Public Policies on Drug Treatment

- A hemispheric vision

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Organization of
American States

- *"The response ... to drug abuse is best organized and guided by a public policy [bold and italics added] and a strategic framework."*

- *"The development of contemporary treatment responses to drug abuse at the local, regional or national level is best guided by a public policy [bold and italics added] and a planning process to develop the strategic framework."*

UNODC, 2003

Contents

- Introduction: General comments on public policies.
- The public drug treatment policy cycle.
- Identification of relevant issues.
- Final comments/challenges.

Public Policy

The position taken by the state regarding an issue society deems problematic.

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Public policy

"A group of actions and omissions that manifest in a modality of State intervention in relation to a point that calls the attention, the interest and the mobilization of other actors in the civil society."

Oszlak and O'Donnell, 1981

Content of public policy

- A framework for the problem
- A group of institutional, administrative, and program measures (to be implemented by the state, civil society organizations, and social institutions) [unofficial translation].

(Huenchuan, 2003)

Public policy on drugs:

Actions organized by the state to address the social, economic, and cultural consequences of drug use by part of the public.

"... policy ... means identifying the major issues and objectives, defining the respective roles of the public and private sectors in financing and provision, and identifying policy instruments and organizational arrangements required in the public and possibly in the private sectors to meet ... objectives ... prompting action for capacity building and organizational development, and providing guidance for prioritizing expenditure, thus linking analysis of problems to decisions about resource allocation."[1]

[1] WHO: The World Health Report 2001

Usefulness of Policy (UNODC, 2003)

- Defines the scale and scope of problems.
- Summarizes the perception of the issue. Designates the party with responsibility for policy administration.
- Describes the functions of each stakeholder.
- Describes how the community will participate and how it will be represented.
- Provides the legal framework for treatment and sets out treatment provisions.
- Describes the treatment supply.
- Indicates available resources.
- Defines anticipated results and evaluation mechanisms.
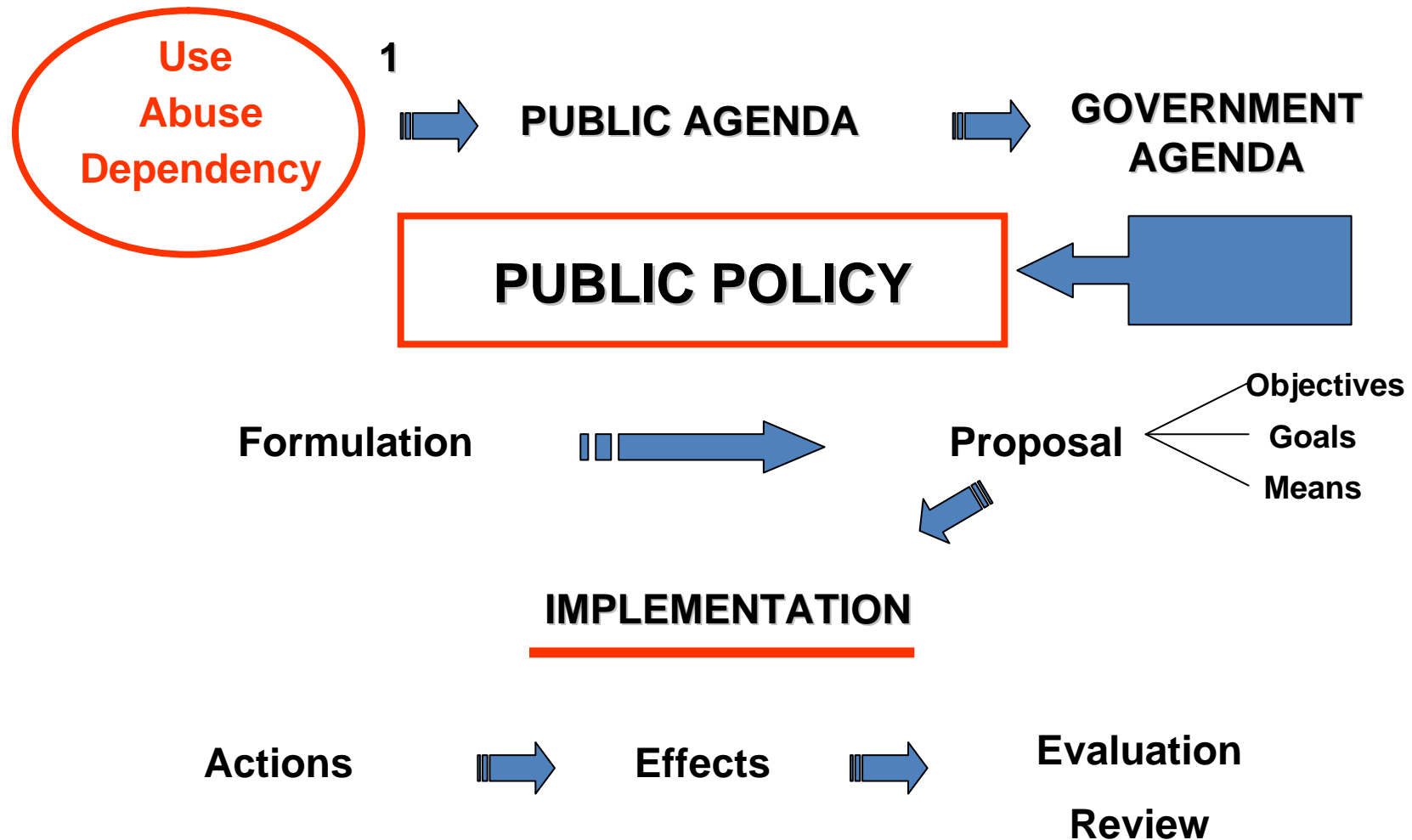- Provides for monitoring of implementation.

