

A “poisoned chalice”? How systems thinking was useful to study key factors that influenced health promotion in Australia

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“Poison’d chalice”

Macbeth, Act 1, scene 7

Macbeth: If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed, then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off.
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.



Outline

1. Research overview
2. Health promotion
3. Systems thinking
4. Health system building blocks for health promotion
5. Creating a causal loop diagram
6. How system thinking was useful to understand why HP would be seen to as a poisoned chalice

1. Research overview

What are the key factors that influenced HP policy and practice in a regional multisectoral health system in South Australia (SA)?



- Qualitative case study
- Analysis of 20 SA strategic documents (2003-2013)
- Interviews with 53 stakeholders
- Identification of feedback mechanisms and creation of CLD

Document analysis



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Research Paper

Disappearing health system building blocks in the health promotion policy context in South Australia (2003–2013)

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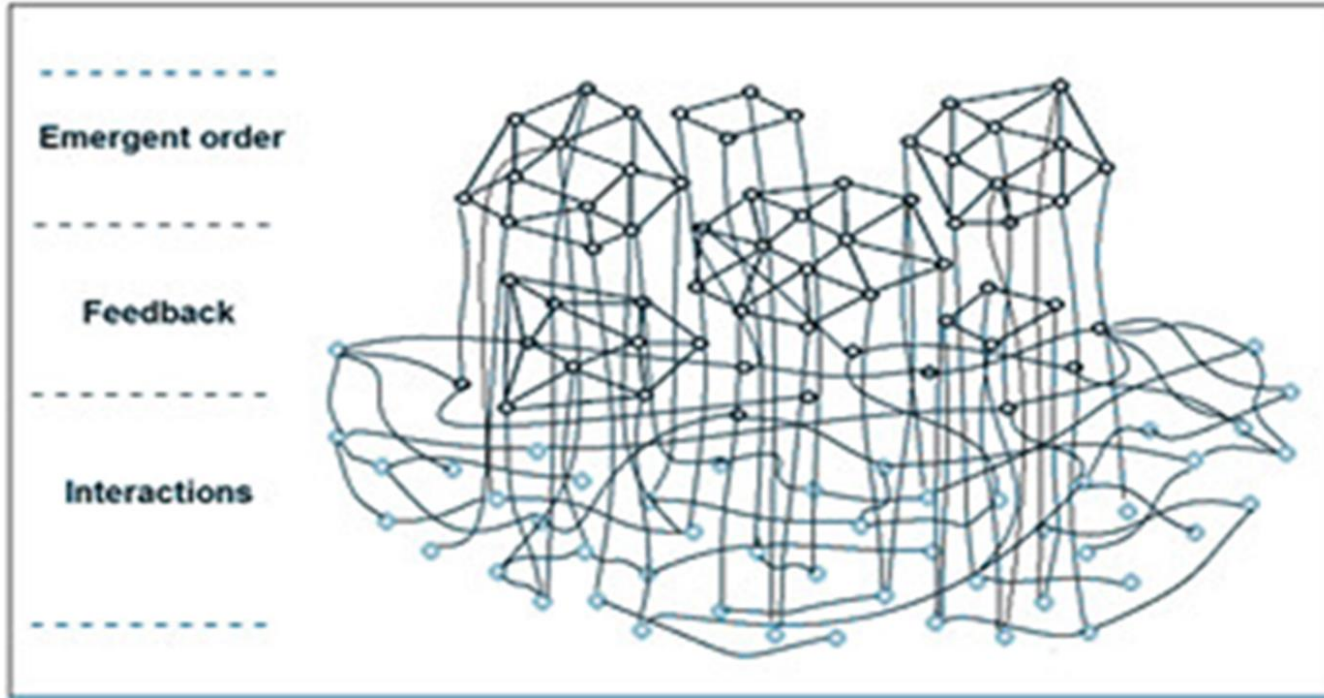
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2. Health promotion

HP goal (why) Reduce health inequities through action on the broad social, structural, economic, political, environmental and behavioral determinants of health	
HP Actions (how) Reorient health services toward HP Develop partnerships and intersectoral collaboration for HP Ensure community participation in HP	HP strategies (what) Develop personal skills Create supportive environments Build healthy public policy

3. Systems thinking



Maverick and Boutique (Producer) (n.d.). (Illustration).
Retrieved from <https://www.pinterest.com/juropel/systems-thinking/>

