

Rethinking Our Activism

NEW WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT SOCIAL CHANGE

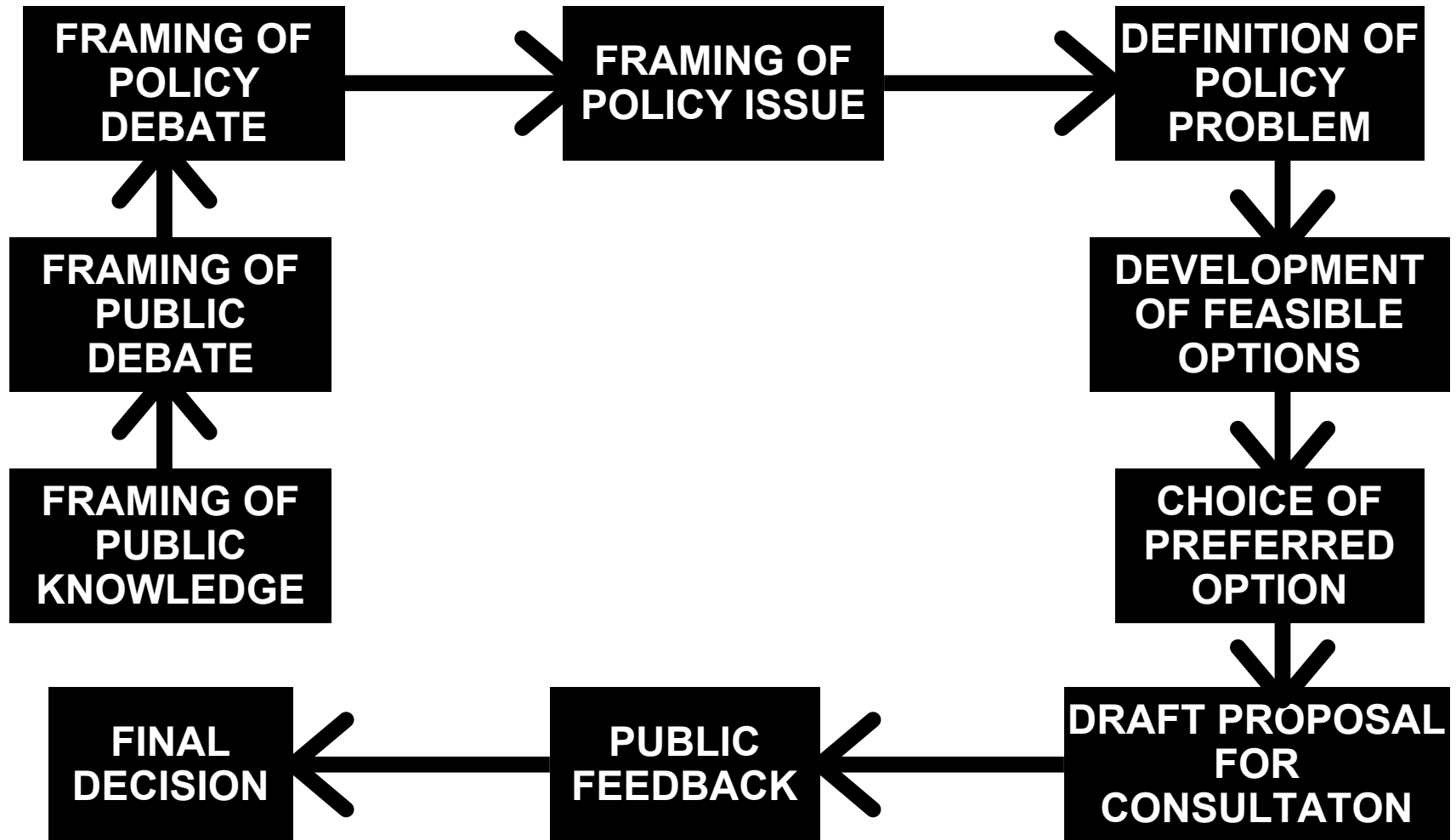
▶ BLACK BOX THINKING

GOOD IDEAS

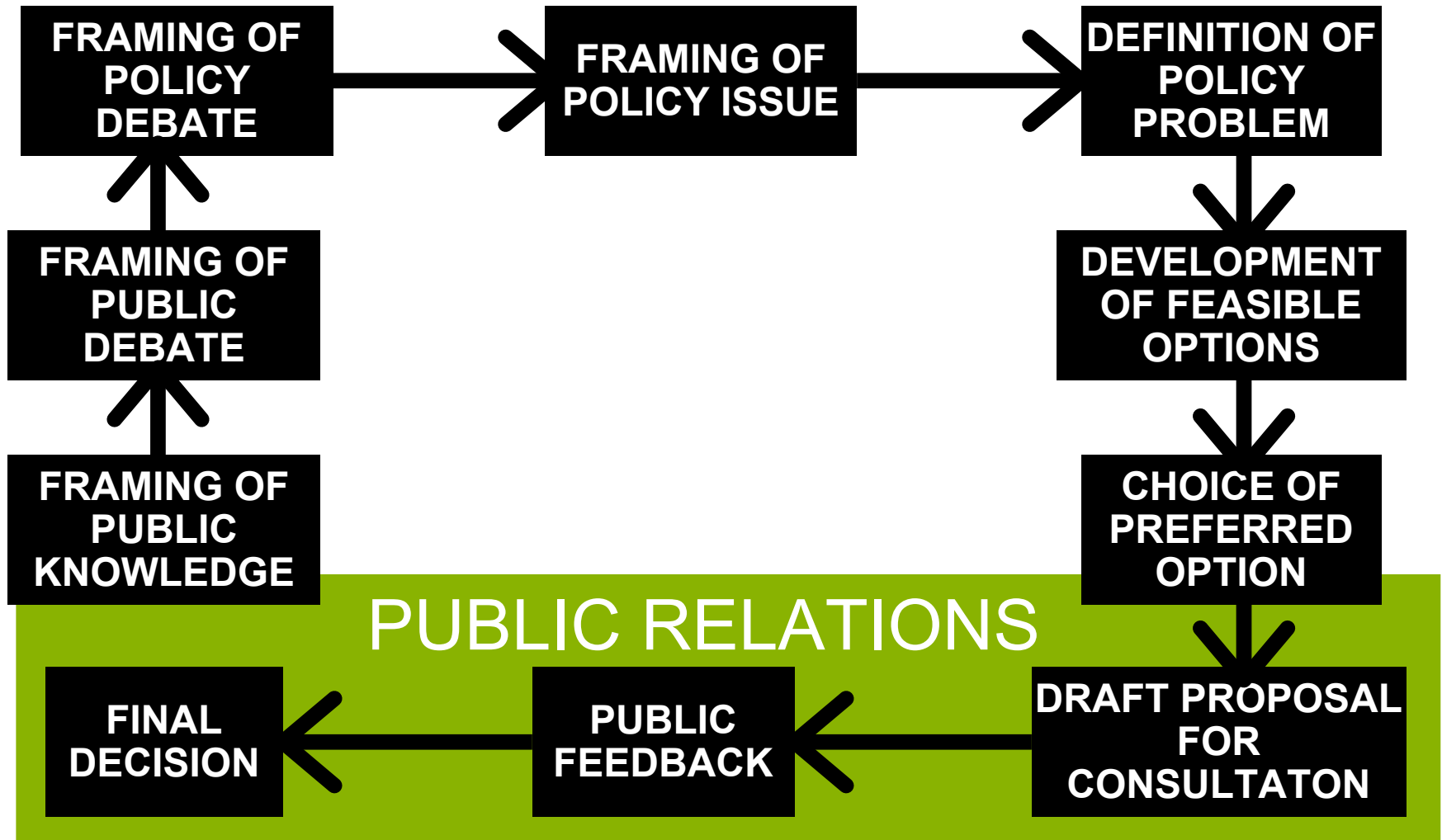


