Sharing Responsibility - perspectives & myths

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Bushfire CRC Research Advisory Forum

Perth, 14th May2013

the policy message

the end user message

"*There is a need for a new focus on **shared responsibility**.*"
    - National Strategy for Disaster
        Resilience (2011), p. 3.

"***shared responsibility** much talked about, but not consistently understood.*"
    - Feedback at Canberra RAF, Oct 2011

the theory message

"*What exactly is **responsibility**?... It all depends on the perspective and on the goals pursued.*" [1]

"*How we define and frame problems will circumscribe our search for solutions.*" [2]
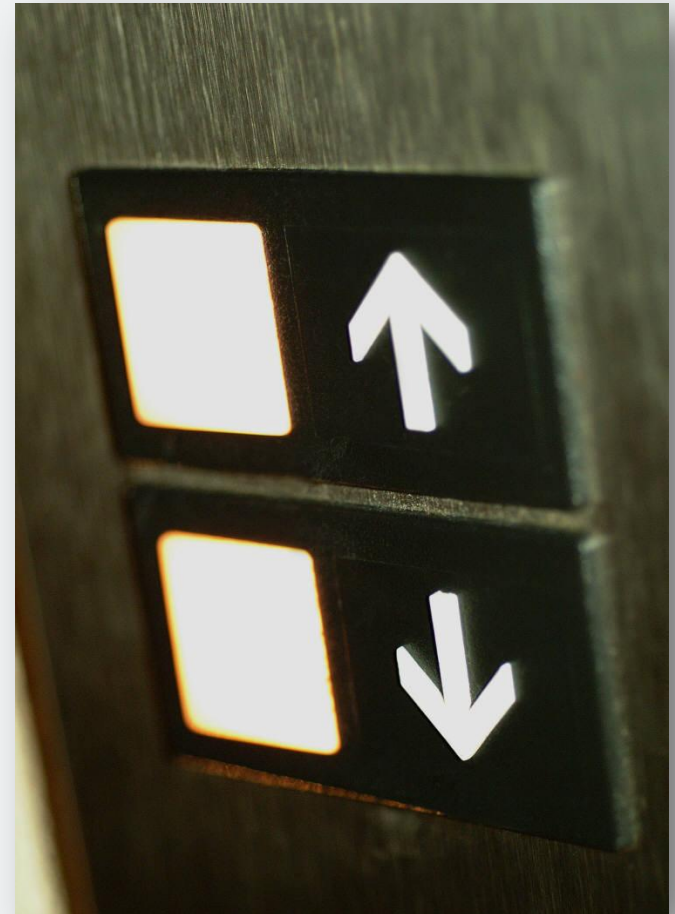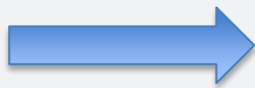
MY ELEVATOR PITCH

What?

❑ Investigating what shared responsibility means for emergency management from different perspectives

Why?

❑ To stimulate new ways of thinking about it and to support decision-making

Focus on sharing between government and 'communities'

Laying groundwork

Stage 1 - Concept review
- Review ways that responsibility-sharing issues are conceptualized in relevant research

Stage 2 - Stakeholder engagement
- Direct research towards policy learning needs (*ongoing*)

Stage 3 - Policy review
- Identify responsibility-sharing issues encountered in a range of sectors internationally, & the policy responses
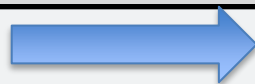
Stage 4 - Australian case studies
- Investigate specific responsibility-sharing issues encountered in Australian fire and emergency management

Stage 5 – Synthesis
- Identify and evaluate alternatives to share responsibility in Australian FEM in the context of what we learn via Stages 1-4

Research program integration

Responsibility has always been shared in Australian fire and emergency management

