

Health Impact Assessment: A pathway to influencing Healthy Public Policy



information



formation



recherche



coopération
internationale

National collaborating Centre on Healthy Public Policy (Canada)

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Healthy Public Policy – Is Health Impact Assessment the Cornerstone?

16–17 October 2007, Dublin, Ireland



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Overview

HIA in Canada

- The National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy
- Current practice

The HIA process as a public health strategy

- Concept flowchart: pathways to influencing healthy public policy
- HIA and the concept flowchart

Is HIA a cornerstone for HPP?

Conclusions



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National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCCHPP) in Canada

One of six Canadian Centers
financed by the Public Health
Agency of Canada



National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy

- **Objective**

To enhance the expertise of public health actors across Canada and to promote healthy public policy through the development, sharing, and use of knowledge, tools, and methods.


- **Clients**

Mainly public health administrators and actors who want to work on healthy public policies outside of the health sector.



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National Collaborating Center for Healthy Public Policy — HPP and HIA

Mains scientific fields from which HPP is studied:

- Health risk assessment
- Knowledge exchange
- Policy making process
- Intersectorial work

HIA: A **process** which integrates these fields of study in a concrete and operational way

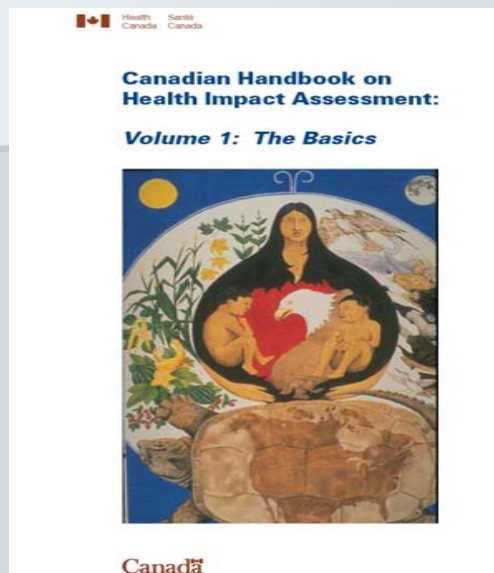


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HIA in Canada — Current practice



Health Canada, 2004

Health Impact Assessment recognised as an essential part of Environmental Impact Assessment

Efforts to integrate HIA into EIA regulatory requirements



HIA developed independently of EIAs



- Québec (Art. 54, since 2002)
- Nova Scotia (Antigonish, *PATH network*, since 1996)
- Ontario (Toronto Public health department, since 2004)



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HIA in NCCHPP – Viewed as a **process**

HIA is a **process** and a framework (combining methods and procedures) designed to inform and influence the policy-making process.

The HIA process brings together decision makers, public health experts, and stakeholders who gather relevant information to assess potential health impacts and to find realistic alternatives.