4. Health system building blocks for HP



Adapted from World Health Organization (2007) and de Savigny and Adam (2009)

5. Creating a causal loop diagram

Key findings regarding factors that influence HP policy and practice	Document review	Stakeholder interviews
Lack of strong support for or discussion of reducing health inequities	✓	✓
Lack of support for community participation	✓	✓
Lack of clear federal-state-local government roles, governance structures and policy directions	✓	✓
Cuts to/lack of HP financing	✓	✓
Cuts to the need for HP workforce capacity	✓	✓
Cuts to/ limited HP service	✓	✓
Lack of information/evidence of HP effectiveness	✓	✓
Negative impact of state economic circumstances/budgetary constraints	✓	✓
Calls for focus on whole-of-government approaches	✓	✓
Potential negative impact of state leadership changes to HP		✓
Negative impact of HP discourse regarding past financing and services in health sector		✓
Dominance of the biomedical model		✓
Demoralisation of HP workforce		✓
Fear of cost shifting from state to local governments		✓
Fragmented system elements		✓
Need for a strategic framework		✓
Support for monitoring and reporting on population health	✓	

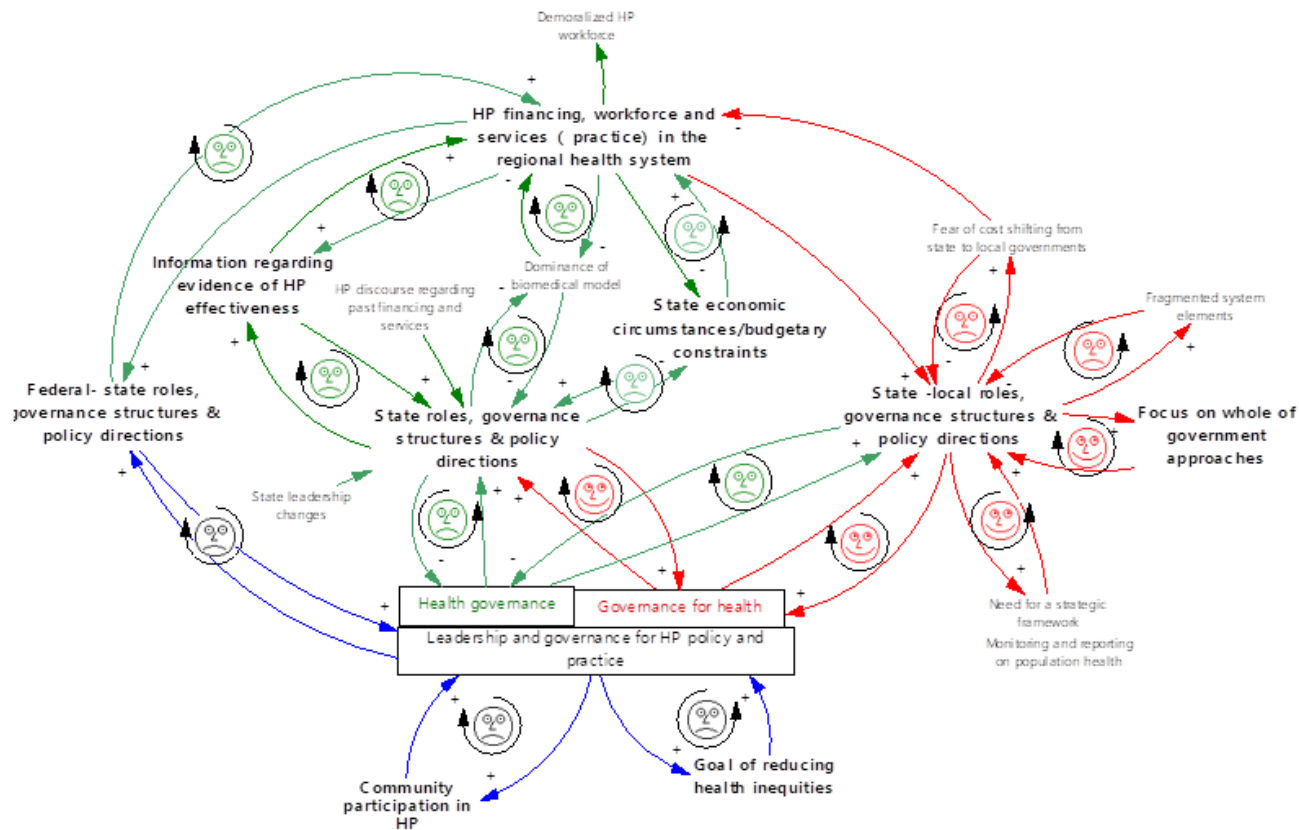
Kim & Anderson (2012)