'Shared responsibility' is a **normative statement**

But the same statement is being used to make **different normative claims**

See McLennan & Bosomworth forthcoming; McLennan & Handmer 2012b

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1. **Legal (e.g. Michael)**

1. Responsibility can only be held by individuals

2. Communities can't share responsibility because they don't exist

3. Royal Commission's can't attribute responsibility

4. Only an external (formal) power can enforce responsibility

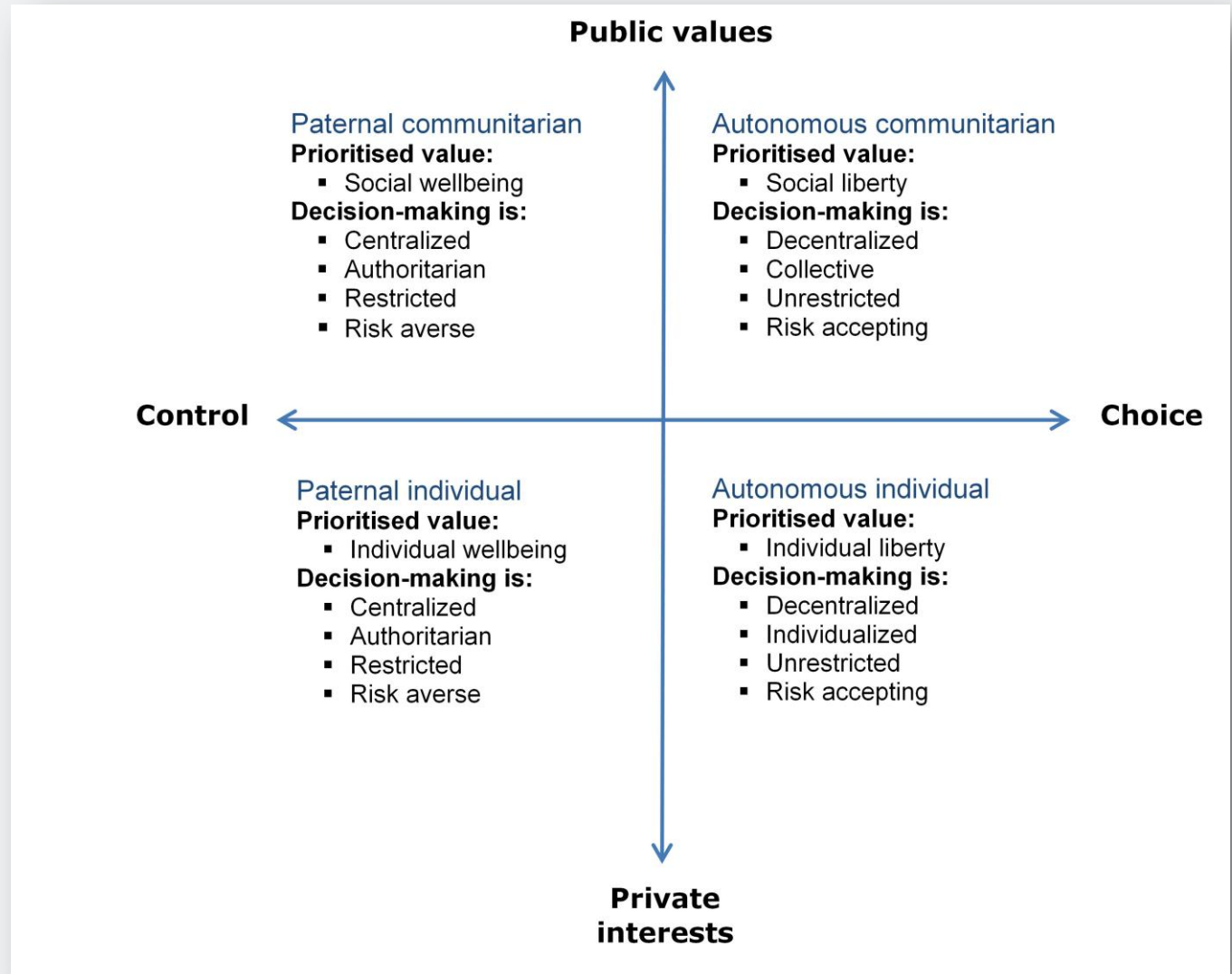5. Law trumps social norms & social institutions

