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WORKSHOP ON ETHICS IN MODERN STATISTICAL ORGANISATIONS

PROPOSALS TO PROMOTE CHANGE FROM COMPLIANCE TO ETHICAL COMMITMENT IN ISTAT

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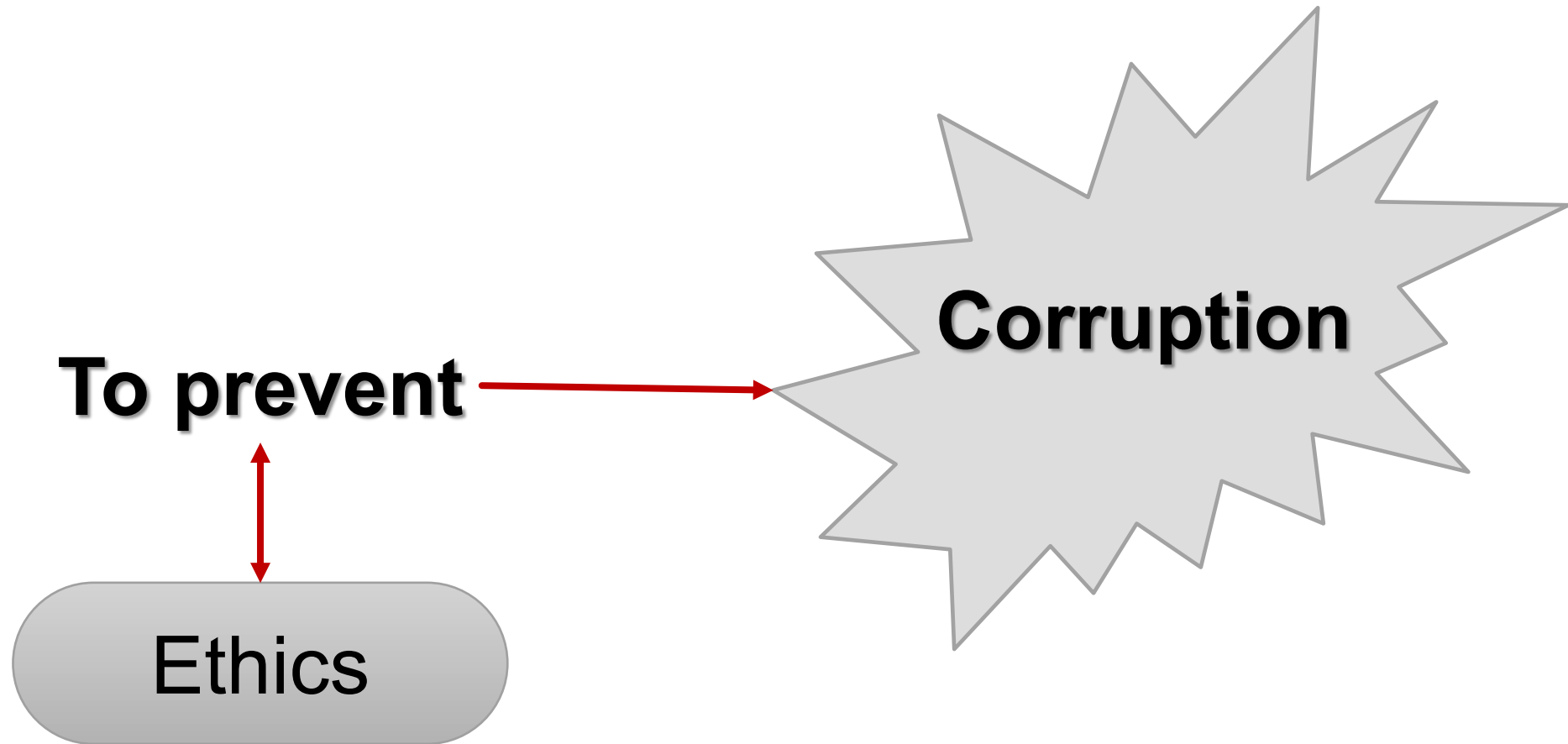
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The reference framework



Words have a weight



What Istat has already achieved (as far as ethics is concerned)

- ❖ Since 2021, participation in the **Task Team on Ethical Leadership**
- ❖ In 2021 Istat got the **UNI ISO 37001:2016 certification** (Anti-bribery management systems standard). This first certification is expiring on 27 July 2024
- ❖ Updating of the **Code of Conduct** for all staff in 2022
- ❖ **Specific training** (webinars) dedicated to the new Code provisions
- ❖ In order to keep the 37001 certification, in June 2023 the Istat Board adopted a **Declaration of Commitment to Prevent Corruption**.