SOCIAL JUSTICE

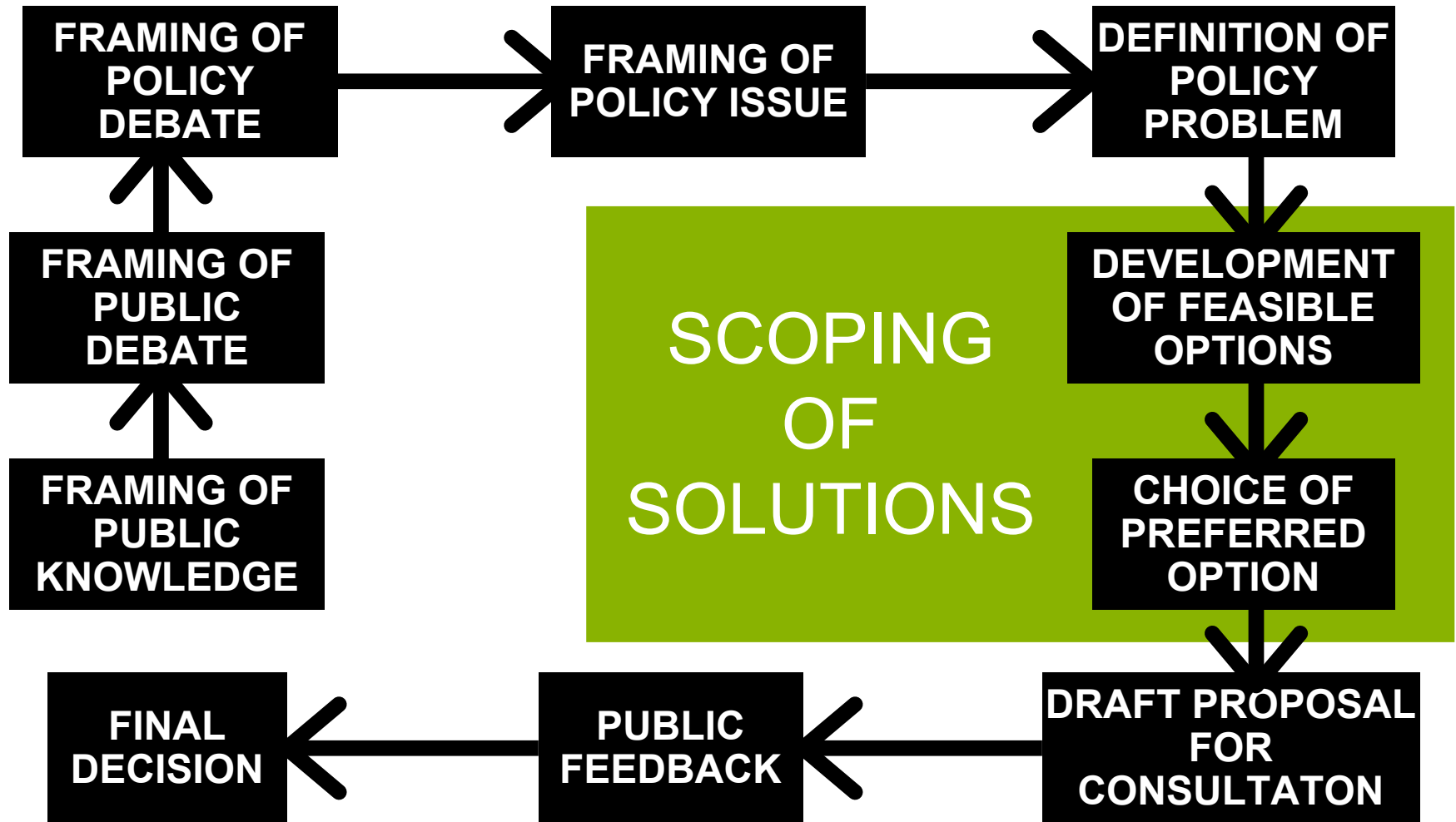
🏠 WHEN IS A DECISION MADE?