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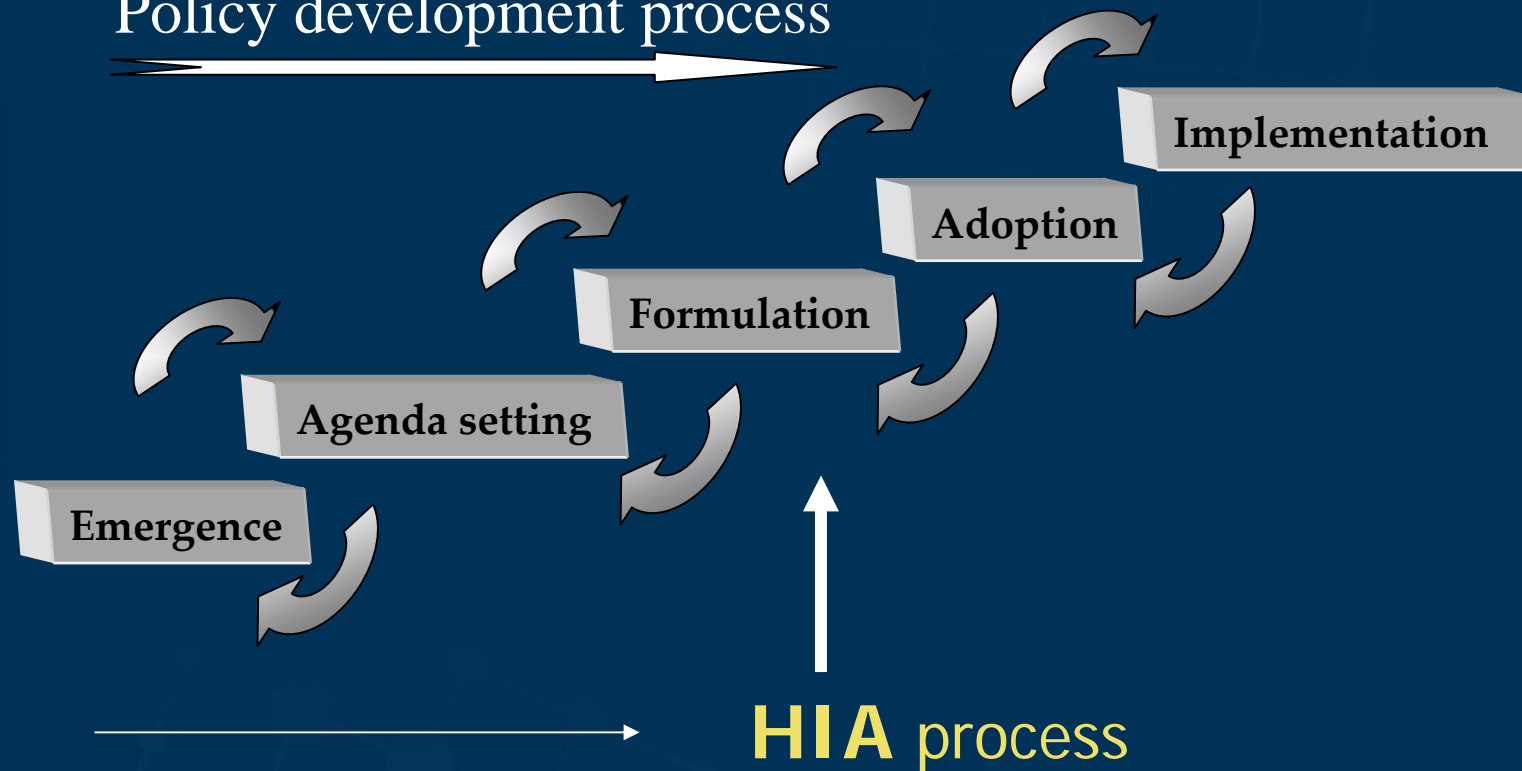
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HIA in NCCHPP — Place in policy development


Policy Stages Model (Laswell, 1956)