The Declaration of commitment to prevent corruption

- ❖ The Declaration was adopted by Istat Board on 8 June 2023
- ❖ The Declaration:
 - **summarizes the objectives** of Istat anticorruption management system **and the different roles** engaged in keeping its efficiency and compliance
 - highlights **the importance of an organisational culture ethically oriented in a proactive way**, that is, not just aimed at avoiding penalties;
 - summarizes **the key elements for anticorruption strategy**, among which more space than in the past is now given to awareness and training on ethics and legality for all staff



The Declaration of commitment to prevent corruption

The Declaration points at a **comprehensive strategy based on the following ethical features:**

- ❖ **avoid/reject any pressure** or influence contrasting with law and the Code of Conduct;
- ❖ avoid/reject any actual or prospective **conflict of interests**;
- ❖ privilege **public interest** in every situation;
- ❖ commit to **opt for public good** whenever involved in an ethical dilemma
- ❖ **remember we are civil servants** even in private situations, and behave consequently when any private circumstances can have an impact on work activities.

Not just a signature



- ❖ The Declaration is now expected to be signed and endorsed by all middle and high managers in Istat. **About the signing, the International Standard is very clear in saying not to consider it a technicality:** through signing managers are expected to make an ethical commitment, that is, are expected to take the responsibility to behave ethically as well as to promote ethics among their staff.
- ❖ The above implies the setting up of a campaign to make the Declaration well known and understood in its different requirements.
- ❖ In order the campaign to be successful, **we have taken into consideration three elements so far:** the **target** (Istat managers), the campaign/training **methods** and the contribution of **psychosocial perspective** (together with legality and professional aspects) in drafting the campaign contents.

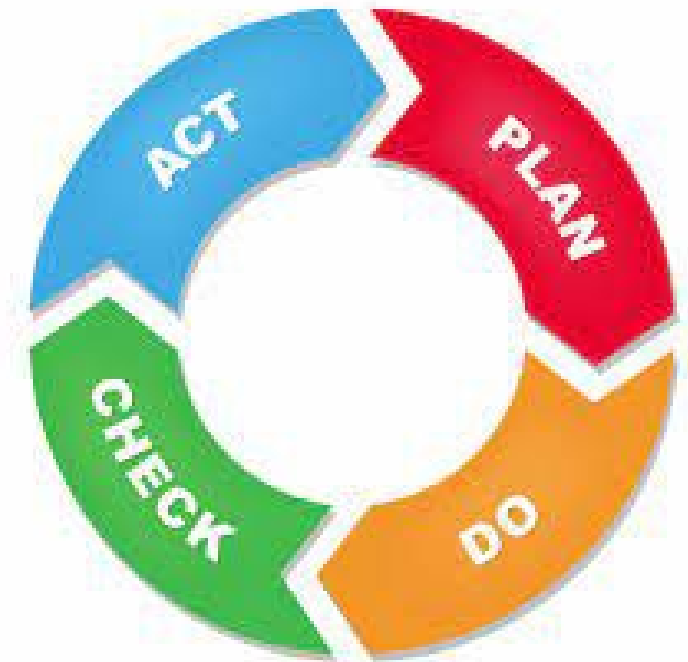
The campaign/training methods

- ❖ Also because of the pandemic, the training on anticorruption, transparency, code of conduct etc. in the last years has been delivered through **webinars**.
- ❖ This method has been **very useful and efficient** in releasing information and updating about law evolution on this subjects.
- ❖ However, when it comes to ethics training, webinars can be a **passive strategy**: people receive information, very few break the ice to ask questions, and sometimes – due to sudden work demands, beyond the screen there can be persons whose mind is temporarily away.
- ❖ If in Istat we want to go beyond compliance, beyond the signature, we must **find ways to actively engage people**.

The campaign/training methods

That means:

- ❖ Using methods that **facilitate active listening and discussion and sharing of experiences**, such as the bootcamp we have just gone through;
- ❖ Building a **training cycle of continuous improvement (PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT)** that, starting from a kick-off event (the signing of the Declaration) will **keep open the debate** on different ethical perspectives and situations.



As regards the target

12

Administrative
managers
(high+middle
level)

Five times as much

60

technical managers
(high+middle level,
most statistics, few
ICT and other)

- ❖ In Italy the **legislation to prevent corruption** has developed with a strong connection to administrative matters, and **the idea of ethics promoted by such legislation goes beyond single professions** in the public sector, because it **focuses on being a civil servant**.
- ❖ Of course, official statistics professionals are civil servants too but, as far as Istat is concerned, **they are mainly focused on professional identity and professional ethics** (deontology). And that is understandable!