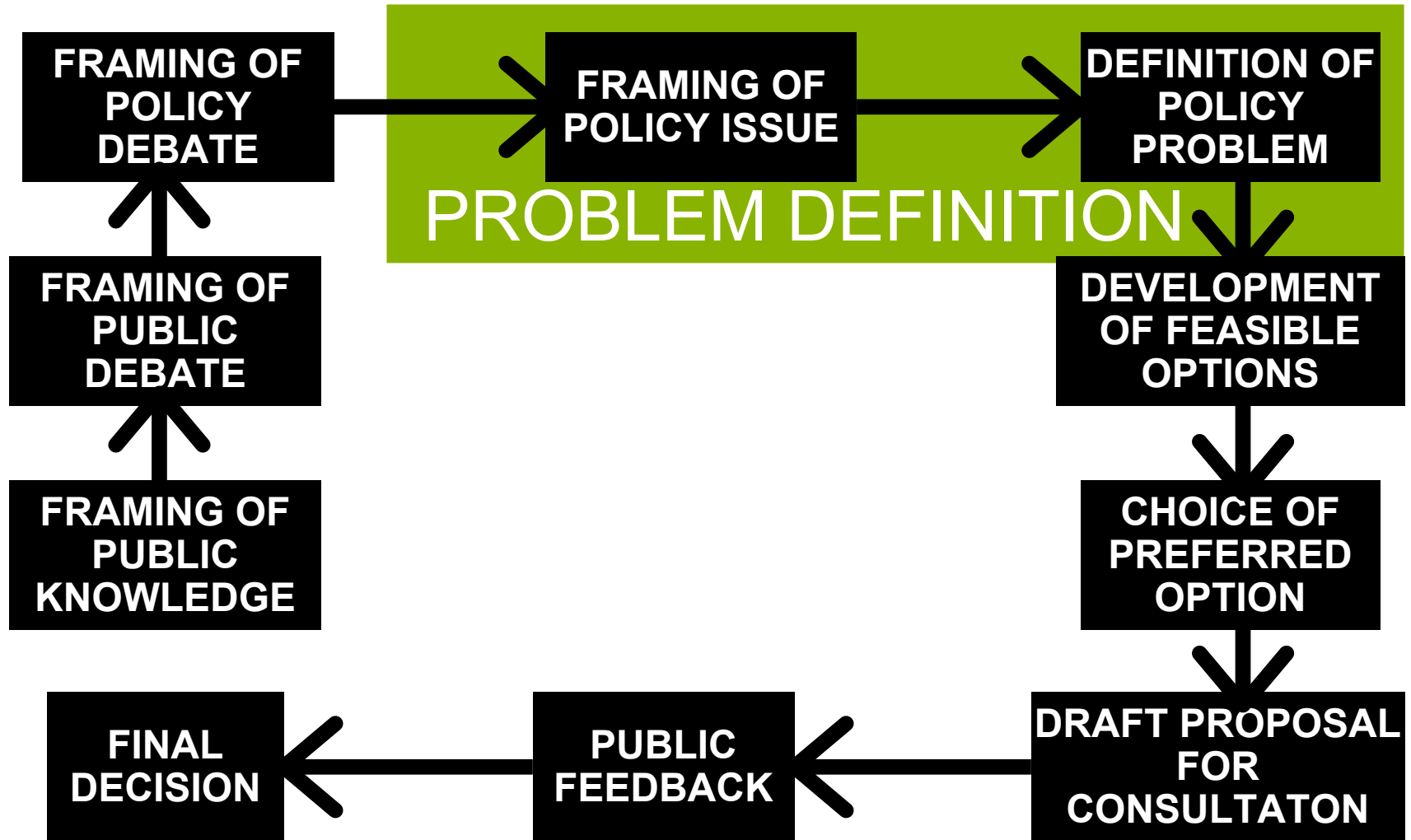
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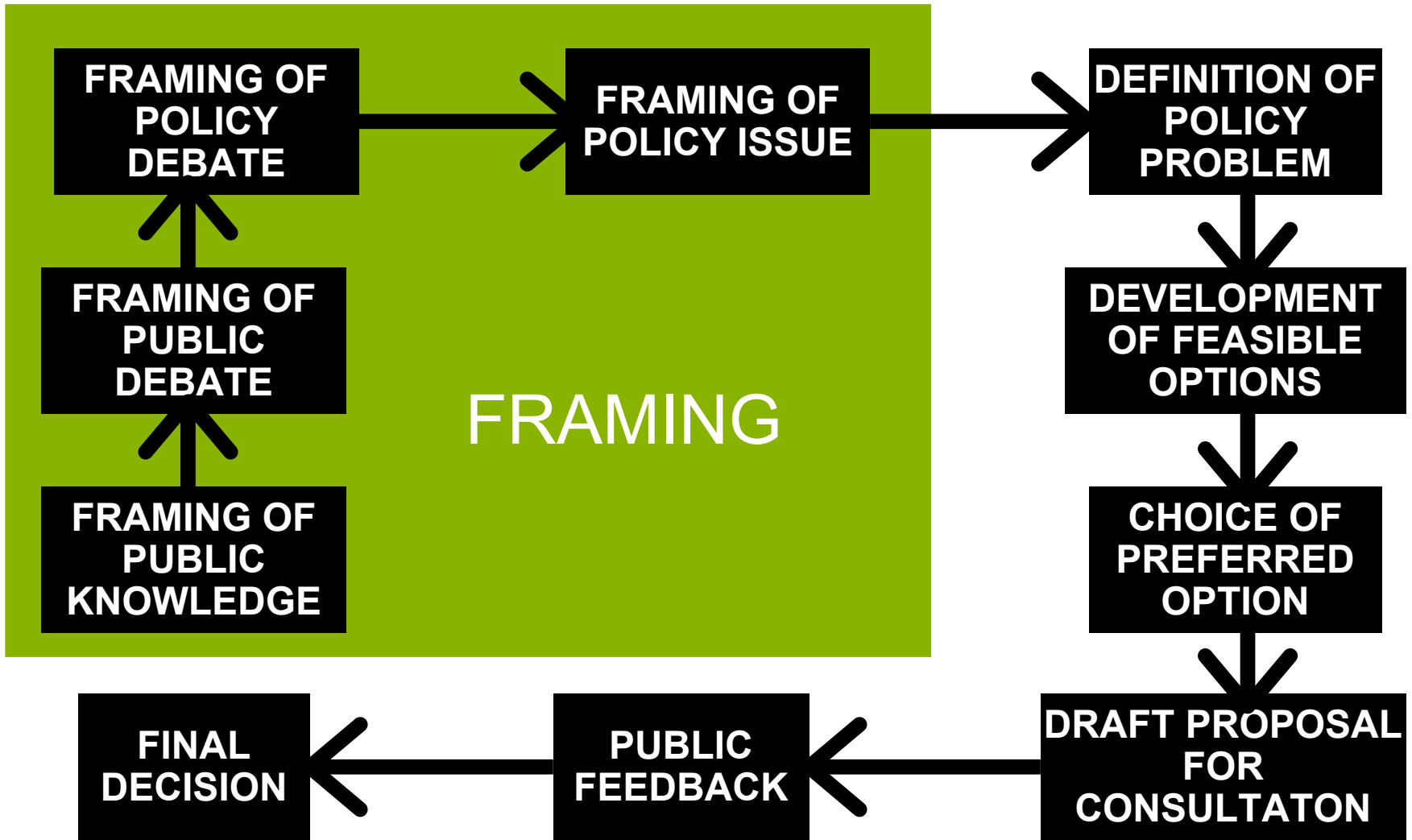