How does a public issue become a governmental or state issue?

Public policy cycle

Use Abuse Dependency   1   →   **PUBLIC AGENDA**   →   **GOVERNMENT AGENDA**

PUBLIC POLICY   ←

Formulation   →   Proposal   —   Objectives / Goals / Means

IMPLEMENTATION

Actions   →   Effects   →   Evaluation Review

1. Define treatment of drug abuse and dependency as a "social problem"

Whether a solution can be identified depends on how well the problem is defined ...

Definition of the problem

- – What is *the problem* and what type is it?
- – What are its *causes or determining factors*?
- – What *information* do we have?
- – What are its *dynamics*?
- – Who is *affected*? How?
- – Whom does it *concern*?
- – What *power* does it have to influence a policy decision?

Rationale for considering drug treatment a problem:

- It is the subject of much attention and/or knowledge √

- Public demand for action exists √

- It is within the competence of a public entity √

The drug treatment problem:

- Health
  - Chronic relapsing disease
  - Highly correlated with early mortality
  - Co-morbidity
- Poverty
- Exclusion/social integration
- Rights

Exclusion/Integration

Social exclusion (ILO, 1995)

Multidimensional phenomenon involving economic, political, and cultural aspects that combine to thwart the capacity of societal groups and individuals to alter their position in society (income, social position)
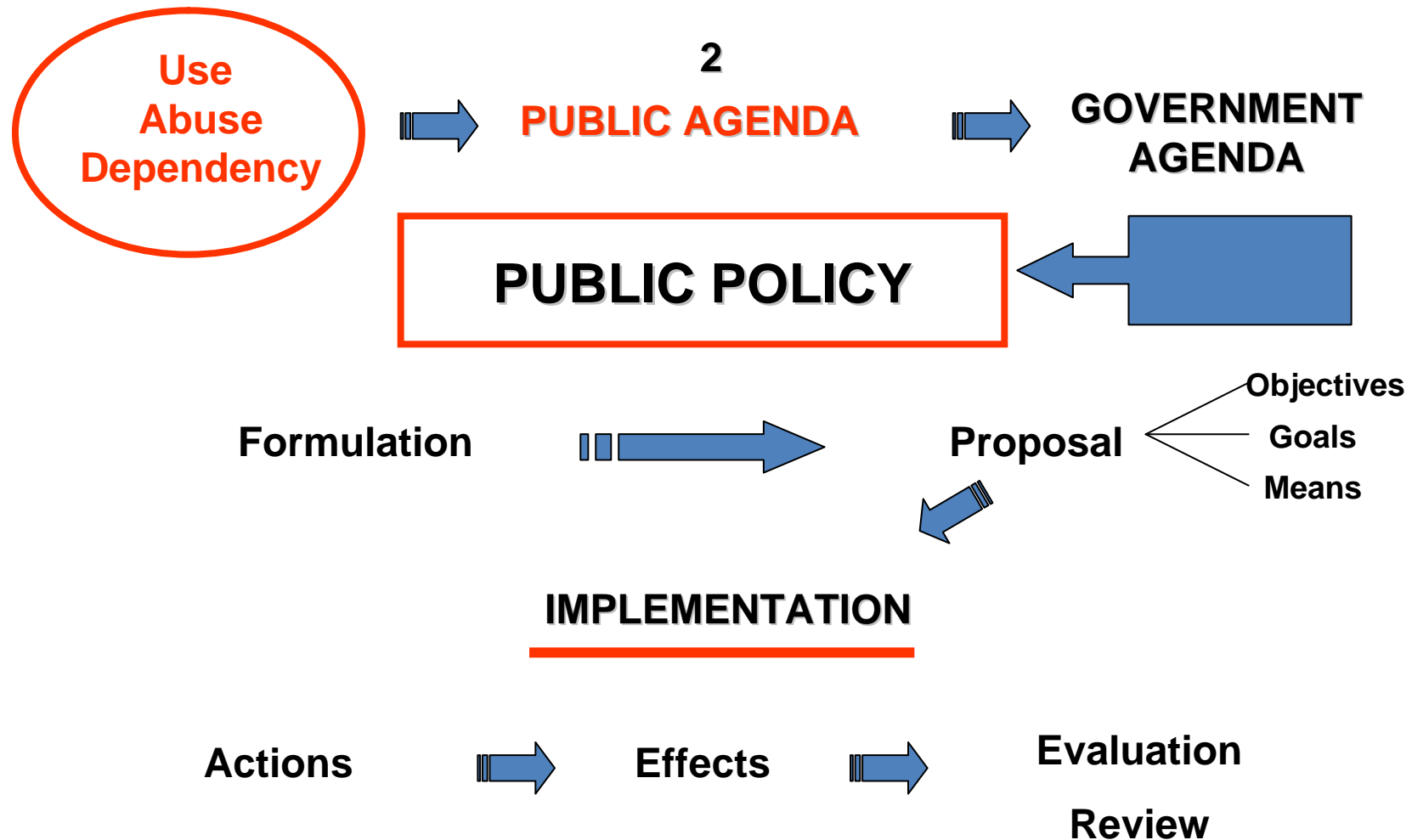
Social integration (Huenchuan, 2003)

