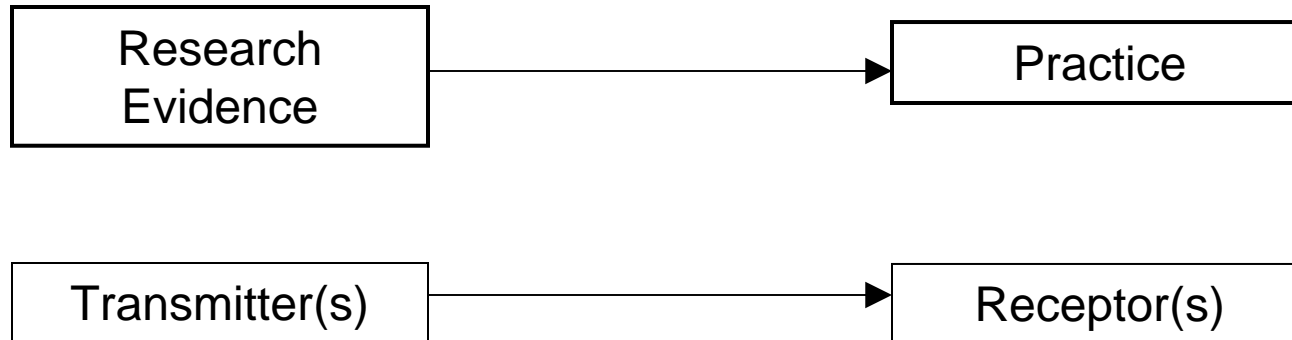


Importance of Studying Context

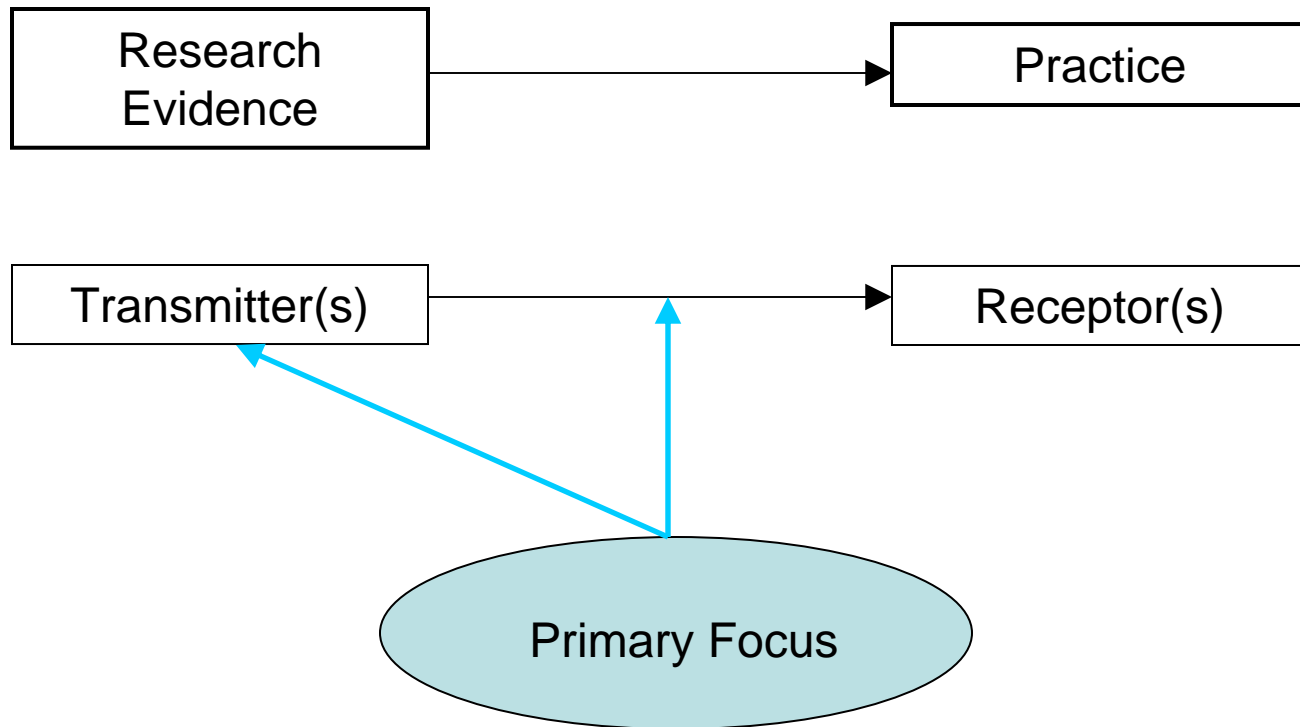
