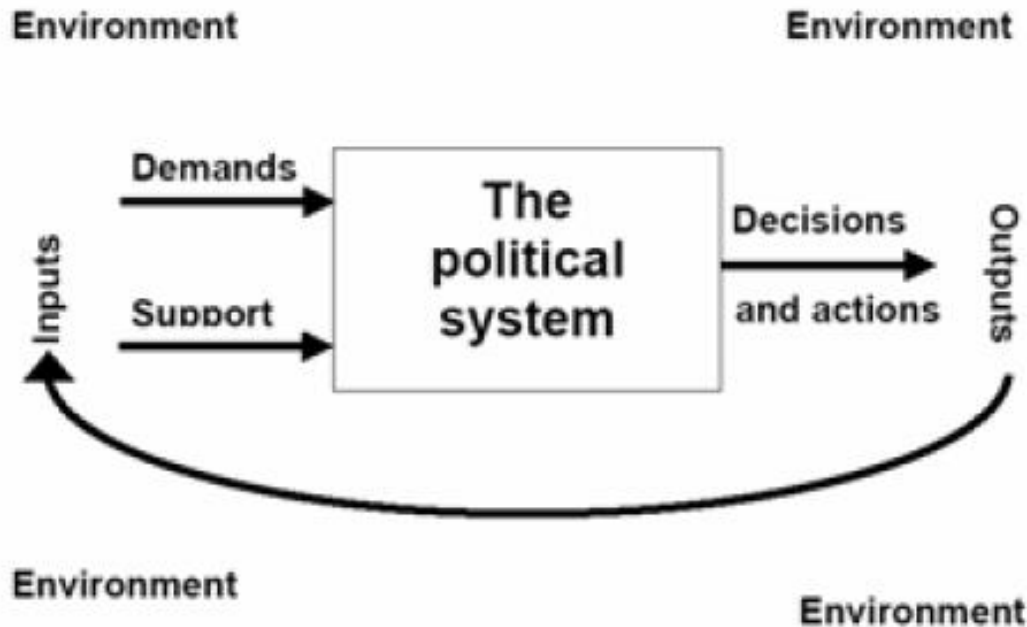
Schedule:

First meeting: Pandemic politics

22nd October

h. 5pm-6pm

Subscribe by email at: sbusetti@unite.it

EASTON (1953), THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

"Society is not especially concerned with power as a phenomenon in and of itself or with government as such. Its interest is always derived from a prior concern with policy»

WHAT IS POLICY ANALYSIS

Policy analysis is a process of multidisciplinary inquiry aiming at the creation, critical assessment, and communication of policy-relevant knowledge.

As a problem-solving discipline, it draws on social science methods, theories, and substantive findings to solve practical problems.

WHAT IS A PUBLIC POLICY

A set of actions for solving collective problems

- Policies are not (only) laws

- Power is only part of the story; government and administration only some of the relevant actors

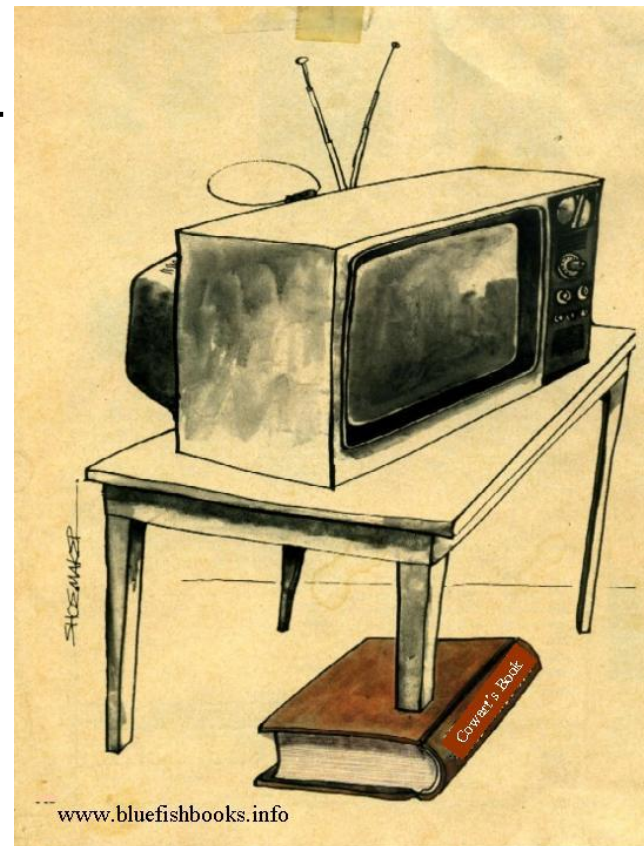- Social problems are the starting step of the analysis