Society as a system – harmonious or in conflict – which should tend towards order, synchronization, and discipline of its members ...

Subjects should adhere to the system and maintain the structure

Public policy cycle

Organization of American States

Use Abuse Dependency → **2 PUBLIC AGENDA** → **GOVERNMENT AGENDA**

PUBLIC POLICY

Formulation → Proposal
- Objectives
- Goals
- Means

IMPLEMENTATION

Actions → Effects → Evaluation
Review

Public agenda

Abstract, general, broad

All matters that the members of a political community deem to warrant public attention and that are within the competence of the existing governmental authority [unofficial translation].
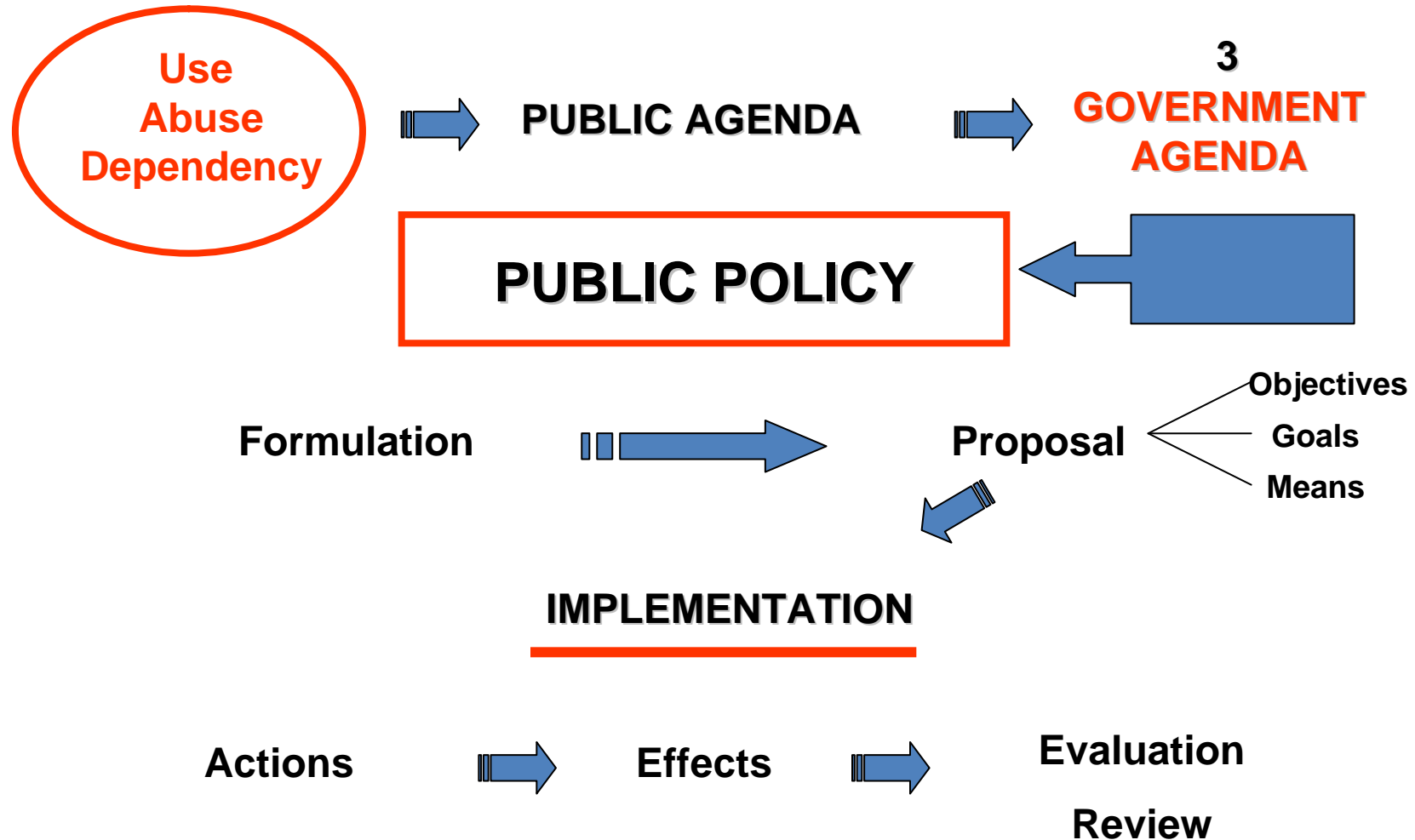
Huenchuan, S. (2003)