Martin P. Charns, DBA

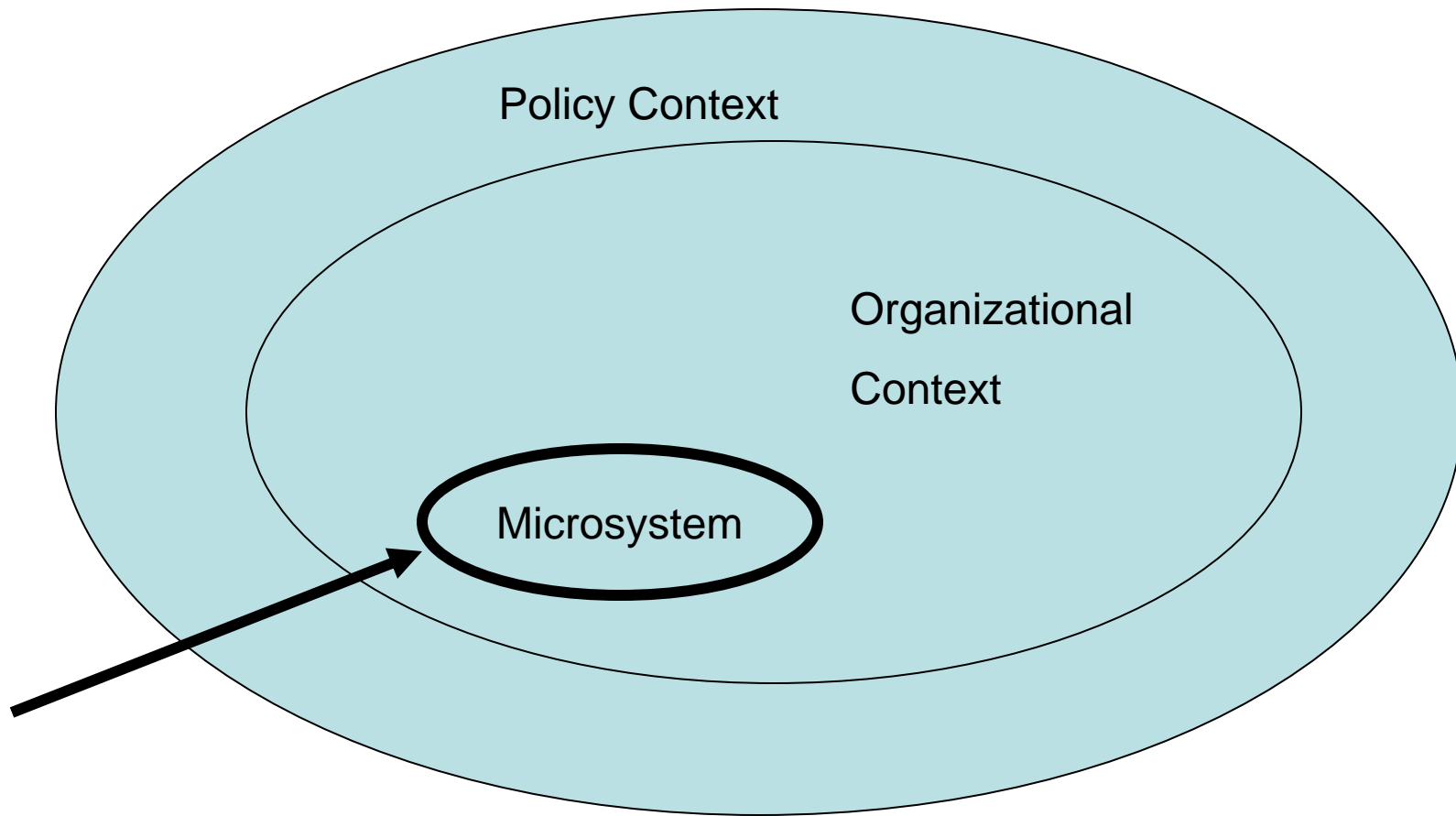
Director, Center for Organization,
Leadership & Management Research