PUBLIC POLICY: THEORY AND PRACTICE

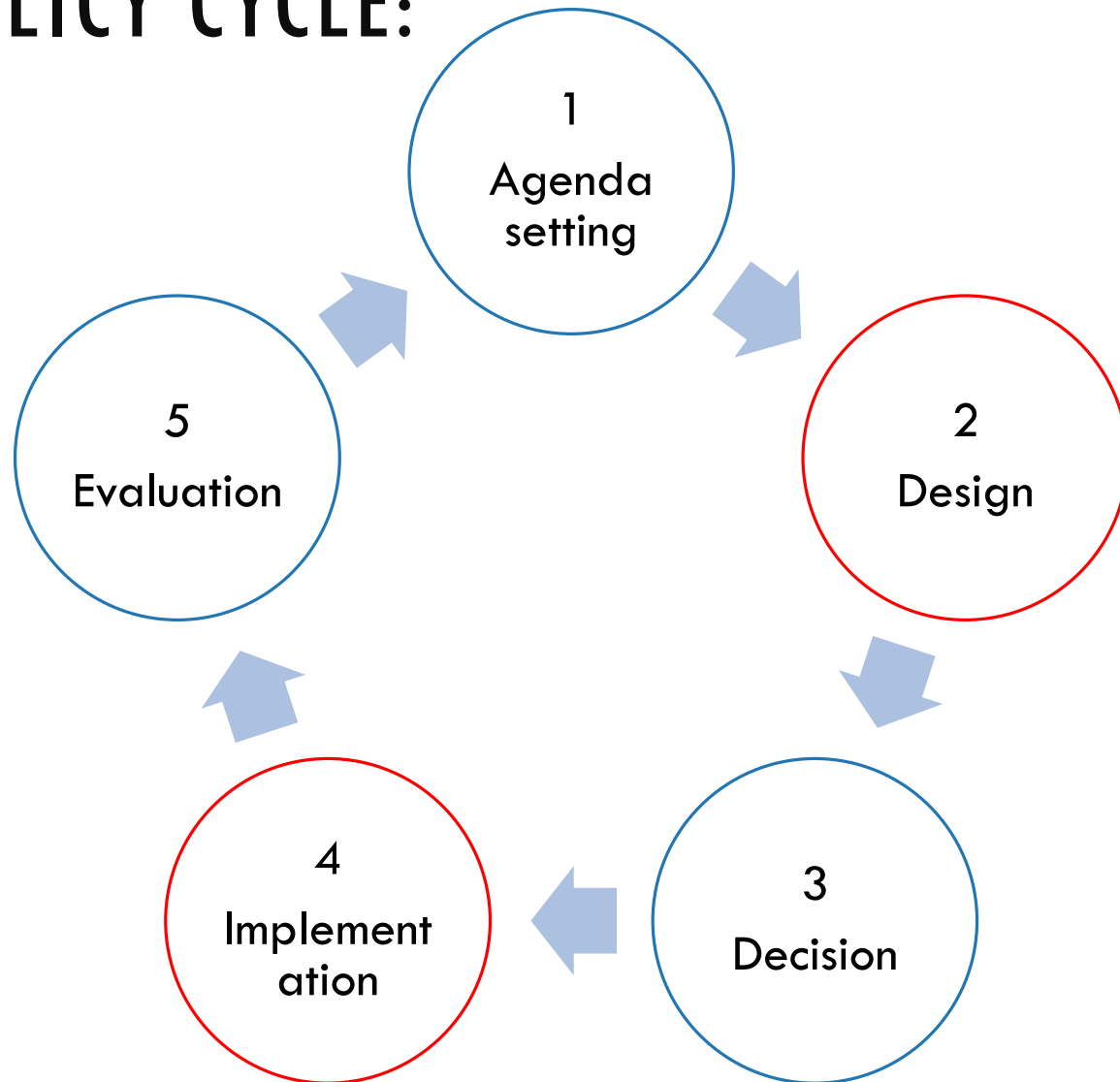Modern public policy was born with the expansion of government

It is descriptive, explanatory, and prescriptive

Mid-range theories vs. General laws

Policy-specific knowledge + design, decision, implementation and evaluation skills