2. Inclusion on the public agenda

- Who initiated and who maintains the effectiveness of drug treatment as a social problem?

- Can cycles or fluctuations of public interest be identified and on what do they depend?

Organization of
American States

**Use
Abuse
Dependency** → **PUBLIC AGENDA** → **3
GOVERNMENT
AGENDA**

PUBLIC POLICY ←

Formulation → Proposal ⟨ Objectives
Goals
Means

IMPLEMENTATION

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Government agenda

Specific, concrete, limited

A group of problems, demands, issues, and matters selected and organized by leaders as objects of their action and, more precisely, as objects of their decision to act [unofficial translation].
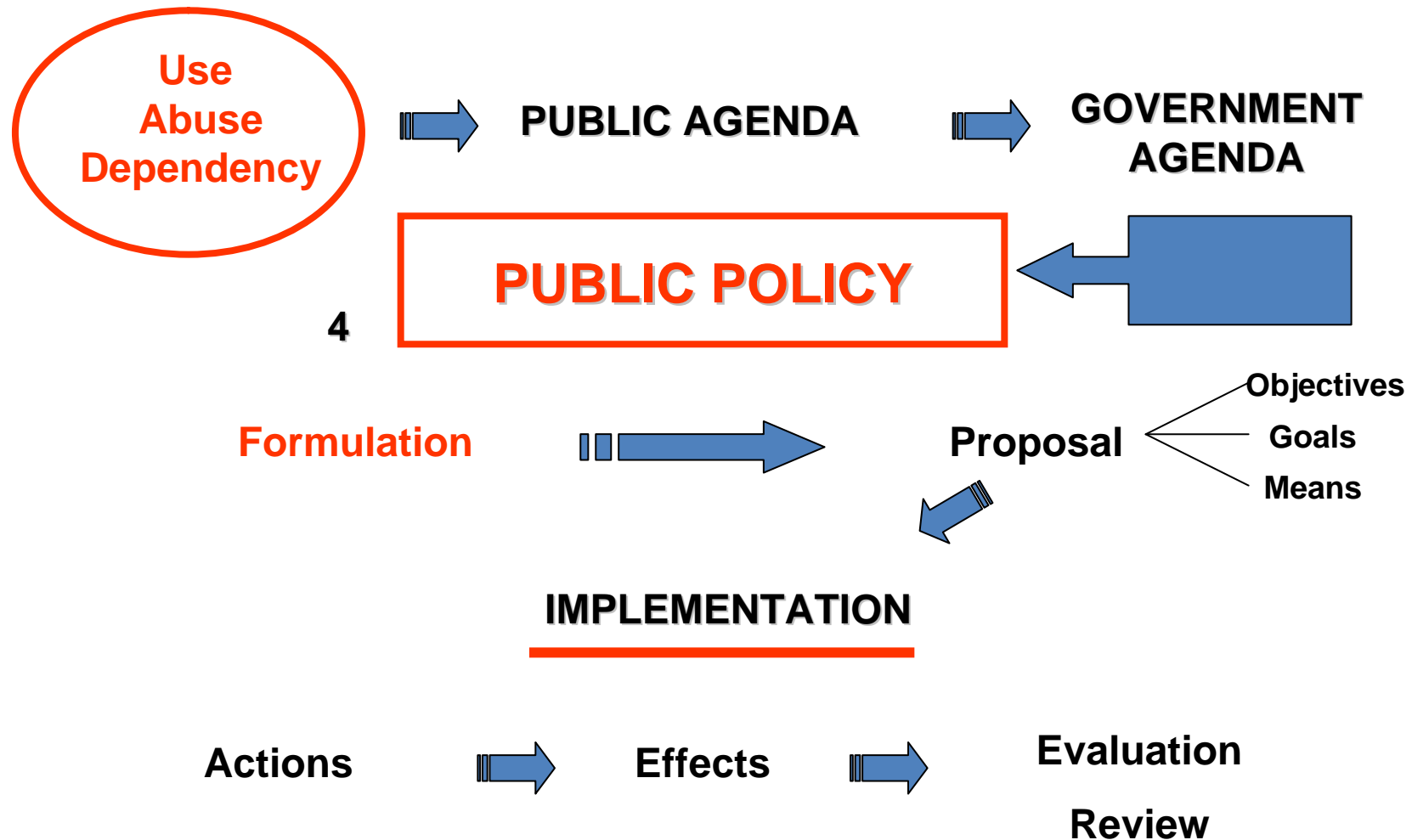
Huenchuan, S. (2003)