Policy development process

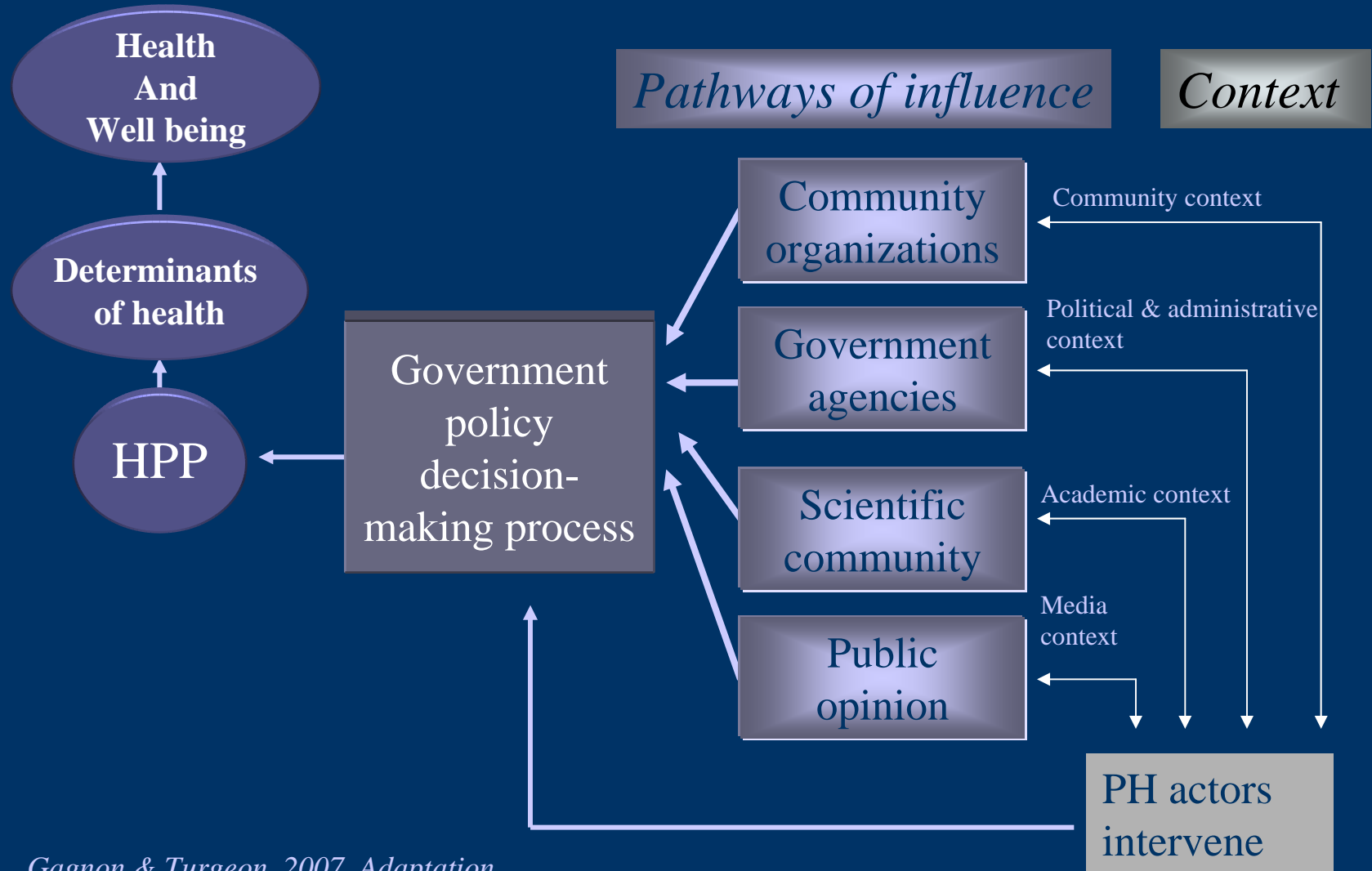


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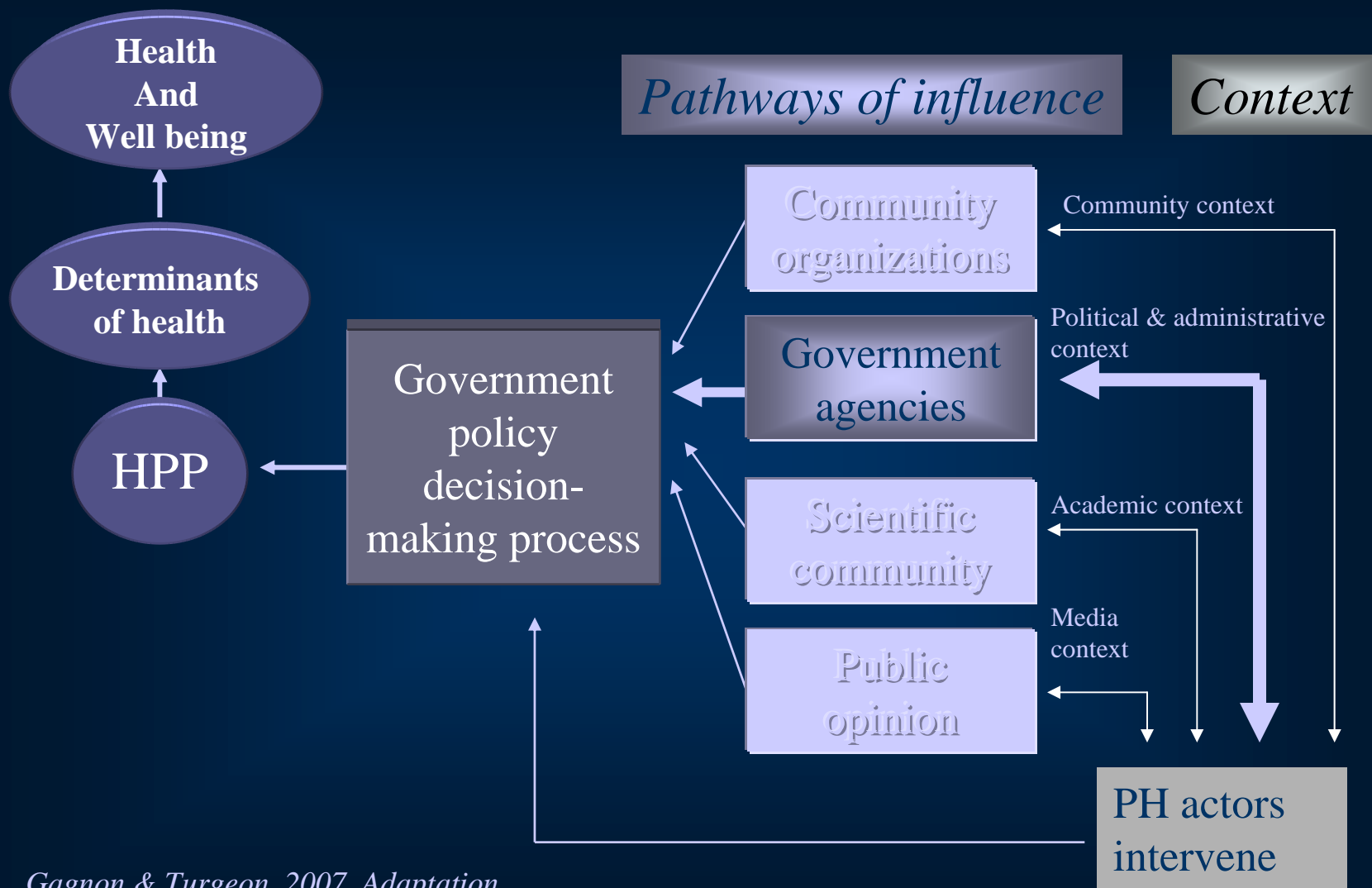
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Concept flowchart: HPP & public health practice



Gagnon & Turgeon, 2007, Adaptation

Concept flowchart: HIA & public health practice



Gagnon & Turgeon, 2007, Adaptation

Concept flowchart: Strengths and limitations of HIA strategy

Strengths

- When used in a political and administrative context, the HIA process contributes directly to policy development.
- Because it is built into the policy making process, HIA creates opportunities to link public health and public policy more effectively.

Limitations

- The assessment results can remain blocked in the HIA process.
- Difficult to keep arm's length from the policy decision.



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Is HIA a cornerstone for HPP?

A powerful tool, which deserves further attention and initiatives.

However, we should consider :

- Other pathways of influence, and
- Other stages at which the policy development process could be influenced.



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Conclusion

- HIA may not be the cornerstone of HPP, but it is certainly one of its main pillars. We will need it to build in the future.
- HIA is one of many other strategies, including advocacy, lobbying, research, scientific communications, and community development.
- To work on HPP, public health actors should choose the strategy best suited to the policy context.



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For more information

Source of the concept flowchart:

Gagnon, F., Turgeon, J., Gagné, D. (2007). Les actions de santé publique en matière de politiques favorables à la santé au Québec, 1995 à 2005 – Perspectives centrales et régionales. GÉPPS, Québec, Canada.

<http://www.gepps.enap.ca>

Gagnon, F., Turgeon, J., & Dallaire, C. (2007). «Healthy Public Policy. A conceptual cognitive framework.» *Health Policy*. 81(1), 42-55.

<http://www.gepps.enap.ca>

NCCHPP web site: <http://www.healthypublicpolicy.ca>



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