HORIZONS **FORESIGHT** METHOD

Module 5

Government of Canada
Policy Horizons Canada
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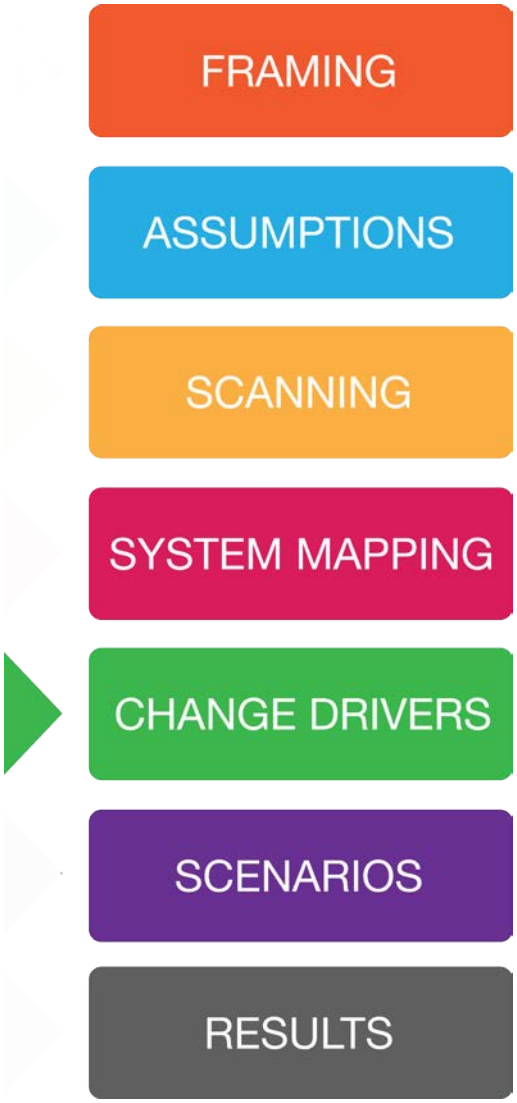
THE HORIZONS FORESIGHT METHOD

You are here in the Horizons Foresight Method



- Identify the issue or problem of interest
- Consider the larger system(s) shaping the issue
- Prepare a simple domain diagram of what is ”in” or “out” as a guide Allow it to evolve over the study

- Identify “current assumptions” buried in public dialogue and policy documents
- Identify key trends people assume are true
- Summarize key assumptions as a description of the expected future

- Scan for weak signals of potentially disruptive changes
- Conduct interviews and facilitate dialogue to understand the system and develop insights

- Identify key elements or nodes in the system
- Describe key relationships
- Use a system map to identify where change could occur and direct further scanning for weak signals as needed

- Use insights from scanning to identify change drivers shaping the system
- Do cascade diagrams to see 2nd to 5th order consequences

- Develop scenarios to explore a range of futures
- Identify potential challenges and discontinuities
- Test robustness of current assumptions and strategies

- Explore policy challenges and opportunities
- Identify credible assumptions and robust strategies
- Identify key uncertainties, surprises and emerging issues
- Better understand how the system or issue could evolve

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand when, how and why to use change drivers
- Understand how change drivers are used as part of the Horizons Foresight Method

WHAT IS A CHANGE DRIVER?

- Definition: In the world of cause and effect, a change driver causes significant change in the system under study.
- A change driver is a significant disruptive force that is present in all scenarios, although it may have a different impact in each scenario.
- Change drivers influence elements on the system map. As they interact with one or more elements of the system, those elements change or behave in a new and/or unexpected way. This interaction is one of the sources of surprise and insight in foresight.

EXAMPLES OF CHANGE DRIVERS IMAGINE IT IS 1982

- The number of and applications for personal computers are growing
- Anti-smoking sentiment is growing
- Charter of Rights and Freedoms promotes diversity
- China’s Reform and Opening-up Policy

FROM WEAK SIGNALS TO INSIGHTS TO CHANGE DRIVERS

- The scanning phase helps identify weak signals and insights about what is changing
- The change driver is a succinct statement of what is driving the change
- Example

