

Air quality policies of the future: individual responses and
societal challenges
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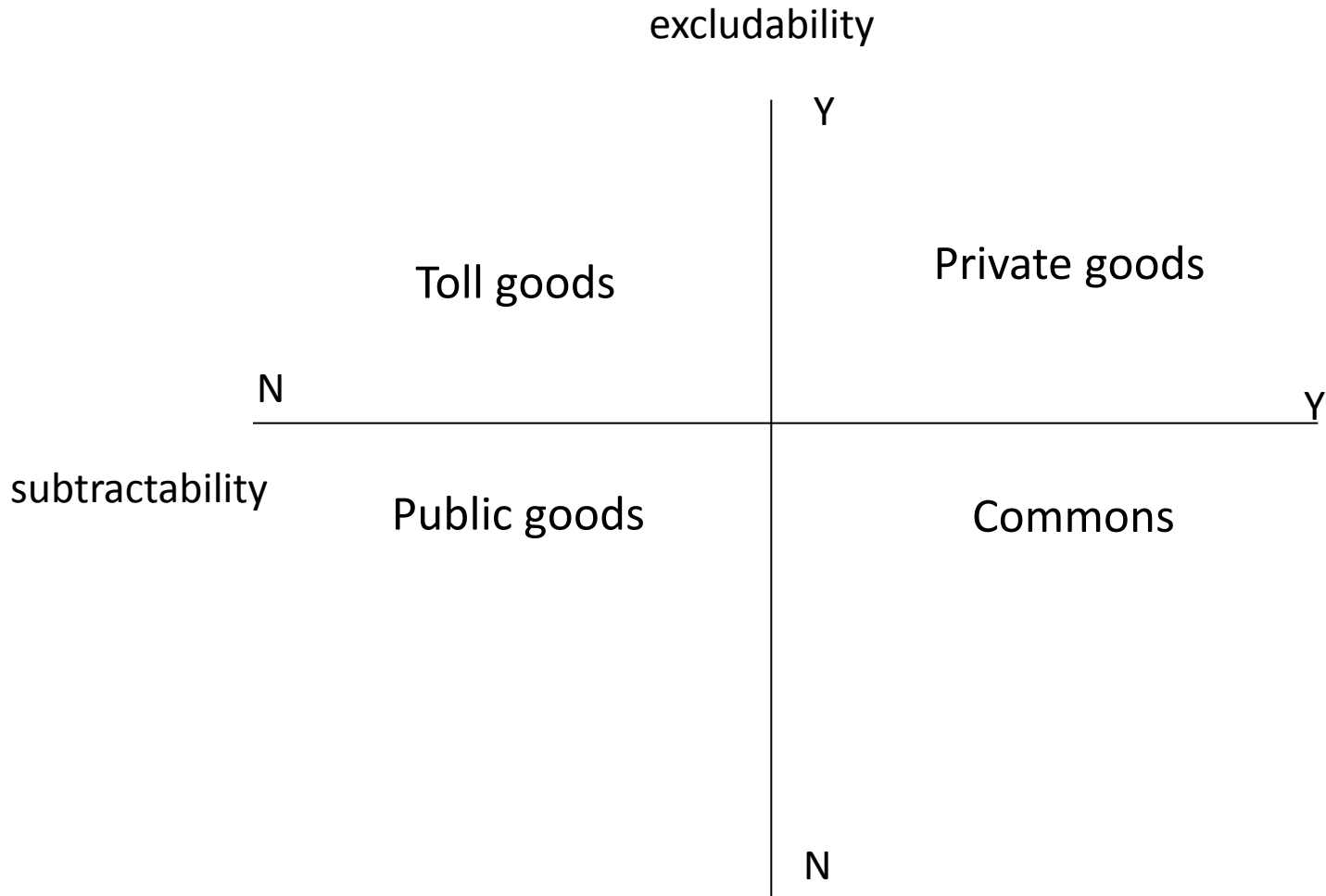
An Introduction on Environmental Conflicts around Air Quality