www.bluefishbooks.info
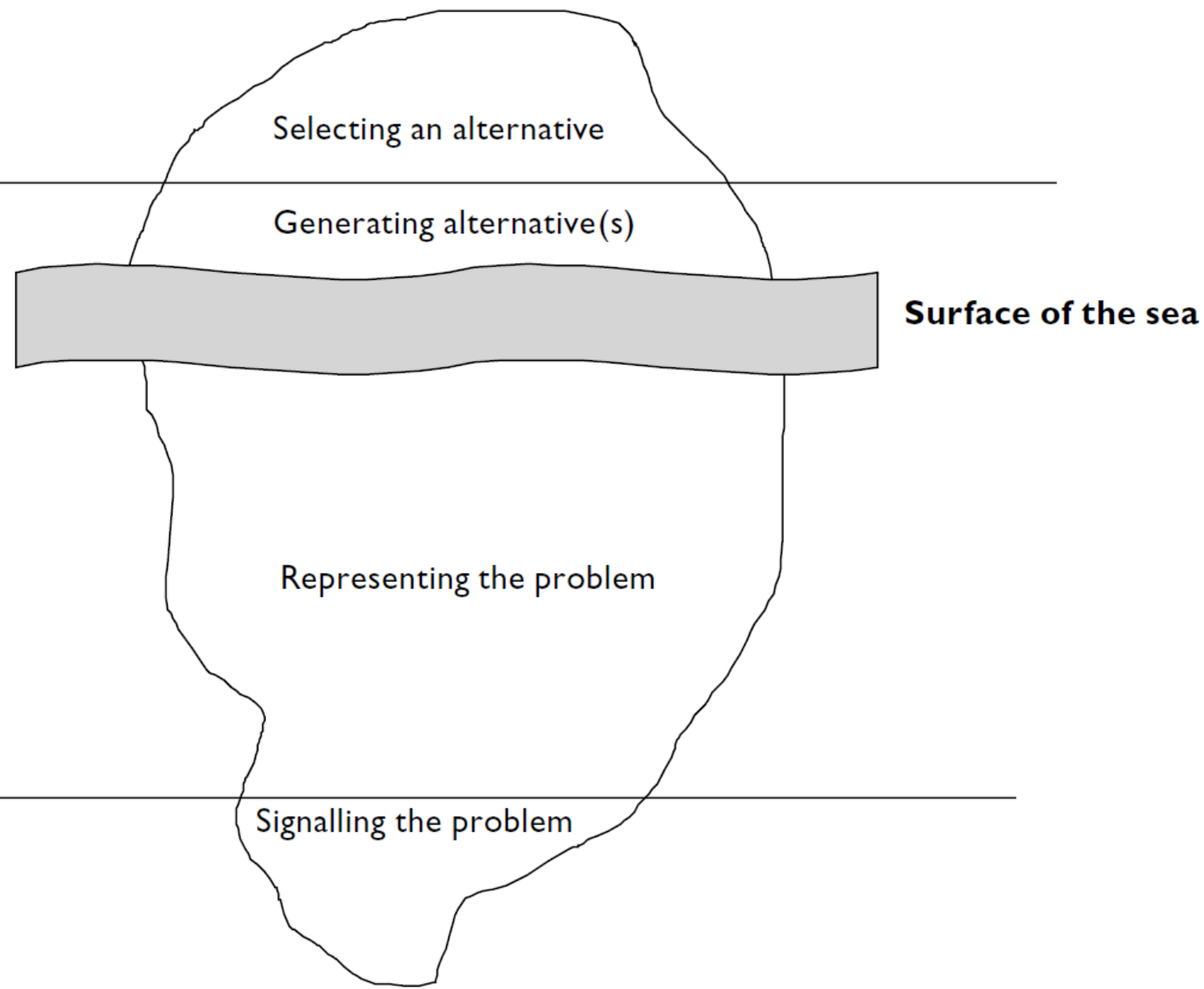
THE POLICY CYCLE:

1. PROBLEM STRUCTURING

WHAT IS A PROBLEM?

NATURE OF POLICY PROBLEMS

Policy problems are unrealized needs, values, or opportunities for improvement

How are problems defined?

-*Powering.* Interests, mobilisation, saliency

-*Puzzling.* Use knowledge and research to find solutions

-*Context.* Existing policies, tools, and capacities

Selecting an alternative

Generating alternative(s)

Surface of the sea

Representing the problem

Signalling the problem

PROBLEM SOLVING VS. PROBLEM FINDING

STRUCTURING PROBLEMS VS. PROBLEM SOLVING

Limits:

- Finding problems has no political capital.

- Problems enter the agenda when they are already structured and need quick solutions