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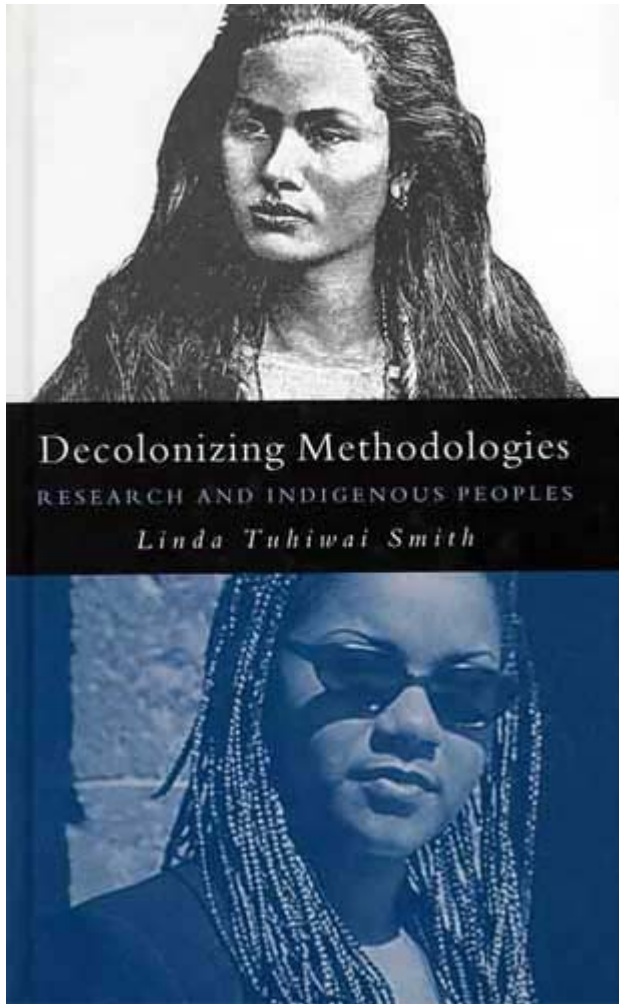