- ✓ Key findings
- ✓ Dominant themes

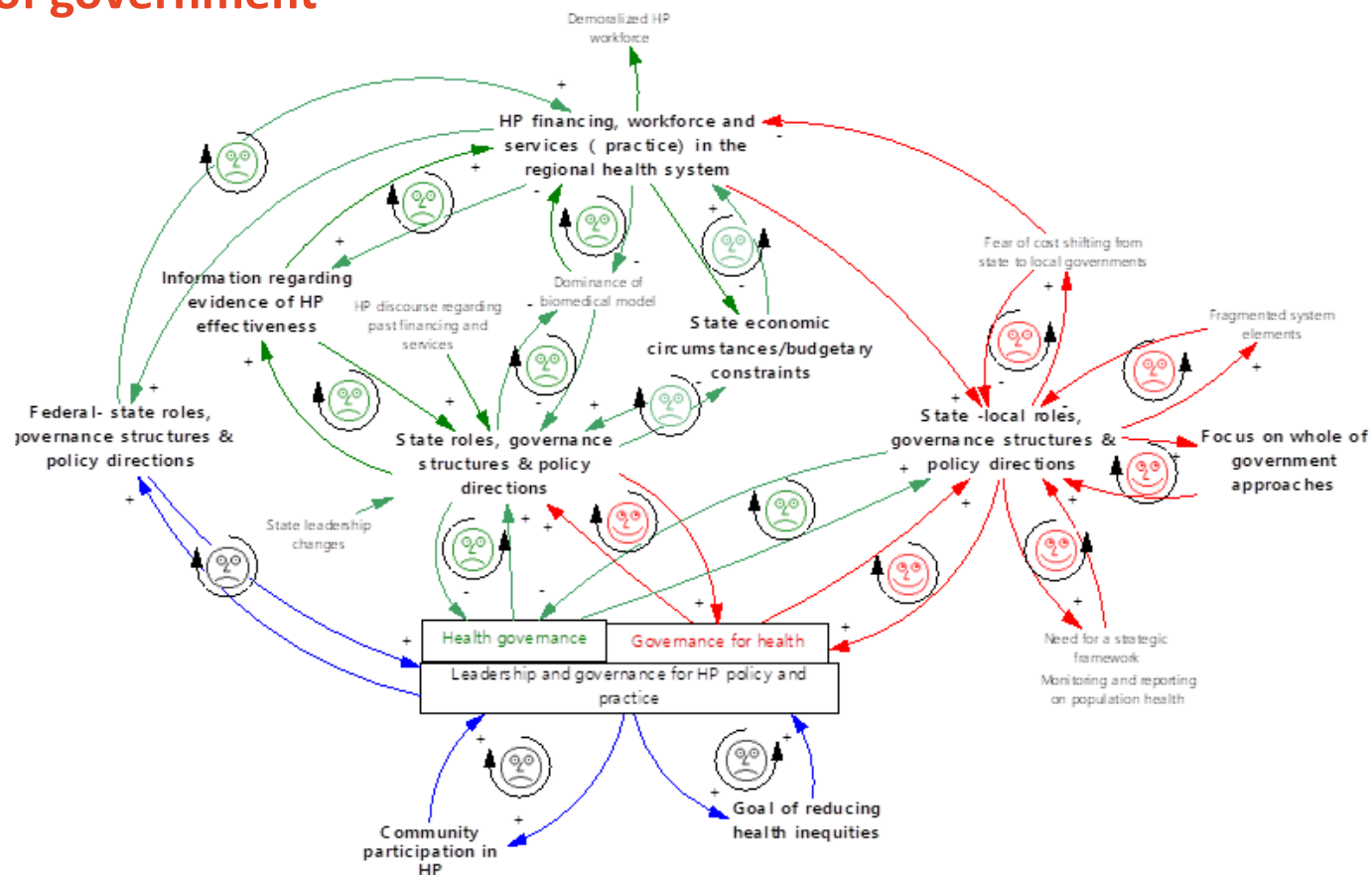
Interactions 

Feedback loops 

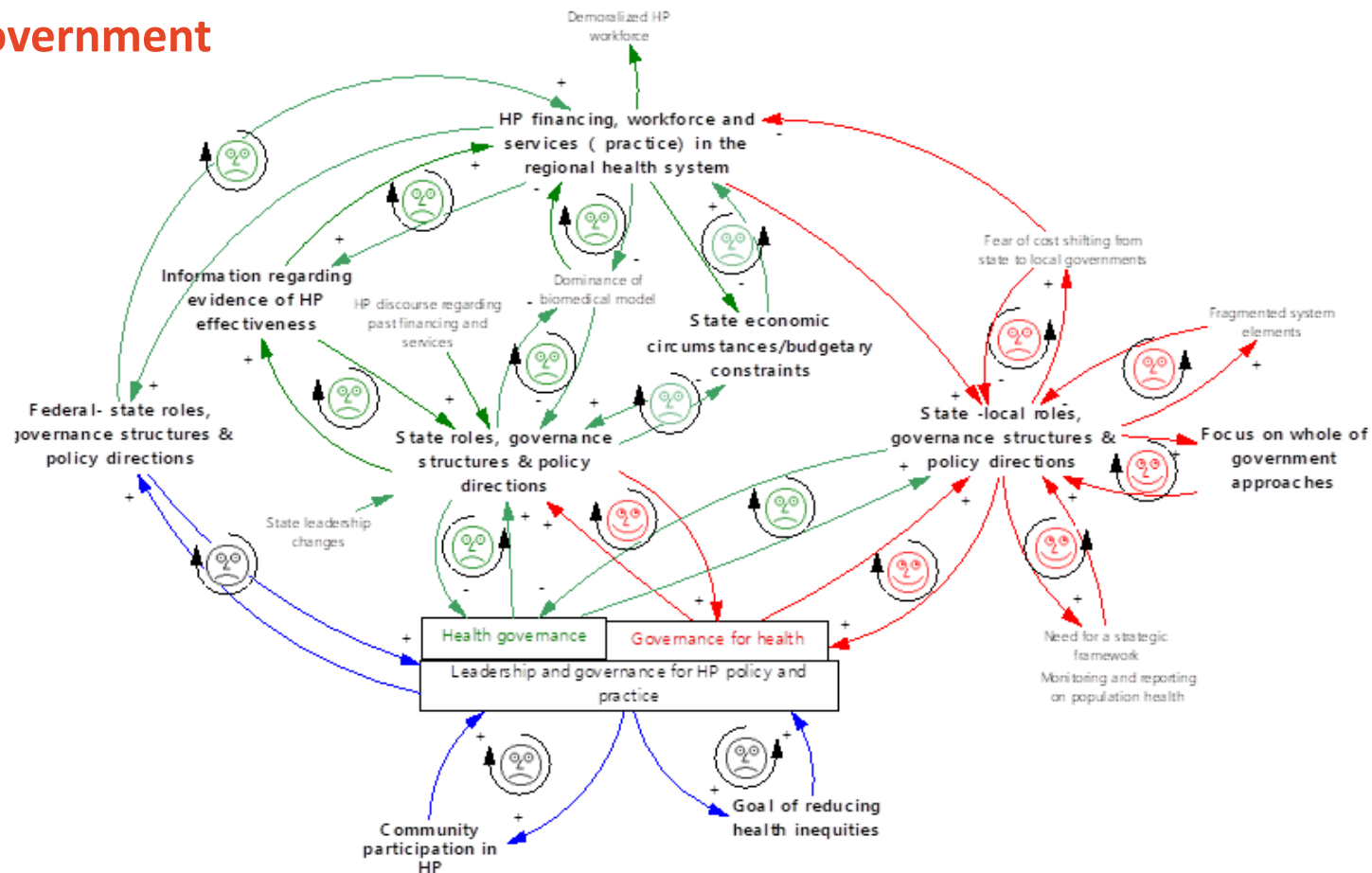
Leadership and governance



All levels of government



State government



State – local government

“I see a lot of cost and expenses so no one is looking to really take it on board because they know it’s like a poisoned chalice” (Local government interviewee)

Shakespeare spoilers

Hamlet



everyone
dies

Macbeth



everyone
dies

King Lear



everyone
dies

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