- Different actors have different definitions of the problems

- Policy targets influence the way the government design policies
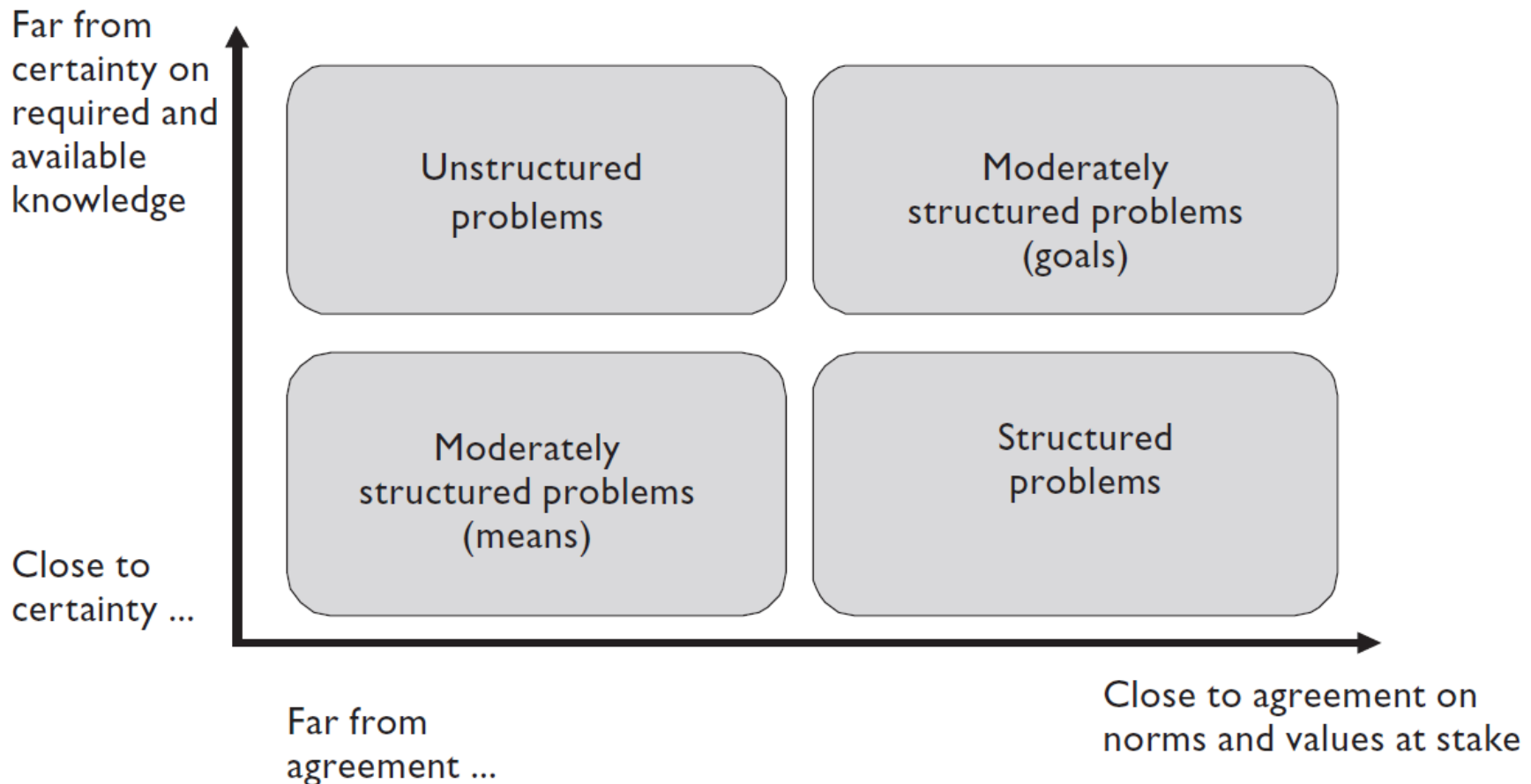
STRUCTURED AND UNSTRUCTURED

Table 3.1: Structured versus unstructured problems

	Structured problem	Unstructured problem
Testability	Definite criteria for testing proposed solutions; errors can be clearly pinpointed.	No single criteria system or solution rule exists; solutions are better or worse relative to one another.
Explanation	Clear explanation for gaps between 'is' and 'ought'; all knowledge is accurate and codified.	Many possible explanations for for same discrepancy; different explanations fit different solutions; not all knowledge articulable.
Tractability	One well-representable problem space, with exhaustive list of imaginable and permissible operations to transform initial state, through intermediate, to goal states.	Ambiguous and uncertain problem spaces; exhaustive, enumerable list of permissible operations not possible.
Finality	Clear solution and ending point; closure possible and observable.	No stopping rules (apart from practicable amounts of time for search and information processing); permanent vigilance required.
Reproducability and replicability	Can be made to repeat itself many times; trial and error under controlled conditions possible.	Essentially one-shot operation; limited possibilities for trial-and-error learning.

THINGS YOU WANT TO CONSIDER

1. DEFINING THE PROBLEM INTO THE SOLUTION:

Italian young people have no perception of risks from alcohol vs. Young people drink too much alcohol with respect to EU standards

2. UNCRITICALLY ACCEPT THE CAUSAL CHAIN:

Is true that alcohol availability impact on the problem?

3. TAKE A LIMITED PERSPECTIVE ON THE PROBLEM

Education? Social behavior? Culture? Family?

4. ACCEPTING THE SOCIAL DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

Is it really a problem?

PROBLEMS, CAUSES, SOLUTIONS

THE PROBLEM

people sleeping on the streets

↓

TARGET DEFINITION AND CAUSES

Homeless (not affordable houses)
Poor people (not enough money)
Criminals (criminogenic contexts)
Mentally ill (psychological illness)

↓

SOLUTIONS

Social housing
Social benefits
Policing and sanctioning
Psychological assistance

PROBLEMS ARE INTERTWINED

1. Salary
2. Employment
3. Microcrime
4. Ethnic ghettos
5. Skills
6. Infrastructure degra
7. Sense of community
8. …
9. …

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF TARGET POPULATION

1. Policymakers and designers define target groups in positive and negative terms.

2. Policies distribute costs and benefits accordingly

- Examples: Immigrants, Roma people, criminals, hiv+, drug addicted

PREVENTING THE USE OF DRUGS IN SWITZERLAND

Period	Policy makers	Target perception	Problem definition	Policies	Design strategy
1970s	Security experts, Cantons	Criminals	Limit the use of drugs	Repression	Powering
1985	Health professionals, Municipalities	Ill individuals	Recover drug addicts	Research, assistance, experimental approach	Puzzling
1990	Residents and shop owners	Anti-social individuals	NIMBY – Security in the neighbourhood	Localization	Powering