3. Inclusion on the government agenda

- *Should the issue* of drug abuse and drug dependency treatment be included in the public policy framework?

- What is the *composition of forces* that favor and oppose?

- Is the issue of drug abuse and drug dependency treatment included in the *configuration of problems* defined by the leading sectors of society?

Public policy cycle

Use Abuse Dependency ➡ **PUBLIC AGENDA** ➡ **GOVERNMENT AGENDA**

PUBLIC POLICY ⬅

4

Formulation ➡ **Proposal**
- Objectives
- Goals
- Means

IMPLEMENTATION

Actions ➡ **Effects** ➡ **Evaluation**

Review

4. Development of treatment policy

Potential effects:

- - _Coverage and quality of services._

- ‾ _Impact of the problem on the different affected sectors._

- _Alters the correlation of forces among the different societal stakeholders involved._

Policy formulation

Policy networks (Arenas)

- Treatment experts and professionals.
- Exchange of technologies, concepts, and skills.
- Expert groups or "task forces"
- Similar reference frameworks.
- Search for common solutions.
- Partnerships based on the logic of the group's interest.

Treatment policy

- **Institutional basis:**
  - Subordinate areas (institute, service, council)
- **Legal basis:**
  - Program law
- **Actions:**
  - Treatment plan
  - Treatment program
  - Projects

Government policy vs. state policy

Government policy

- Policy document or plan, not necessarily based on a law
- Determined by the priorities of the executive
- Limited to the duration of the government's term of office

State policy

- Institutional basis
- Legal basis
- Survives administrations
- Broad consensus in its formulation