1. **Governance (e.g. Blythe)**

1. Responsibility can be held collectively

2. Communities can share responsibility because they do exist

3. Anyone can attribute responsibility

4. Responsibility can also be internally (and informally) enforced

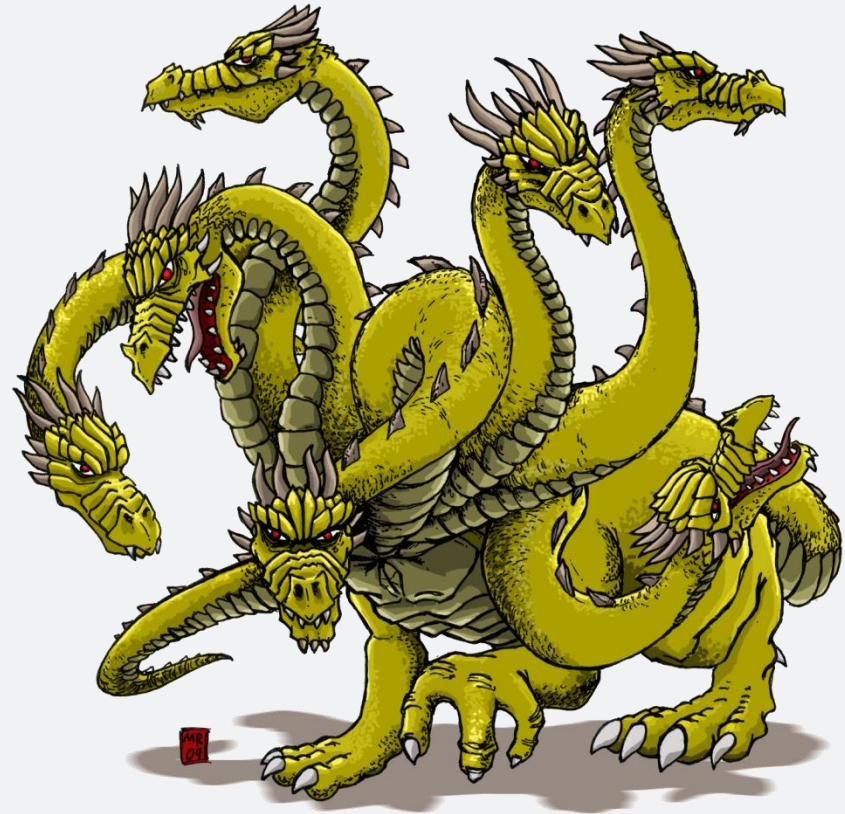5. Law reflects social norms & social institutions

See McLennan & Eburn forthcoming; McLennan & Handmer 2012d.

EXPOSING HIDDEN VALUE TRADE-OFFS

Figure 1: Four hypothetical scenarios for sharing responsibility for wildfire management between governments and citizens (McLennan & Eburn forthcoming)

Public values

Paternal communitarian
Prioritised value:
- Social wellbeing
Decision-making is:
- Centralized
- Authoritarian
- Restricted
- Risk averse

Autonomous communitarian
Prioritised value:
- Social liberty
Decision-making is:
- Decentralized
- Collective
- Unrestricted
- Risk accepting

Control ← → **Choice**

Paternal individual
Prioritised value:
- Individual wellbeing
Decision-making is:
- Centralized
- Authoritarian
- Restricted
- Risk averse

Autonomous individual
Prioritised value:
- Individual liberty
Decision-making is:
- Decentralized
- Individualized
- Unrestricted
- Risk accepting

Private interests

1. It is a many-headed beast
   a) Context-dependent
   b) Multiple activities
   c) Multiple values/ interests/ end goals to trade off.