LIMITED FRAMING IN POLICY PROBLEMS: TRANSPORTATION DILEMMA

As the agency's policy analyst you are directed to show how all nine stops may be connected by four sections of highway. You are also told that these four sections of highway must be straight (no curves will be permitted) and that each new section must begin at the point where the last section stopped (the construction team will not be permitted to retrace its steps). You are then shown a map of the region (Figure 3.7) and asked to make a recommendation that will solve the director's problem.
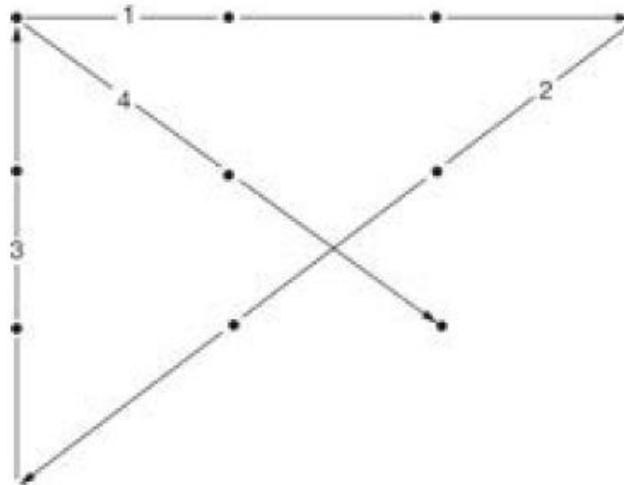
Marysville   Alexandria   Elizabethtowr
●   ●   ●

Morewood   Dithridge   Bunker Hill
●   ●   ●

FIGURE 3.7
Map of Transportation Points in Central Region

Oakhurst   O'Hara   Williamsburg
●   ●   ●

TRANSPORTATION DILEMMA: SOLUTION

Marysville   Alexandria   Elizabethtowr
•   •   •

Morewood   Dithridge   Bunker Hill
•   •   •

FIGURE 3.7
Map of Transportation   Oakhurst   O'Hara   Williamsburg
Points in Central Region   •   •   •

FIGURE 3.8
Solution for Nine-Dot Problem

HOW TO RESEARCH POLICY PROBLEMS?

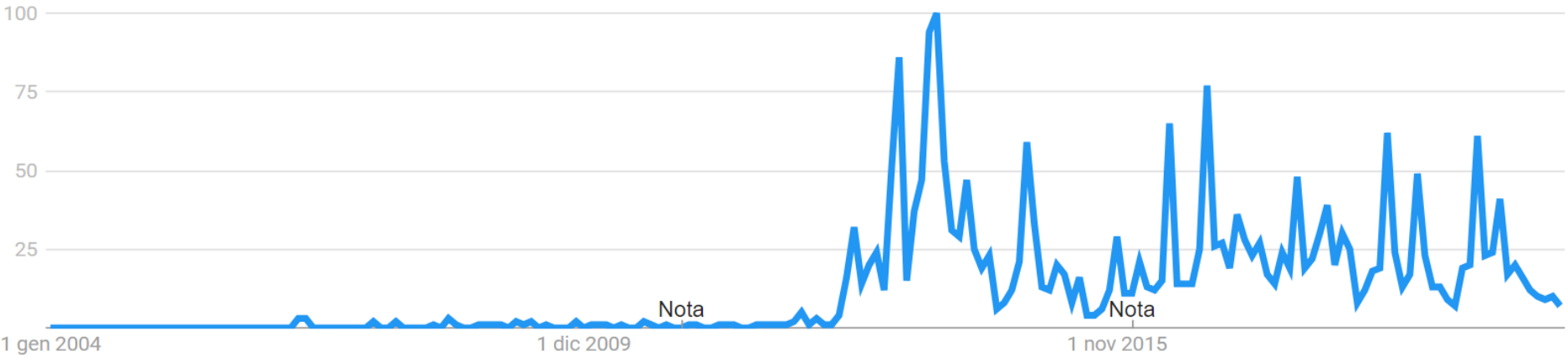**1: Collecting data**: on the problem, its causes, solutions, past policies, good practices

2: Stakeholder analysis: map all stakeholders and identify their interpretation of the problem, their goals, their preferred solutions