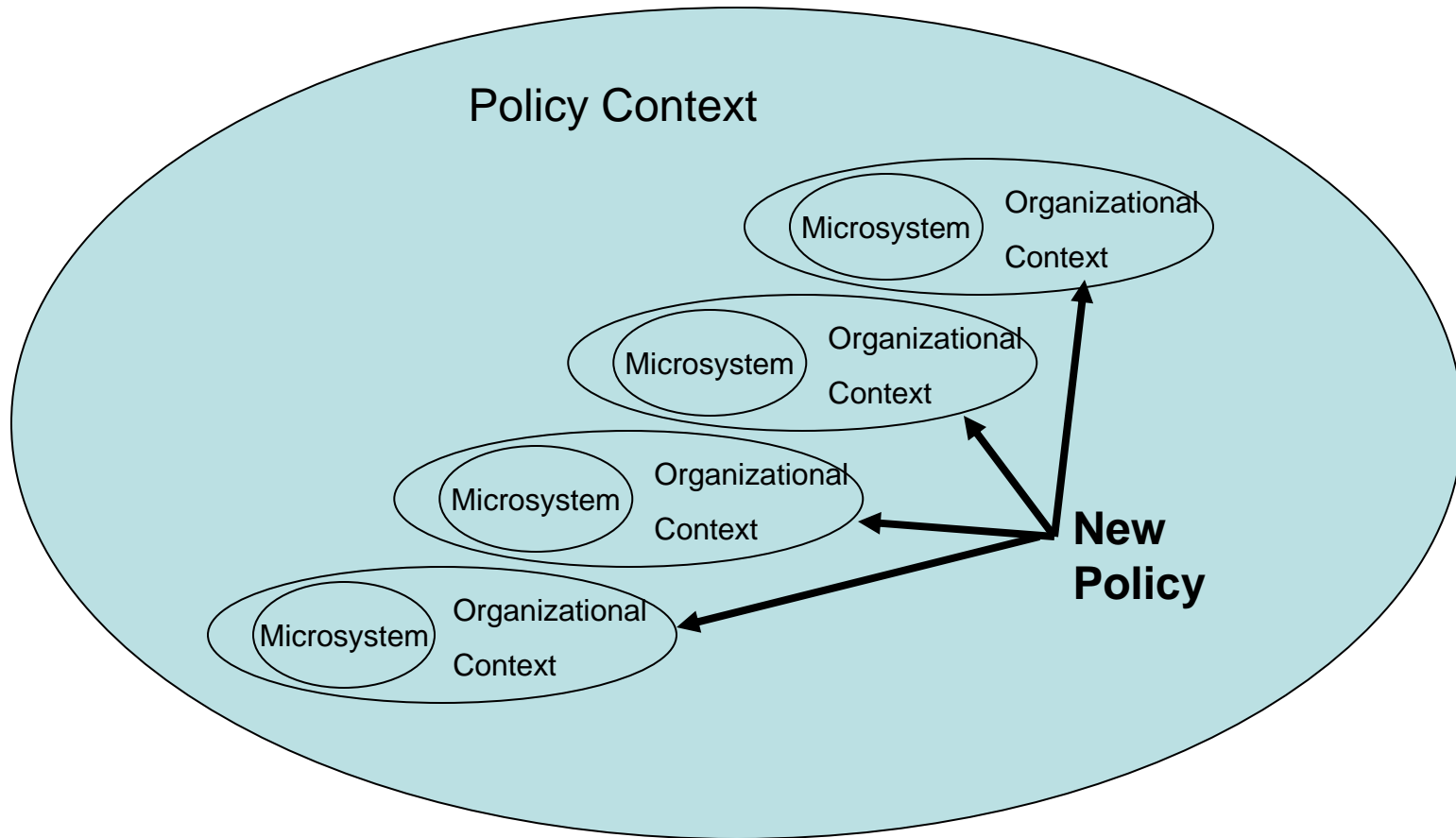
Implementing Evidence

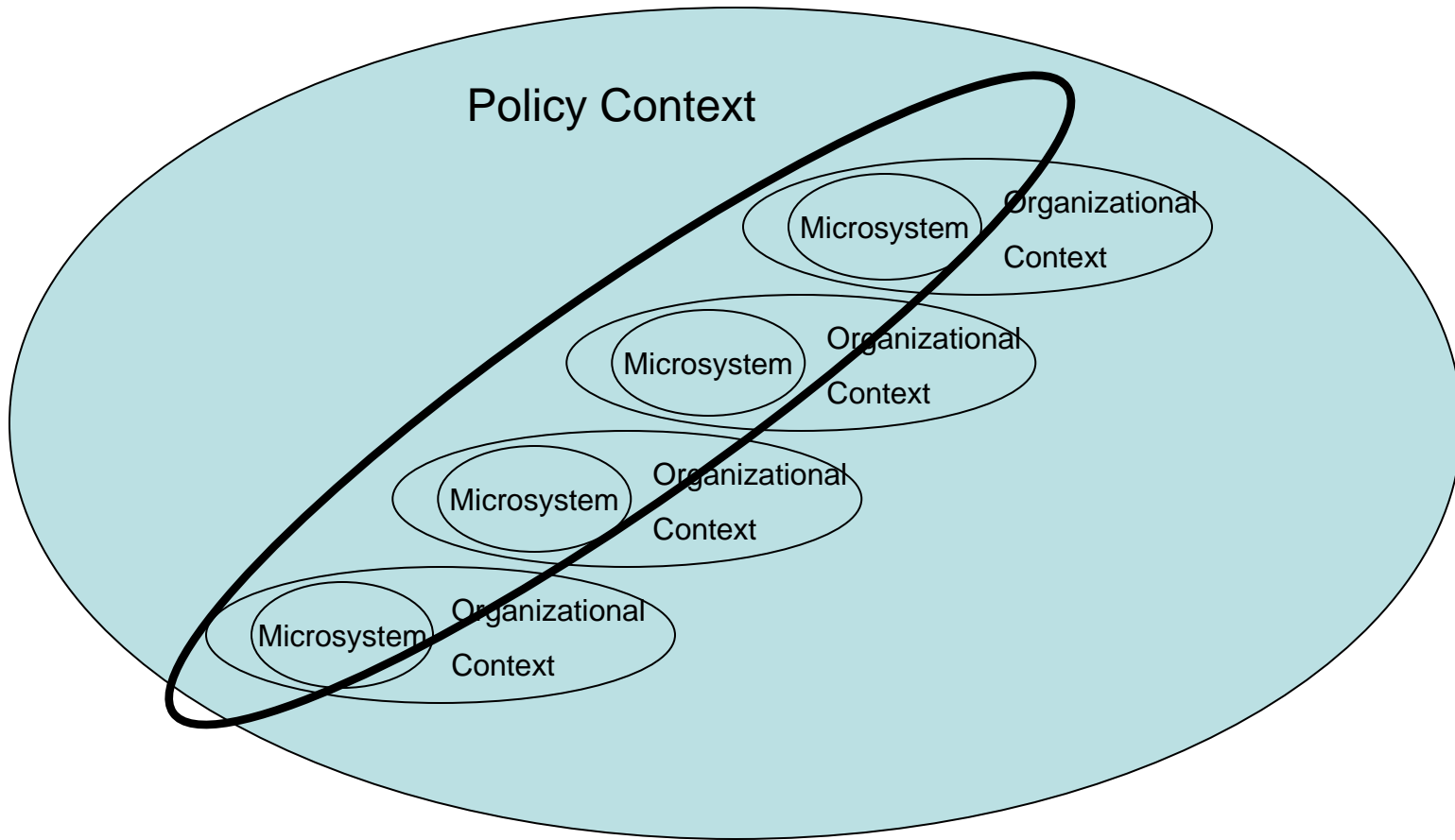


Implementing Evidence









VA Center for Organization, Leadership and Management Research

Why?

- The whole premise of policy making is that we can substantially influence organizational functioning by setting policy
- So why do researchers so often ignore the organizational context, while at the same time believing the effect of policy on organizations?

Ignoring Policy & Organizational Contexts

- Just because new policies or directives to implement new practices often do not get implemented is not a reason to ignore the policy context
- Experience & literature indicates the need to consider the organizational context in studying implementation

VA Experience

Example of Negative Effect of Context

- In the mid- to late 1990s VAMCs and VISNs “heard” that Ken Kizer favored implementation of service line structures
- Nearly all VISNs & $\frac{3}{4}$ of the VAMCs “implemented” service lines
- Full implementation was hindered by many factors
- A key factor was the power of traditional service chiefs
 - Did not favor the new structure
 - Used their power to alter or stop the implementation
- Implications for actual practice
- Implications for our research on effects of service lines

Private Sector Experience

Example of Positive Effect of Context

- Academic health center needed to engage medical staff in QI
- Provided resources to academic divisions to compensate for time of physicians (resources)