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LINDA TUHIWAI SMITH

“Fourteen lessons of resistance to exclusion: learning from Maori experience in New Zealand over the last two decades of neo-liberal reform” Chapter in Mulholland, M. (2006) *State of the Maori Nation*”

FOURTEEN LESSONS OF RESISTANCE

1

It is important for communities to **struggle**, to act, to make sense of or theorise their expectations.

In the neo-liberal society there is only limited space for passive victims

2

It is important for communities to have, to articulate to itself and to hold to a vision or **ideal of itself**.

It helps when trying to figure out which way is forward and when pressures such as short time frames to make decisions are applied



FOURTEEN LESSONS OF RESISTANCE

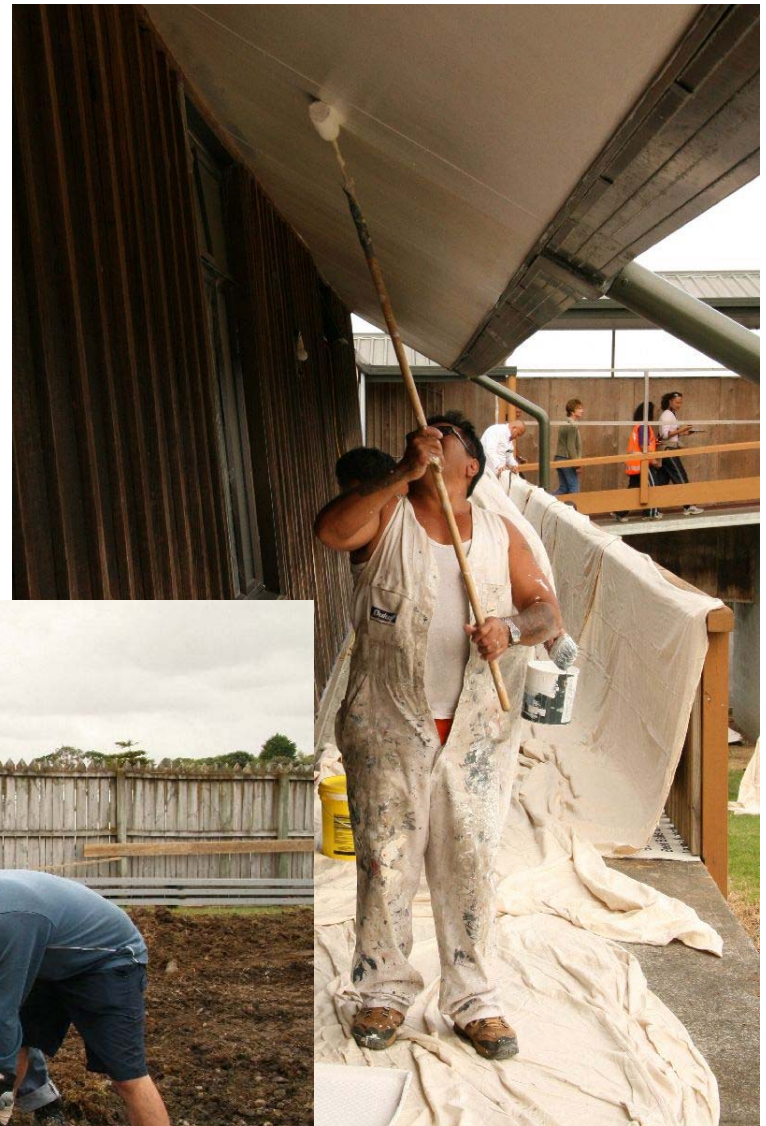
It is important for communities to **define themselves** using their own language & terminology – even when they have been reframed and redefined by the state

This has been especially important when officials have tried to diminish cultural differences and emphasise economic or even education differences as a way of separate out one group from another

4

When confronted by what seems like inevitable change it is important for communities to **build something together**, to be even more purposeful about sharing values & building a vision

Social cohesion needs to be nourished in the face of radical change & cultural values become even more necessary as a way to hold things together



FOURTEEN LESSONS OF RESISTANCE

5

Mediating radical social change for communities requires a **mix of skills**

People who can translate policy implications into community life

Who can synthesise ideas and their alternatives

Who can identify and work with key activists

Who can build dialogue and can unstick situations

There is a real role for **community entrepreneurs & political activists**

Community entrepreneurs have the ability to identify a gap & create a large space for opportunities

Activists can mobilise individuals to act for collective benefits