3: Causal mapping: collect data on what the science of the problem tells you about the causes of the problem
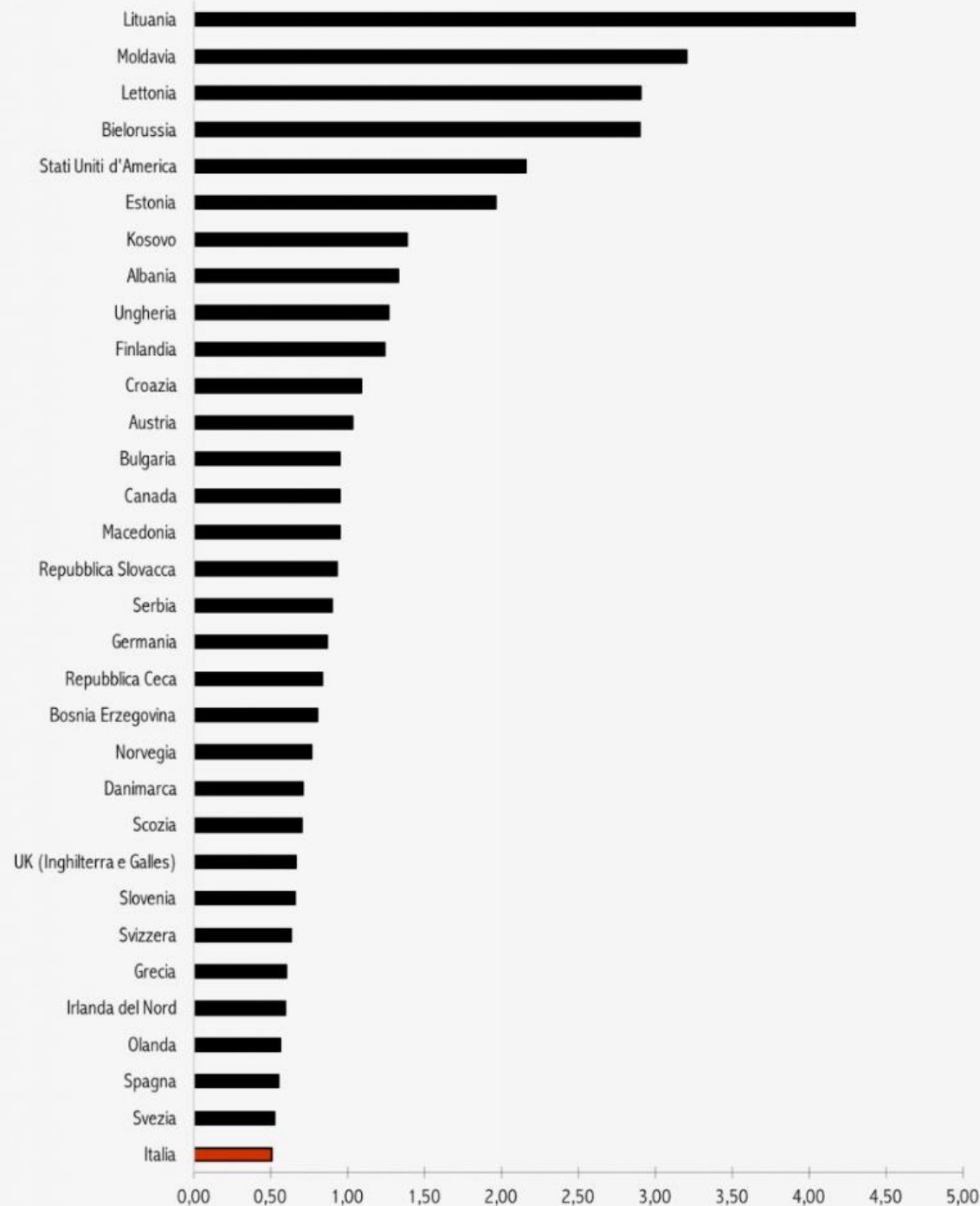
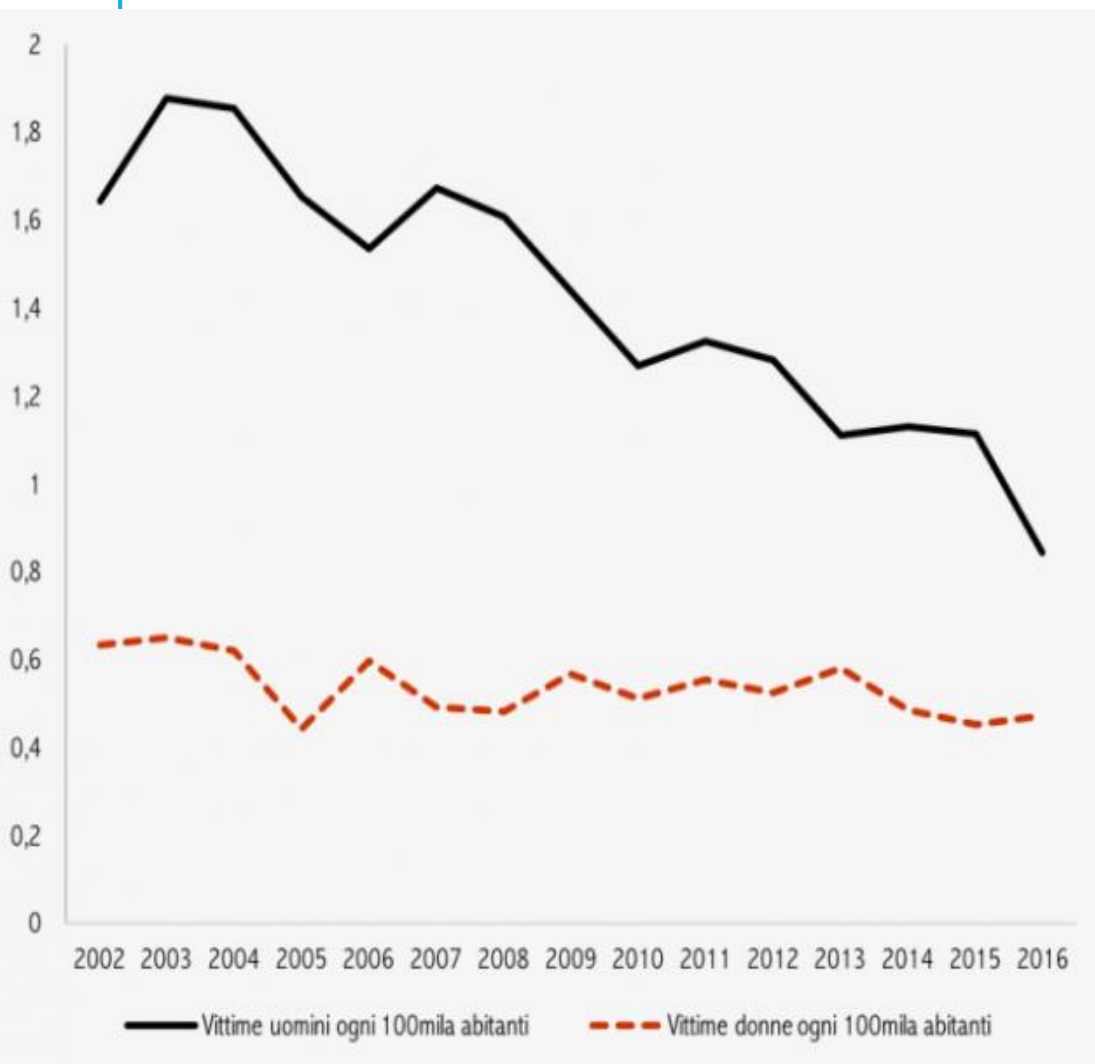# COLLECTING DATA