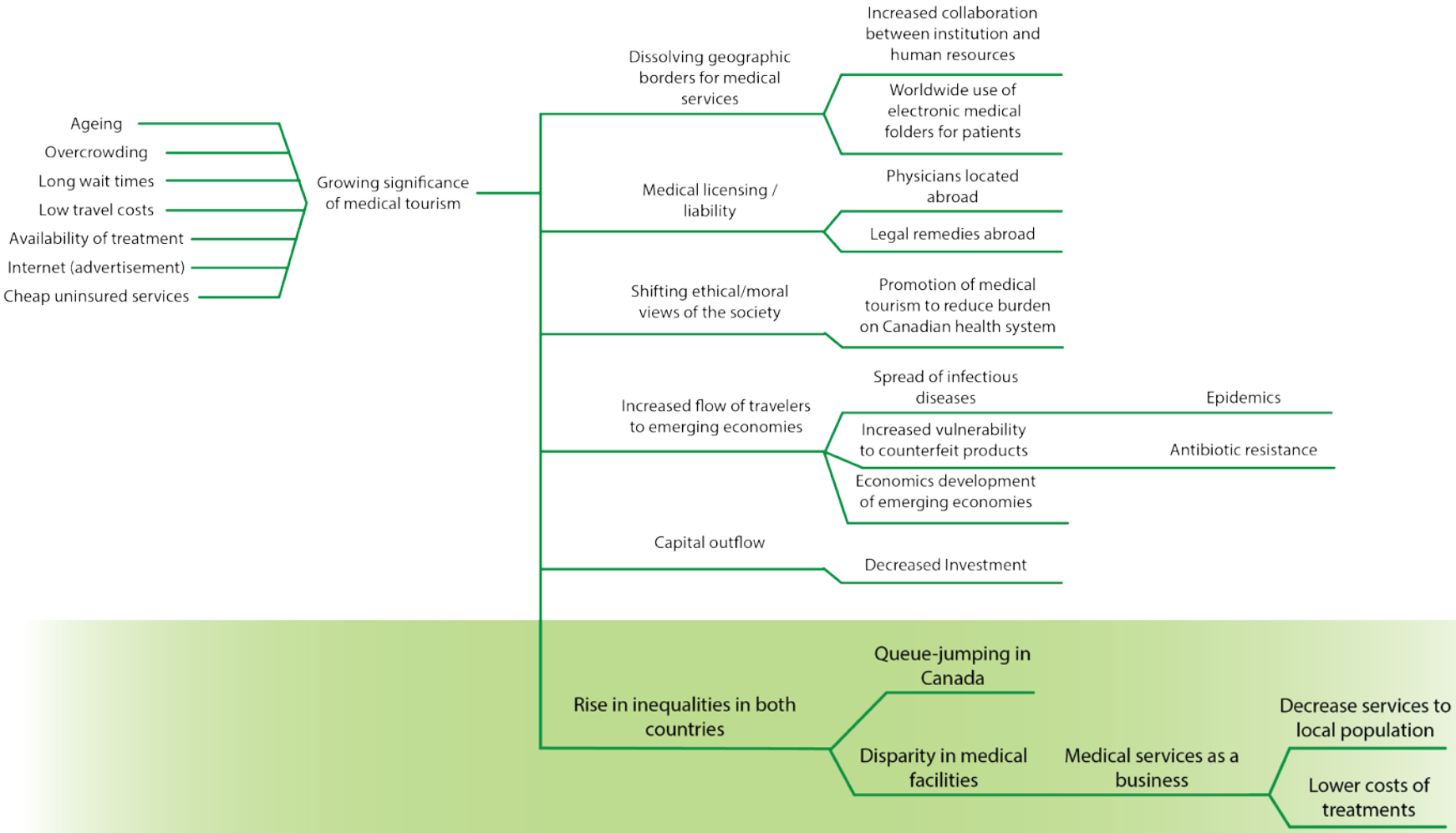
  Weak signals about Russia's recent behaviour:

  - Russia wants to expand energy infrastructure and sales to China
  - Russia is building new special economic zones to expand ties to the far east
  - Russia is building the Eurasian Union to expand its influence
  - Russia agrees to sell advanced missile defense systems to China
  - New nuclear deal with India and air fighter deal with Malaysia

  Insight/Change driver:

  - Russia is pivoting to Asia to expand markets, influence and allies

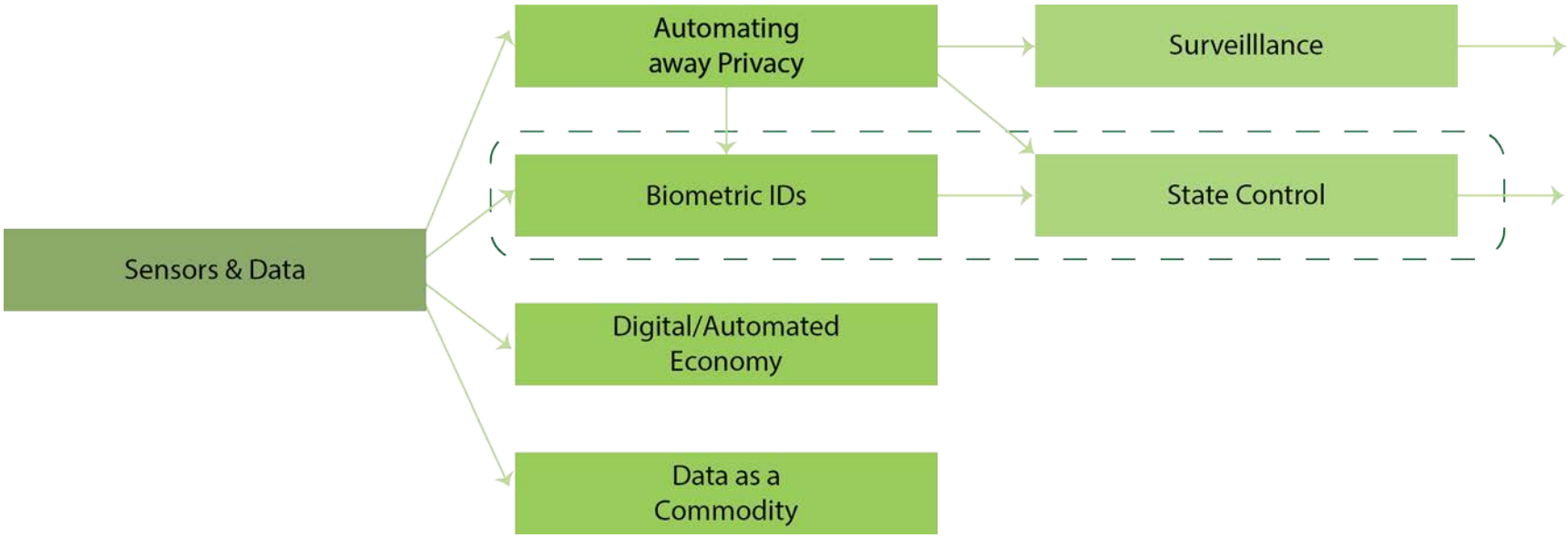
IMPACTS OF A CHANGE DRIVER



WHAT MAKES A GOOD CHANGE DRIVER?

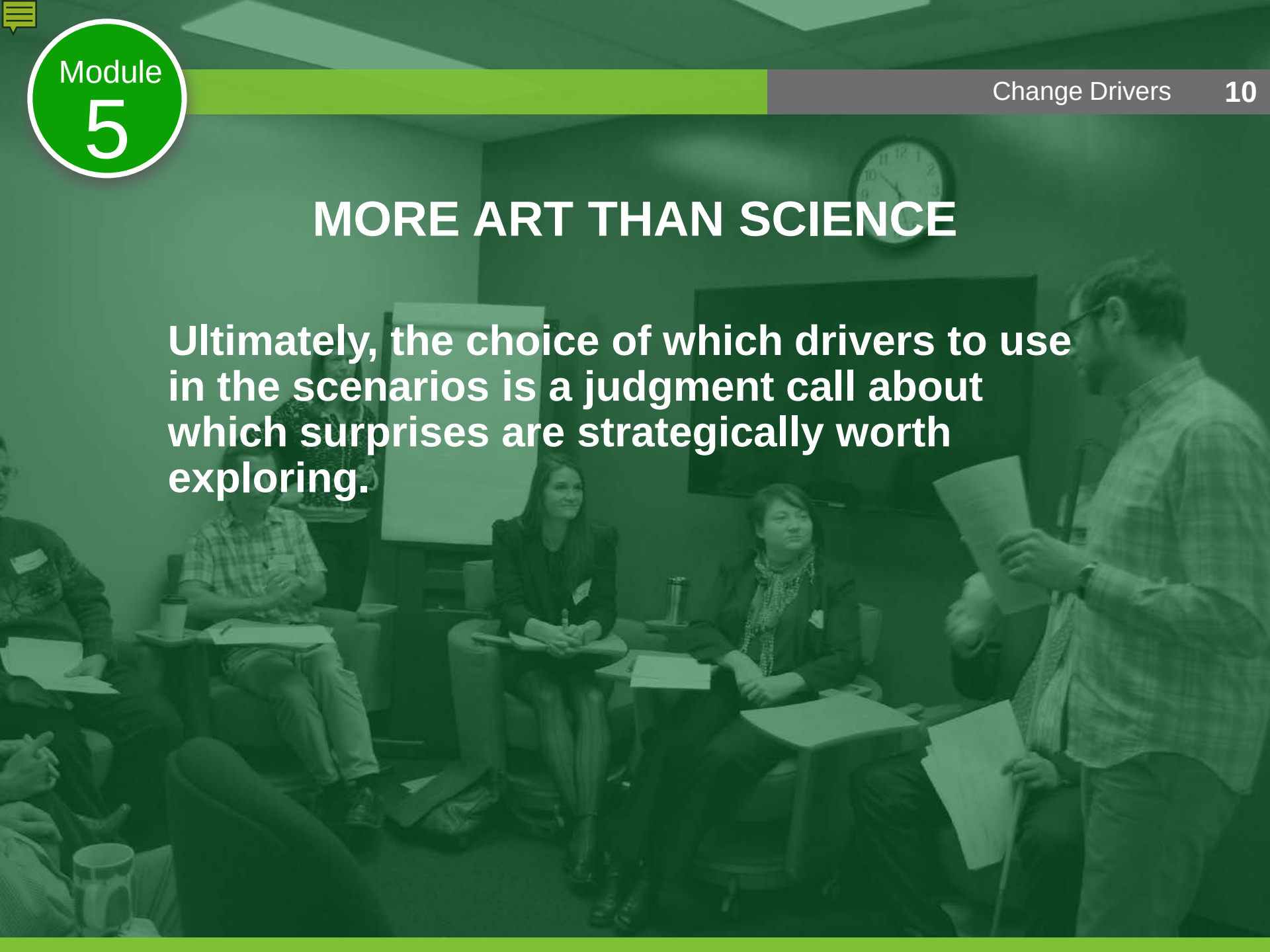
- It causes significant disruption
- The driver or its consequences are not well known or understood (or may be contested)
- The driver has impact within the timeframe (10–15 years)
- It is often a succinct statement with a direction to the change
  - E.g. *Aging* population, *Shrinking* Middle Class, *Rise* of Cleantech