Policy criteria *(PAHO-AMNET, 2008)*

§ Equity: equitable societal distribution of costs and benefits

§ Economic and social costs

§ Burden

§ Effectiveness cost

§ Economic efficiency

§ Timeliness

§ Morbidity

§ Mortality

§ Special groups impacted

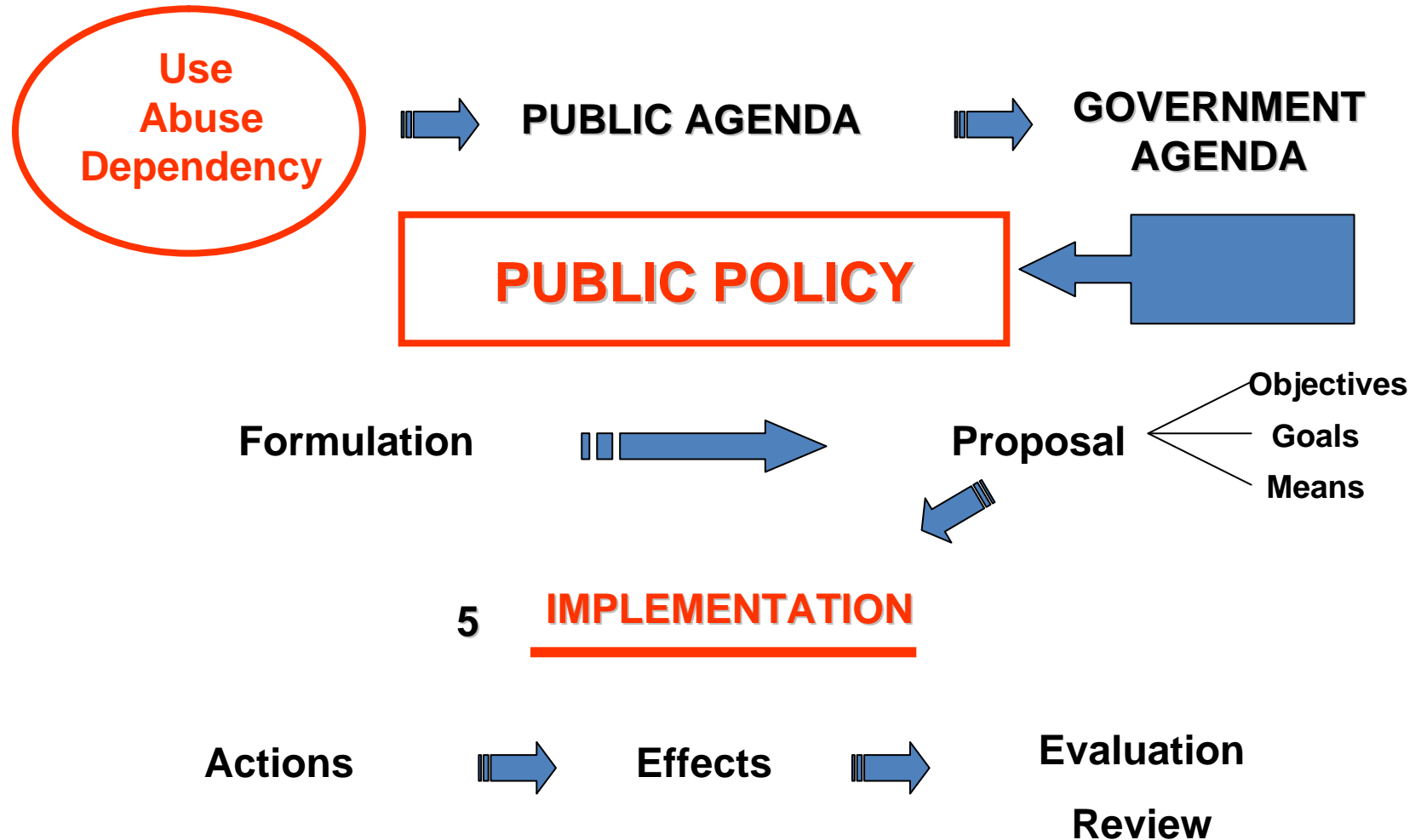§ Feasibility

§ Sustainability

§ Security

- "... mental health, alcohol and drug policies must be formulated [bold added] within the context of a complex body of government health, welfare and general social policies. Social, political and economic realities must be recognized at local, regional and national levels."

WHO: The World Health Report 2001

Public policy cycle

Use Abuse Dependency ➡ **PUBLIC AGENDA** ➡ **GOVERNMENT AGENDA**

PUBLIC POLICY ⬅

Formulation ➡ Proposal — Objectives / Goals / Means

5 **IMPLEMENTATION**

Actions ➡ Effects ➡ Evaluation

Review

5. Policy implementation

Adjustments to state organization (potential conflicts)

- Assignment of authorities and allocation of resources among different areas and units (horizontal-vertical)

- Assignment of new functions to existing entities, or the creation of new units

Questions

- Intersectoral or intrasectoral *processes* generated by treatment policy?

- State *party with responsibility* for the treatment area?

- Establishment or reprogramming of bureaucratic *structures*?

- *Conflicts and partnerships* among stakeholders (state or private)?