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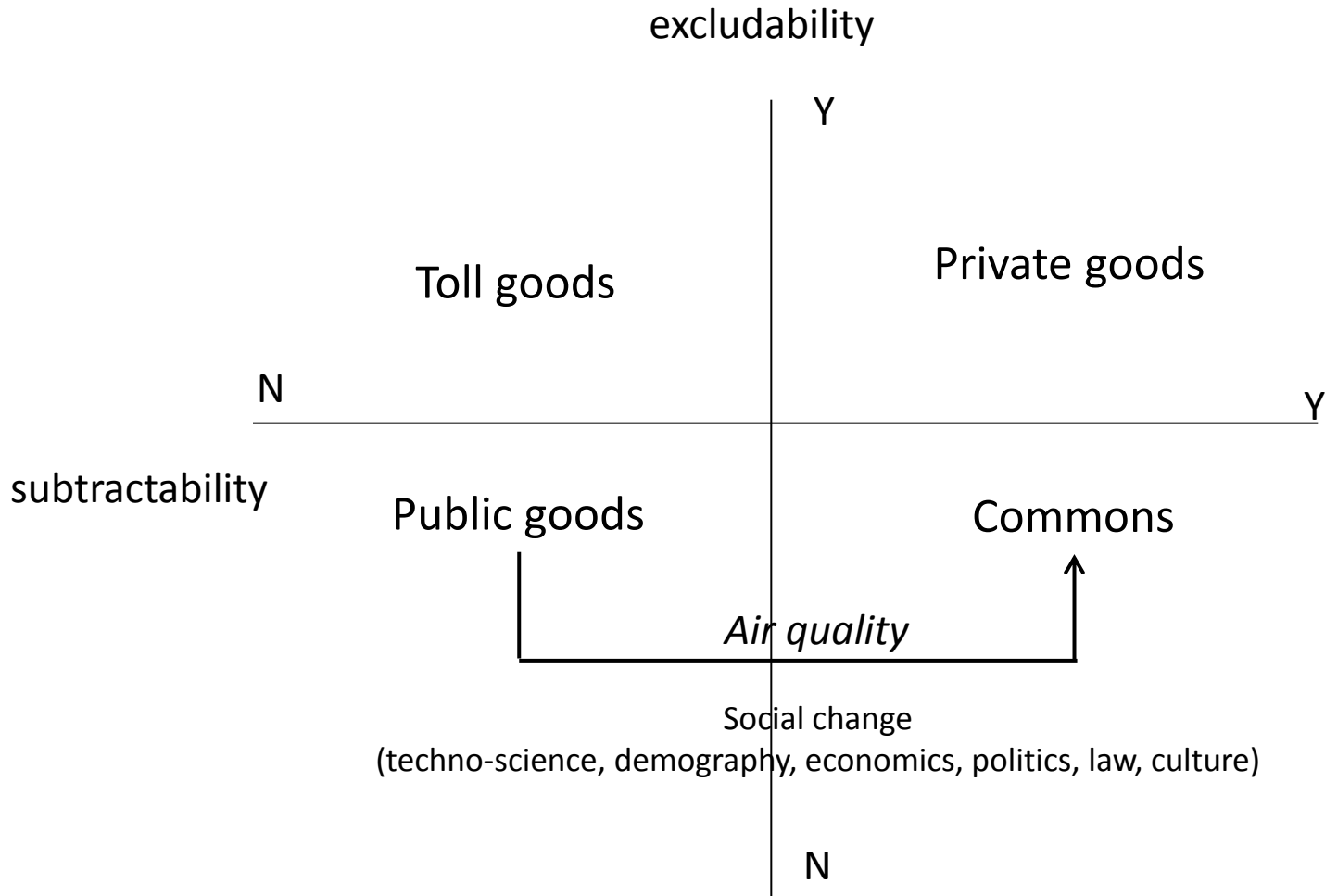
Why environmental conflicts?

- Why conflict?
- Why environmental conflict?