FOURTEEN LESSONS OF RESISTANCE

7

Social inclusion is a **constant process** of translation, negotiation, mediation, reciprocity consent & readiness

8

In the face of disorganisation and the absence of leadership, having communities and individuals simply **singing one song** over and over again can be irritatingly effective

In the Maori case, asking about how anything related to the Treaty of Waitangi was applied time after time.

9

Solutions don't have to be perfect for they are always going to be **improved upon in the field**

Solutions can be frightening to people because there is a **risk of unknown failure** that is riskier than the known failure of the status quo

The risk of unknown failure has greater immediacy and holds more terror than the risk of known failure to which many people have become immune

Incremental change will not transform lives or overturn the legacy of colonisation in our grandchildren's lifetimes

To really make a difference change must be accelerated, multi-layered with multiple strategies all working simultaneously and intergenerational

At any given time state agencies are constituting, targeting and **peeling off new groups of the socially excluded** (naming, defining excluding, managing)

Communities work constantly to mediate the ways exclusion works but are drawn into “**peeling off**” risky

troublemakers, that is the groups who by being identified as excluded begin to threaten the interests of the larger community eg youth gangs

If given some capacity, communities tend to **work things out on the ground** that policy makers often see as irresolvable

struggle

ideal of itself.

define themselves

build something together

mix of skills.

community entrepreneurs

constant process.

political activists

Incremental change will not transform lives

risk of unknown failure

Improved upon in the field.

**“peeling off” risky
troublemakers,**

**peeling off new groups of the
socially excluded**

work things out on the ground

singing one song

FOURTEEN LESSONS OF RESISTANCE