Context

The group of factors not forming part of public policies that is essential to the comprehension, description, and explanation of such policies and their impact on other variables. [unofficial translation].
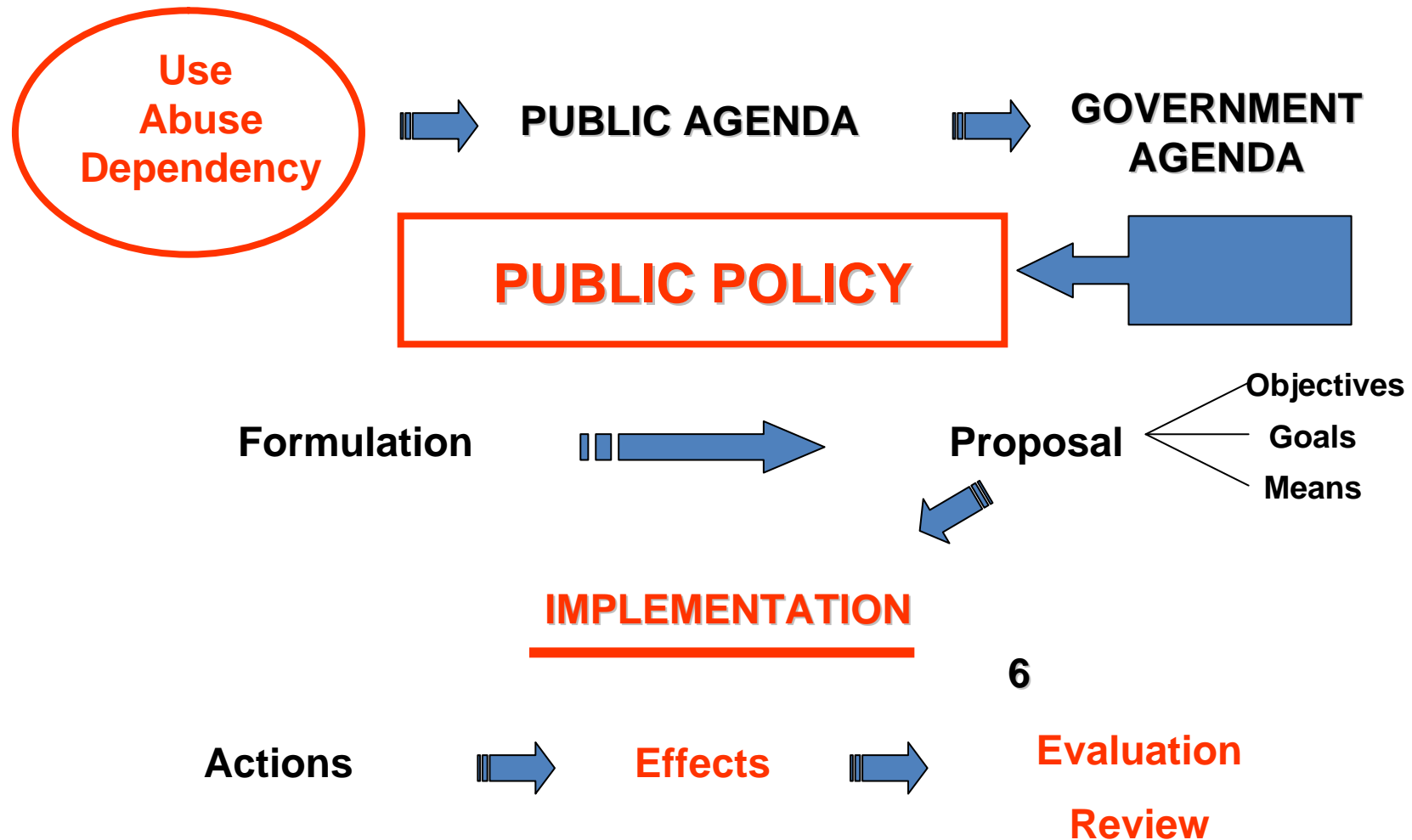
(Oszlak and O'Donnell, 1981)

Context

1. *Background* to policy in the treatment area
2. *Prior* state *definitions* (problems and solutions)
3. *Forum for negotiation* (public arena)
4. *Predominant approach* to solutions to the treatment problem
5. *Changes* in society or the state *that can be attributed* to the development of policy
6. *Impact* on future policies

Public policy cycle

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Abuse
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PUBLIC POLICY ←

Objectives

Formulation → **Proposal** — Goals

Means

IMPLEMENTATION

6

Actions → **Effects** → **Evaluation**

Review

36

Policy evaluation

Scenario

- Complex network of problems and the accompanying societal process.