GOOGLE TRENDS: «FEMMINICIDIO»

An italian emergency?

Dalla Zuanna e Minello, 2017, Assassini di genere, Lavoce.info

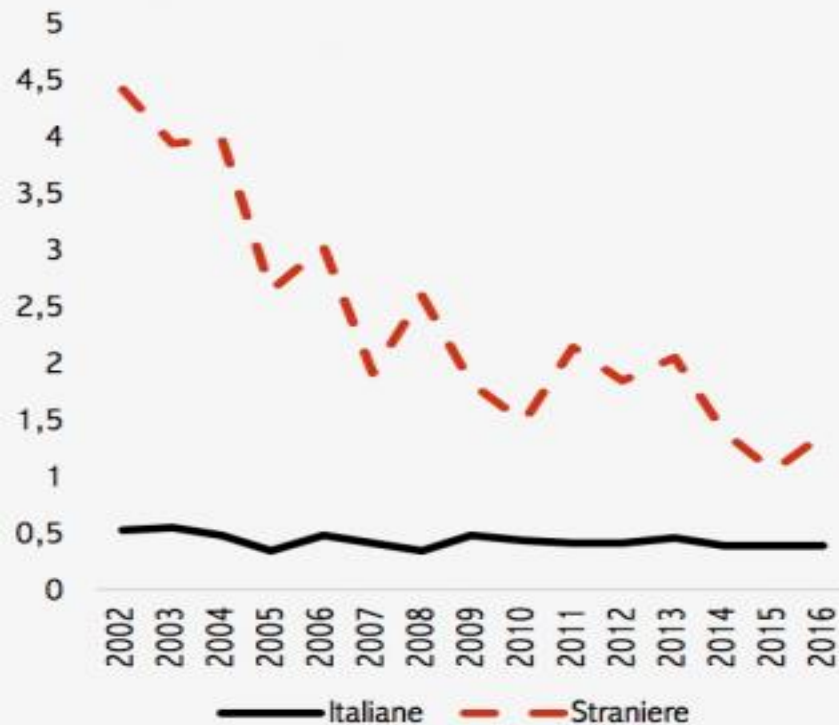Women killed per 100 thousand women, 2004 - 2015

A gender problem?

Dalla Zuanna e Minello, 2017, Assassini di genere, Lavoce.info

Average killed per100000 residents

Legend: Vittime uomini ogni 100mila abitanti — Vittime donne ogni 100mila abitanti

AN ETHNIC PROBLEM?

Vittime donne ogni 100mila residenti — Italiane / Straniere

Vittime donne per mano di partner o ex-partner ogni 100.000 residenti — Italiane / Straniere

2. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS
CAP GREENING – COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Private companies and their associations: "the environment is a market problem; overregulation is a cost for companies and consumers alike; reduce regulations; do not condition funding to environmental standards"

EU Commission: "the environment is a common good; one that no state can really regulate by itself; agriculture has a major impact on the environment; a common regulation is needed to avoid market imbalances"