ENVIRONMENTAL 'GOODS' AND USE CONDITIONS

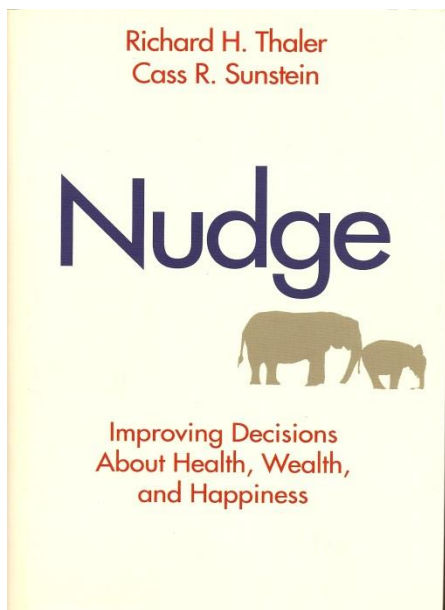


ENVIRONMENTAL 'GOODS' AND USE CONDITIONS



Understanding the 'social'

- Weber's rule: never start by assuming people are stupid!
- 'There is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women' (M. Thatcher)
- 'Folk sociology'
- ABC Model
- Institutions, practices, routines and 'nudges'



What is Explanatory of Social Phenomena?

Properties of and relations among aggregate social entities are irreducibly explanatory

YES

NO

YES

Anti-reductionism

Methodological Individualism

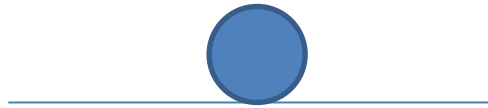
NO

Radical Holism

Atomism

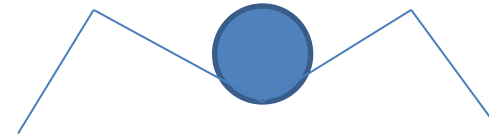
Relations among individuals are explanatory

Myths of nature and behavioral orientations (elaboration on M. Douglas, and M. Schwarz/M. Thompson)



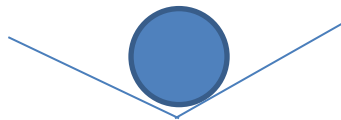
Nature capricious (Fatalist)

- View of nature: none
- View of resources: lottery
- Environmental risk perception: what you don't know cannot harm you
- Management strategy: cope



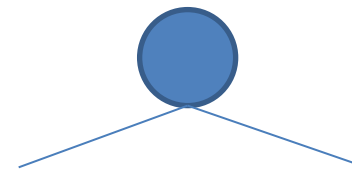
Nature perverse/tolerant (Hierarchist)

- View of nature: unstable equilibrium
- View of resources: scarce
- Environmental risk perception: acceptable risks, determined by experts
- Management strategy: regulation and control



Nature benign (Individualist)

- View of nature: stable/global equilibrium
- View of resources: abundant
- Environmental risk perception: proactionary attitude
- Management strategy: take what you need



Nature ephemeral (Egalitarian)

- View of nature: precarious balance
- View of resources: depleting
- Environmental risk perception: precautionary attitude
- Management strategy: take direct responsibility

Types of errors and actors' positional preferences

(Source: author's elaboration from Freudenburg, W., Gramling, R., Davidson, D., Scientific certainty argumentation methods (SCAMs): science and the politics of doubt, *Sociological Inquiry* 78(1), 2008)

'Hypothesis'	Technology is safe	Technology is risky
'Reality': Technology is safe	(correct)	Type I error (usually avoided with 95% confidence) Single-factor research designs Scientists, entrepreneurs
Technology is risky	Type II error (rarely avoided with even 50% confidence) Pluri-factor research designs Social movements, final users, exposed groups	(correct)

Science and public opinion: the age of distrust?

- “Public understanding of science” vs. positionality (risk/danger – agent/patient)
- Organized irresponsibility (Beck)
- Zero risk vs. trade-offs
- “Innovation risks” and cost/benefit distribution: zero sum vs. win/win game
- The scientist’s ‘double track’
 - ‘All is OK... but remember that science is fallible by definition!’
 - ‘I just deal with my own research... but opposing its outcomes is irrational!’



- Scientist ≠ expert
 - Authority
 - Transgressivity
 - Eterodirection



- Science and the media
 - Funnel
 - Megaphone
 - Hat on the chair



Conclusion

- Why conflict?
- Why environmental conflict?
- Overcoming, handling, benefitting from conflict