- Interconnection with other policies (public and private).
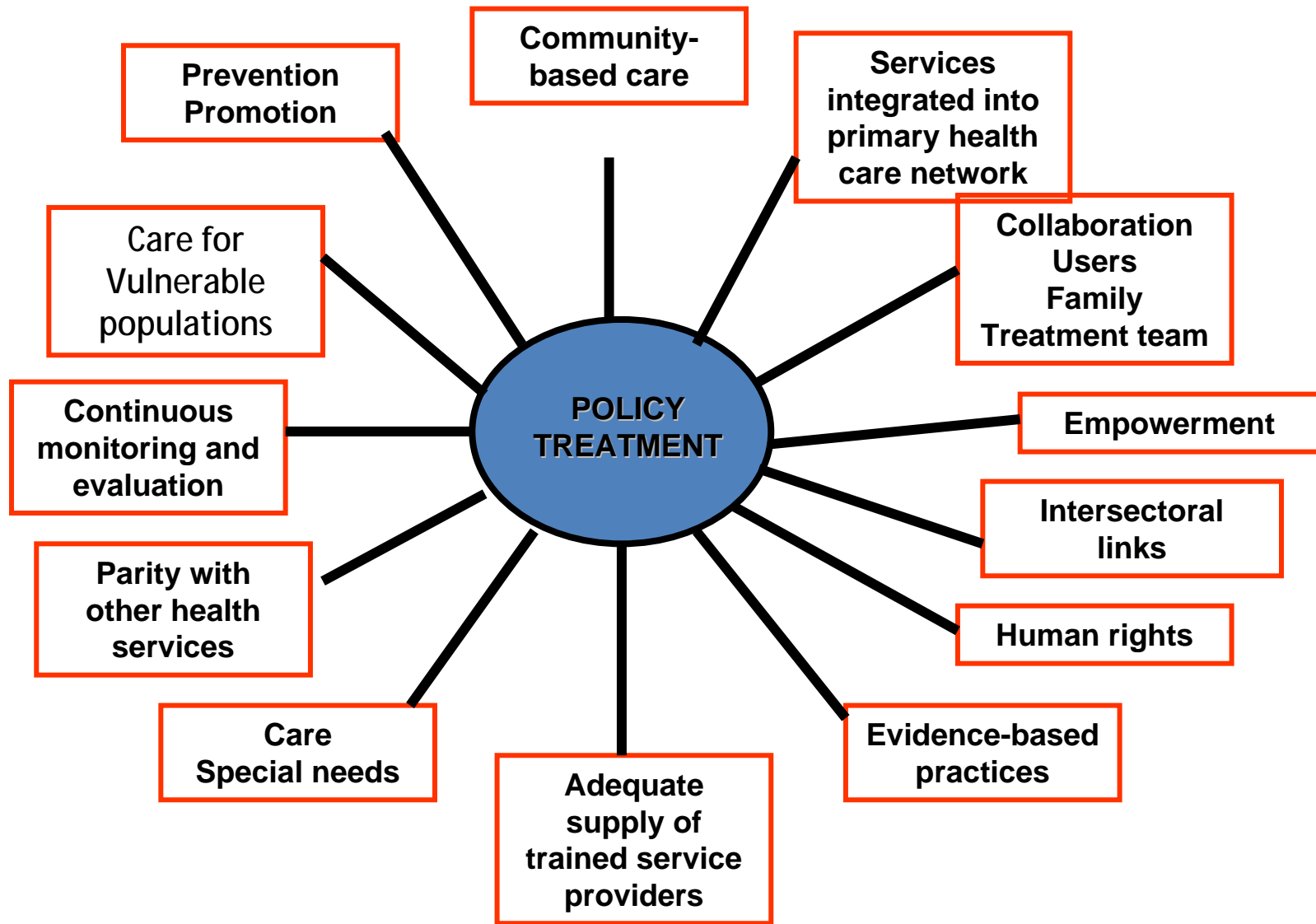
Outcome

If traditional approaches are taken, it is difficult to identify and characterize impacts that can be attributed to policy

Policy challenges

(Adapted from *WHO: The World Health Report 2001*

- Development of community-based care
- Services integrated into primary health care
- Collaboration between individuals, families, and health professionals
- Empowerment of individuals, families, and communities
- Respect for fundamental *human* rights
- Evidence-based practices
- Adequate supply of appropriately trained service providers

- Recognition of special needs
- Parity between health services and other health services
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation of services
- Responsive to the needs of underserved and vulnerable populations
- Attention paid to strategies for prevention and promotion
- Intersectoral links

Thank you very much