- Removed barrier to physician engagement
- Allowed QI projects to flourish

Private Sector Experience

Example of Positive Effect of Context

- Hospital engaged in QI for several years with increasing emphasis
- A large project stalled due to lack of engagement of several key members of team (-)
 - These members' department heads indicated their need for department work not to be compromised by project teams
- Hospital CEO clearly indicated importance of hospital QI effort

Private Sector Experience

Example of Positive/Negative Effect of Context

- Hospital with strong history of QI (+)
- Organization of separate QI structures for hospital & medical staff (-)
 - Projects that required physician involvement disadvantaged by this structure
 - Major difficulty in attaining involvement or coordination of physicians in hospital QI

Private Sector Experience

Example of Positive/Negative Effect of Context

- Hospital making good progress in program to manage patients with diabetes (+)
- Unable to negotiate changes in third party payment (-)
- Led to discontinuation of program that was having positive health care outcomes because there was not a business case for quality

VA Experience

Example of Positive/Negative Effect of Context

- Major VISN-wide project to implement new hand hygiene practices
- Highly supported by VISN director
 - Allocated considerable resources to effort
 - Voiced his support frequently
- Mixed support from VAMC directors
 - Success in VAMCs with quadrad support
 - Relative failure in VAMCs without quadrad support

What is Organizational Context?

- No standard definition
- Many theoretical perspectives support premise that context affects implementation
 - Greenhalgh et al review identified “system antecedents for innovation” & “system readiness for innovation”
 - Pettigrew et al describe “receptive context”
 - PARiHS framework describes “quality of the context”
 - Lukas et al identifies “5 drivers of change” & 4 attributes of the organization

Greenhalgh et al System Antecedents - Structural Determinants with Significant Association with Innovativeness

- Administrative intensity (+)
- Centralization (-)
- Complexity: specialization, functional differentiation, professionalism (+)
- External communication: external professional activities (+)
- Functional differentiation: division into different units (+)

Greenhalgh et al System Antecedents - Structural Determinants with Significant Association with Innovativeness (2)

- Internal Communication (+)
- Managerial attitude toward change (+)
- Professionalism: professional knowledge (+)
- Slack resources (+)
- Specialization: number of specialties in organization (+)
- Technical capacity: technical resources (+)

Greenhalgh et al System Antecedents – Absorptive Capacity For New Knowledge

- “An organization that is systematically able to identify, capture, interpret, share, refine, and modify new knowledge
- “to link it with its own existing knowledge base, and
- “to put it to appropriate use will be better able to assimilate innovations.”