2. Is a collection of overlapping challenges
   - Many types of 'theoretical' challenges (McLennan & Handmer 2011a,b)
   - Challenges in VBRC public submissions (McLennan & Handmer 2011c)
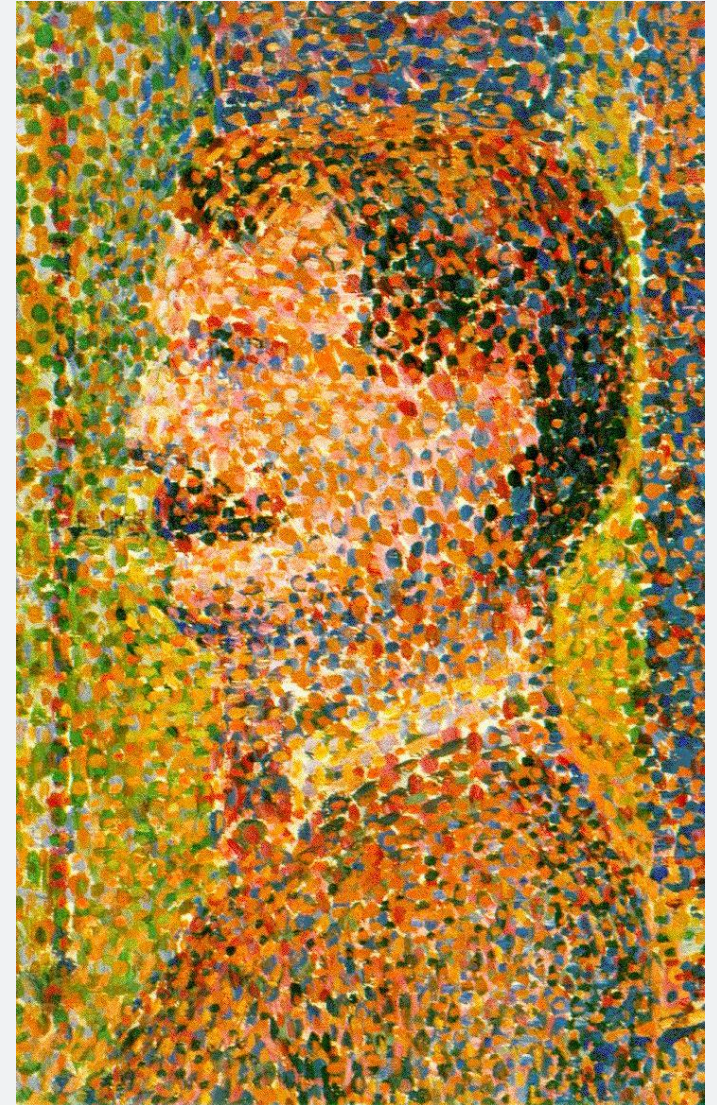
Ten theoretical Challenges