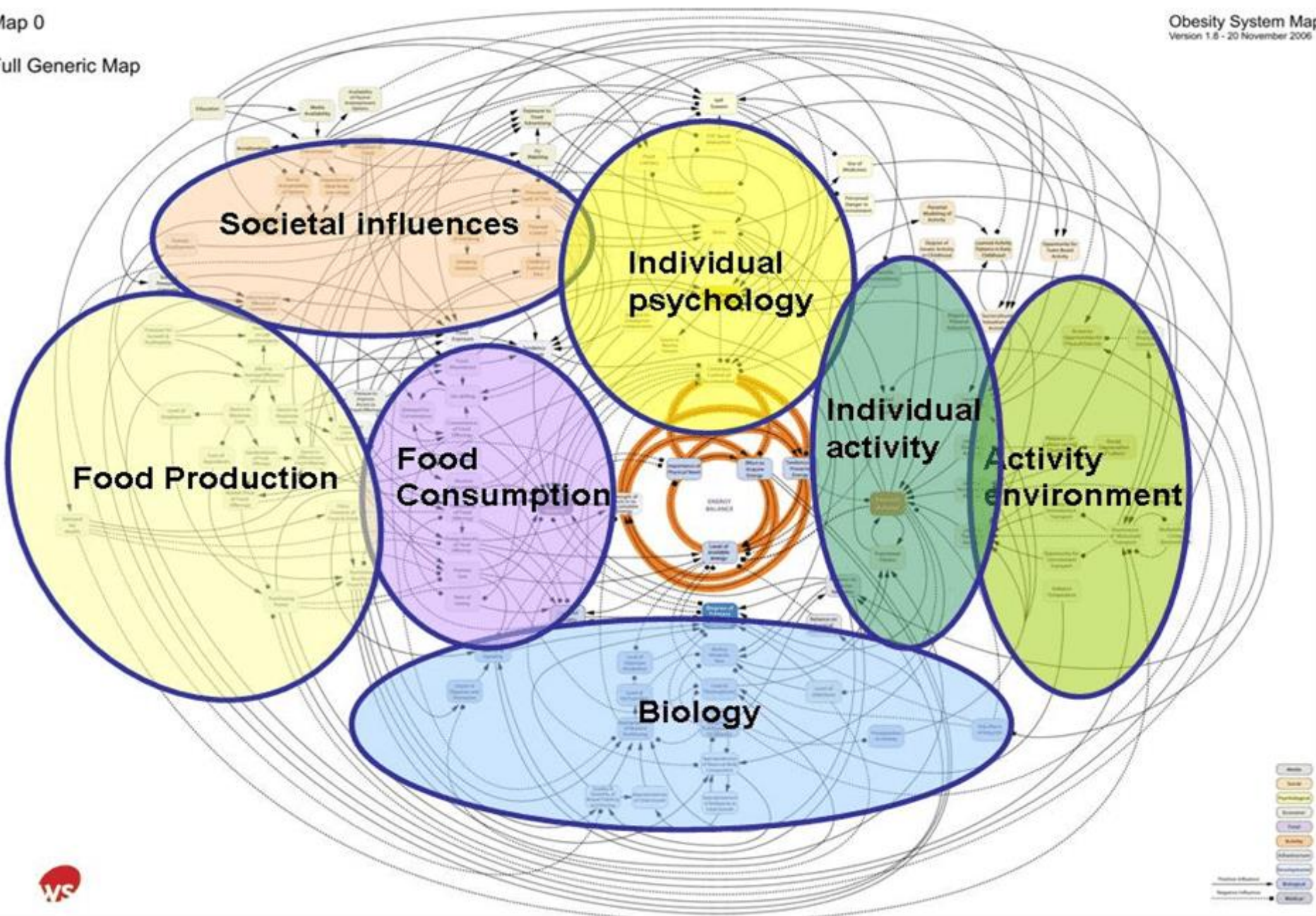**Non agricultural member states**: "all money for agriculture is likely to drug the market; if environmental protection is the goal of the policy, then all money should be conditioned to greening and funds for agriculture should be reduced"

Agricultural member states: "some products, such as wine, are too costly to be subject to environmental limits; exclude those products; expand budget as much as possible"

3. CAUSAL MAPPING: OBESITY

Obesity is among the greatest predictors for NCDs: cardiovascular diseases (like heart attacks and stroke), cancers, chronic respiratory diseases (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma) and diabetes...

Complex causal map: dietary habits, sport, high-fat food, sugar, urban planning and jobs, education, socio-economic status...

shift[n] Obesity System Influence Diagram

Full Map
Clusters
Core Loop
Individual Psychology
Social Psychology
Individual Activity
Activity Environment
Food Consumption
Food Production
Individual Physiology
Physiology

Media
Social
Psychological
Economic
Food
Activity
Infrastructure
Developmental
Biological
Medical

Negative Influence
Positive Influence

shift[n]
clarity in complexity

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Map 0

Full Generic Map

Societal influences

Individual psychology

Food Production

Food Consumption

Individual activity

Activity environment

Biology

THIRD TYPE ERROR:
A VERY EFFECTIVE SOLUTION
FOR THE WRONG PROBLEM

"Successful problem solving requires finding the right solution to the right problem. We fail more often because we solve the wrong problem than because we get the wrong solution to the right problem."
— **Russell Ackoff**

SUMMING UP:

Problem structuring is key:

1. Designing is path-dependent

2. Several limits – cognitive, organisational, political, social – to defining the solution (puzzling).

3. Policy innovation – solving an old problem with new tools or solving a new problem – may depend on framing the problem differently