Greenhalgh et al System Antecedents – Absorptive Capacity For New Knowledge

- “An organization that is systematically able to identify, capture, interpret, share, refine, and modify new knowledge
- “to link it with its own existing knowledge base, and
- “to put it to appropriate use will be better able to assimilate innovations.”
- This is not a description of a passive receptor

Greenhalgh et al System Antecedents – Absorptive Capacity For New Knowledge Prerequisites

- Existing knowledge & skills base
 - (esp its store of tacit, uncodifiable knowledge)
- Pre-existing related “technologies”
- Learning organization culture
- Proactive leadership directed toward sharing knowledge

Greenhalgh et al System Antecedents – Absorptive Capacity For New Knowledge (2)

- “The knowledge that underpins adoption, dissemination & implementation ... is not objective
- “...it is socially constructed and frequently contested and must be continually negotiated among members of the organization

Greenhalgh et al System Antecedents – Absorptive Capacity Social Factors

- Strong, diverse, organic intraorganizational networks
 - (esp opportunities for interprofessional teamwork &
 - Involvement of clinicians in management networks)

Greenhalgh et al System Antecedents – Receptive Context for Change

- Strong leadership
- Clear strategic vision
- Good managerial relations
- Visionary staff in pivotal positions
- Climate conducive to experimentation & risk taking
- Effective data capture systems

Greenhalgh et al System Readiness for Innovation

- Tension for change
- Innovation-system fit
- Assessment of implications: are implications of innovation fully assessed & anticipated?
- Support & advocacy
- Dedicated time & resources
- Capacity to monitor & evaluate the innovation

Pettigrew et al Receptive Context

- Change agenda & its locale: *fit* between the agenda & factors in the local, external environment that might influence internal change efforts
- Cooperative inter-organizational networks: *links* with other agencies
- Environmental pressure: *pressures* from influential agents external to the organization
- Key people leading change: *roles* in which an individual influences others
- Quality & coherence of policy: vision's congruence among related "goals"
- Simplicity & clarity of goals
- Managerial-clinical relations
- Supportive organizational culture

PARiHS Framework Context Components

- Organizational culture
 - Values, beliefs, attitudes
- Leadership
 - Teamwork, control, decision making, structure, empowerment
- Evaluation
 - Measurement, feedback

Lukas et al Organization Transformation Model: Five Drivers of Change

- Impetus to transform
- Leadership
- Improvement Initiatives
- Alignment
- Integration

Organization's History

- What receptive & non-receptive elements have been shaped by history
- Hard elements
 - Systems & policies developed
 - Resources acquired
 - Interorganizational relationships
- Soft elements
 - Workforce skills, experience
 - Culture - expectations
 - Readiness for change
- Cf Harrison & Kimani Denver Health

Ferlie: The Nonspread of Innovations

- “Social and cognitive boundaries between different professions retard spread, as individual professionals operate within unidisciplinary communities of practice.”
- Need to examine whether an innovation to be implemented depends on interdependent professional groups – i.e. does it cross internal organizational boundaries?
- If so, what are the positions of the different stakeholders?

To Consider

- We have found context to be so important to understanding & evaluating implementation & organization change
- Led us to inclusion of contextual factors in evaluation of Implementation & QI
- Further led to examination of how to change contextual factors to facilitate implementation
- Led to recognition of the importance of the role of improvement projects in changing organization context

Questions?

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