As regards the target

- ❖ In other words, statistics managers in Istat have **a very strong professional identity** that comes from dedicated legislation and ethics and adds to their number and their professional link to the Istat mission and vision.
- ❖ On the other hand, the ethics campaign that anticipates and will follow the signature of the Declaration to prevent corruption **is targeted for all Istat managers** and so it must be, even though it comes from different legislation.
- ❖ Therefore, from a communication-and-training point of view, the challenge will be to engage and keep engaged this significant subgroup of managers, and there are clues that lead us to believe that **this will only be possible through sharing ethical problems and discussing on real experiences.**

The contribution of psychosocial perspective

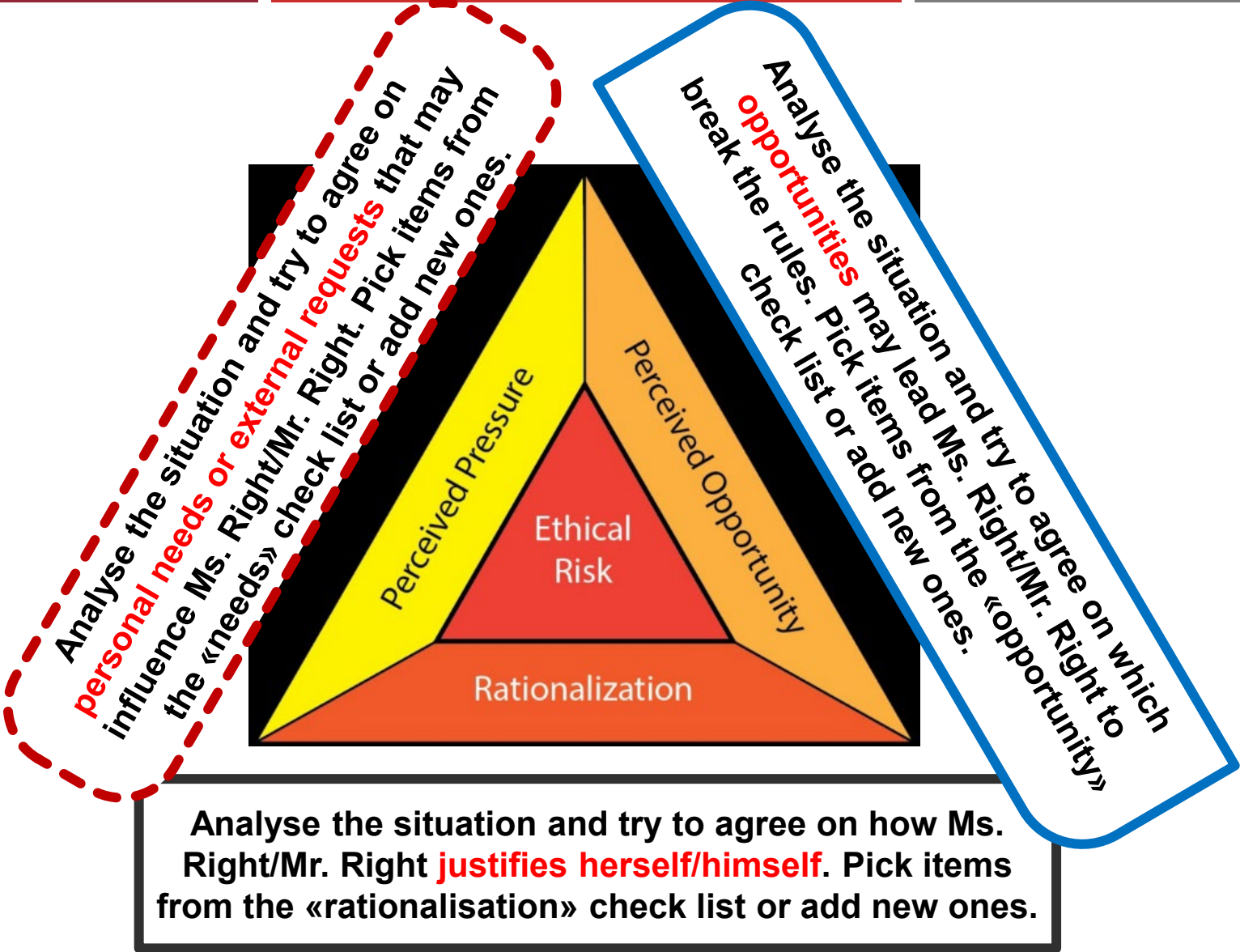
- ❖ “an initial step to combat unethical behavior within organizations is (...) to set aside the idea that people are essentially moral or immoral, [... and] focus on the idea that an individual’s choice to act in moral or immoral manner depends upon a complex interaction – determined on a case-by-case basis – between psychological, social and contextual factors”;
- ❖ That is what the Donald Cressey’s Triangle is about.