CHOOSE THE MOST STRATEGIC WAY TO FRAME THE DRIVER



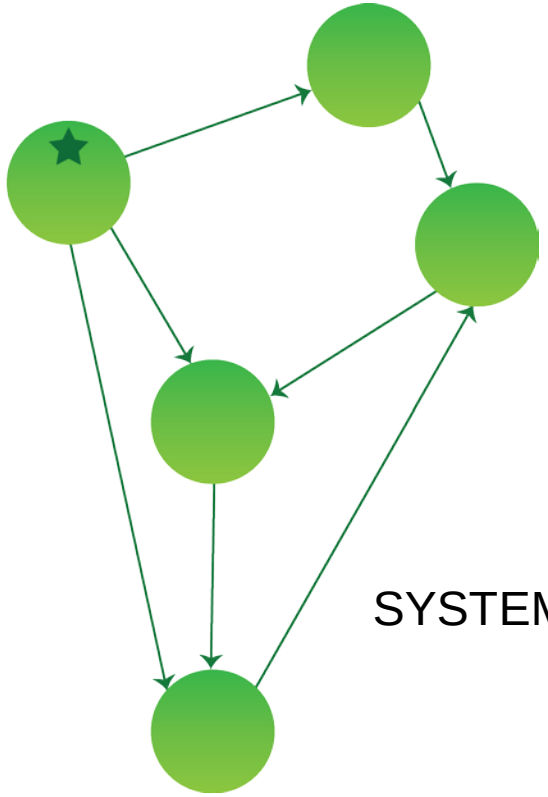
MORE ART THAN SCIENCE

Ultimately, the choice of which drivers to use in the scenarios is a judgment call about which surprises are strategically worth exploring.