**The individual
+
Context
+
Society**

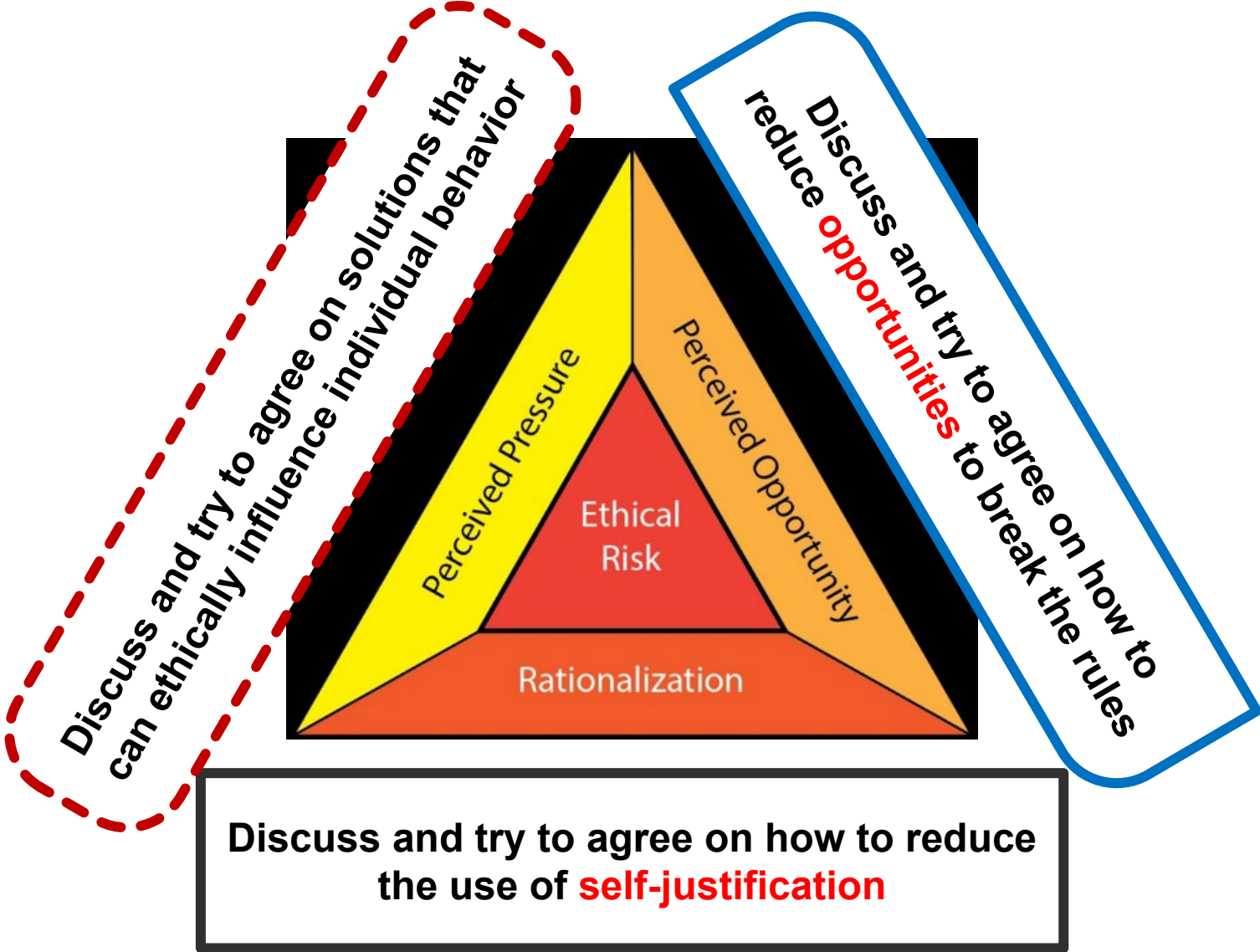
Cressey, D., *Other People’s Money: A Study in the Social Psychology of Embezzlement*, Glencoe, 1953

Pacilli, M.G., Spaccatini, F., Giovannelli, I., 2019.

Apply the Cressey's triangle to the analysis of a situation



Apply the Cressey's triangle to reduce ethical risk in the future



The elements of the campaign



- ❖ Intranet
- ❖ Kick-off event
- ❖ Intranet
- ❖ Standing working group

Thank you for your attention

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