TESTING TO IDENTIFY USEFUL DRIVERS

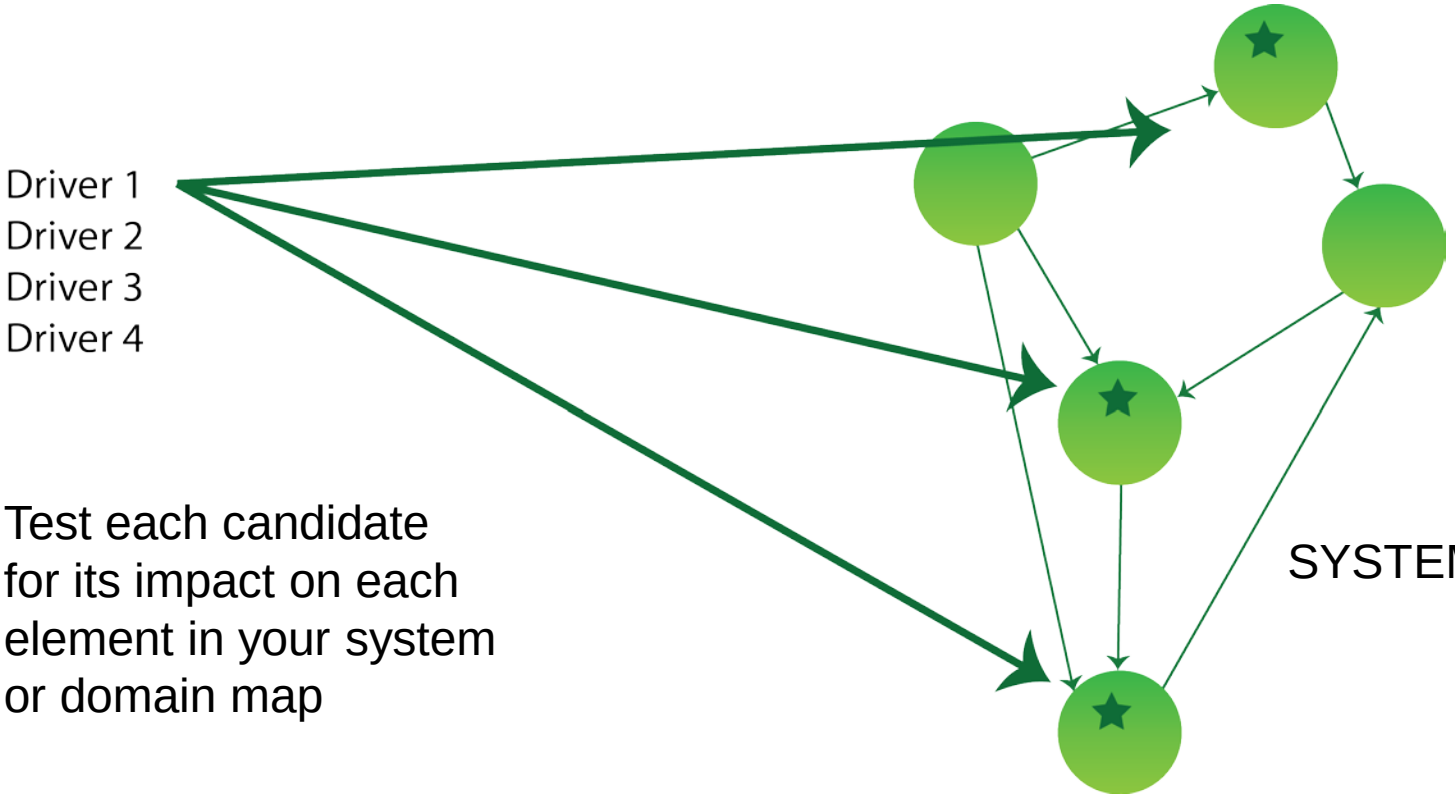
Driver 1
Driver 2
Driver 3
Driver 4



SYSTEM MAP

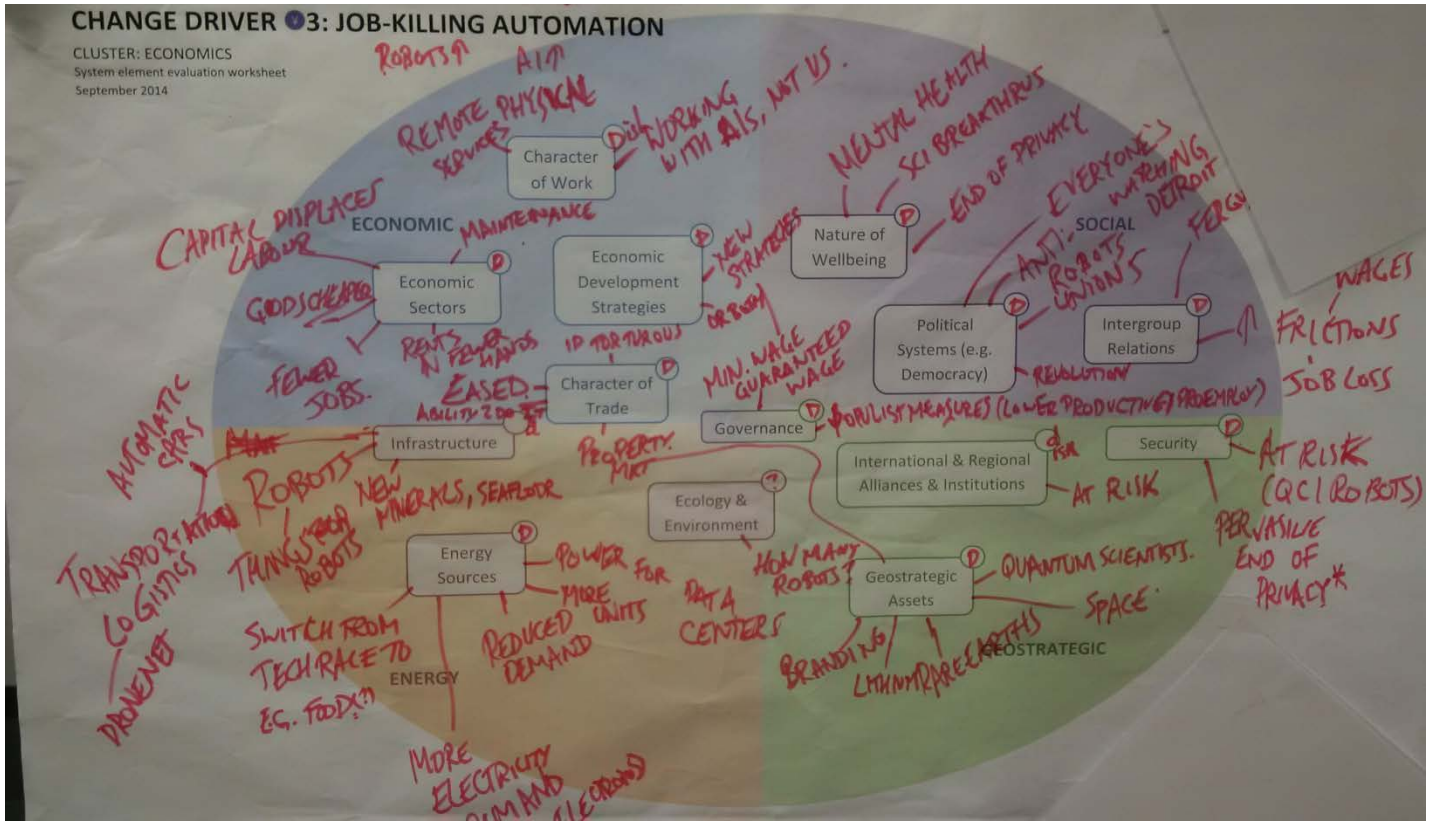
Test each candidate driver for its impact on each element in your system or domain map

TESTING TO IDENTIFY USEFUL DRIVERS



Test each candidate for its impact on each element in your system or domain map

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH: USE A DOMAIN MAP TO ASSESS DRIVERS



USING CROSS-IMPACT ANALYSIS TO SELECT DRIVERS

	SYSTEM ELEMENTS						
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
CHANGE DRIVERS	1	H						
	2			L		H	H	
	3							
	4				H			H
	5		H	H	H			
	6	H			H			
	7						H	H

Rating:
H = Change driver has a high impact on these system elements

L = Change driver has low impact on these system elements, but still interesting

Empty cell = no impact

USING CROSS-IMPACT ANALYSIS TO EXPLORE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN DRIVERS AND FIND NEW SURPRISES

THE WHOLE MATRIX

	CHANGE DRIVERS				
CHANGE DRIVERS		1	2	3	4
	1	X			
	2	X			
	3	X	X		
	4	X	X	X	X

A CLOSER LOOK

	THE DIGITIZATION OF THE ECONOMY
GROWING INEQUALITY	INTERNET BECOMES A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT HEADLINE: OECD, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH SLAM CANADA'S CONNECTIVITY IN THE NORTH

WHAT IS NOT A CHANGE DRIVER?

- A statement about the change rather than *what is driving the change.*
- Change drivers are not normally any of the following:
  - problems
  - solutions
  - advocacy / desired states
- If a change driver does not have a significant impact on at least one element in the system map, then it should be discarded.

SUMMARY

- Change drivers cause significant change in the system under study.
- Cascade diagrams help identify surprising and unexpected consequences of drivers over time.
- Cross-impact matrices and domain map exercises can be used to identify the most significant and disruptive change drivers.
- The choice of the best change drivers to use is more of an art than a science.

INFORMATION

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