1. Social dilemma
2. Normative standards
3. Social contract
4. Governance
5. Social capacity
6. Attribution
7. Sociocultural context
8. Distribution
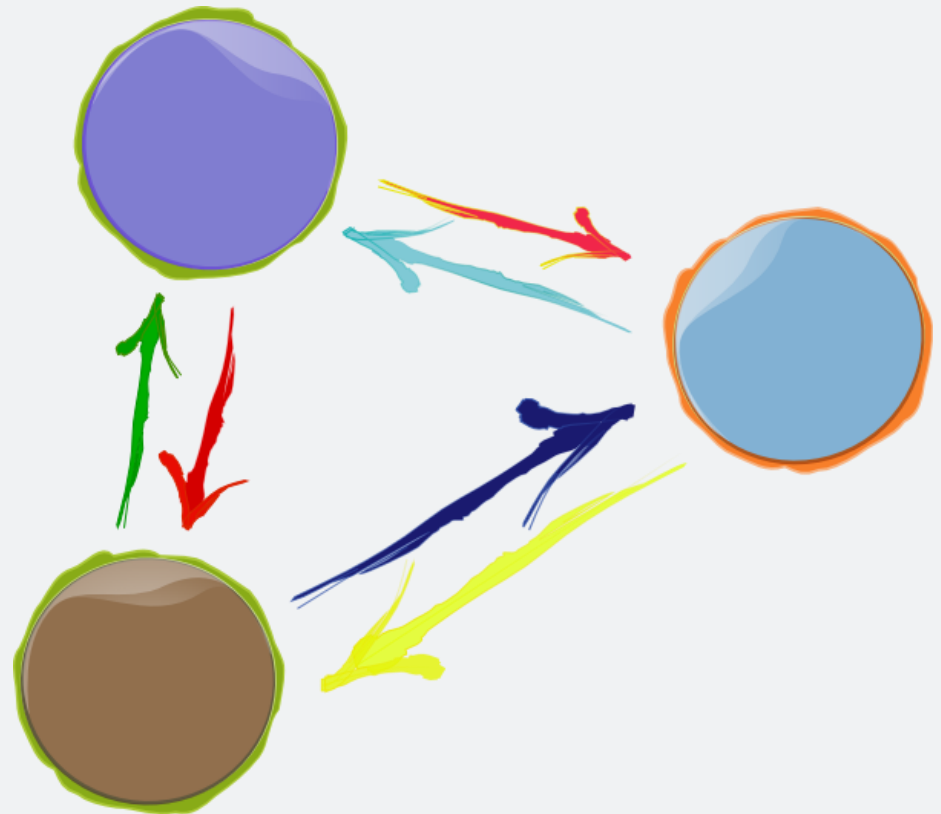9. Practice
10. Complex systems

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1.   Shared responsibility is an **emergent property.**

2.   It is a **process** as much as an outcome.

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- Disagreement is messy but…
- Interaction between diverse and contradictory perspectives can be an advantage
  - E.g. high reliability organisations
- Being 'frame-reflective'
  - McLennan & Bosomworth forthcoming)
- Co/shared governance

See also Lofquist, Eric Arne. (2010). The art of measuring nothing: The paradox of measuring safety in a changing civil aviation industry using traditional safety metrics. Safety Science, 48(10), 1520-1529.

KEY PROJECT DOCUMENTS

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- McLennan B, Eburn, M (forthcoming) Exposing hidden value trade-offs; sharing wildfire management responsibility between government and citizens. *Under review*.

- McLennan, BJ, & Handmer, JH (forthcoming) Visions of sharing responsibility for disaster resilience: sharing control. *Paper presented at AFAC and Bushfire CRC Conference, Perth 2012.*

- McLennan, BJ, Bosomworth, K (forthcoming) *From risk to resilience: reframing responsibilities in Australia disaster policy discourse.* In preparation.

- McLennan, BJ et al. (forthcoming). Sharing responsibility for implementing the NSDR: written account of a stakeholder workshop. *In preparation*.

- McLennan, BJ, Bosomworth, K, Keating, A, Kruger, T, Towers, B. (2012). *Visions of sharing responsibility for disaster resilience: account of a multi-stakeholder workshop.* RMIT University, Bushfire CRC, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF), Melbourne.

- McLennan, BJ, & Handmer, JH (2012a). *From risk to resilience? Reframing shared responsibility in Australian disaster policy [extended abstract].* Paper presented at the 3rd Human Dimensions of Wildland Fire Conference, Seattle, WA.

- McLennan, BJ, Handmer, J (2012b) Reframing responsibility-sharing for bushfire risk management in Australia after Black Saturday. *Environmental Hazards* **11**, 1-15.

- McLennan, BJ, Handmer, J (2012c) *Windows on responsibility-sharing challenges: a multi-theory analysis of public submissions to the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.* RMIT University & Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre, Melbourne.

- McLennan, Blythe J., & Handmer, John. (2012d). Changing the rules of the game: Mechanisms that shape responsibility-sharing from beyond Australian fire and emergency management. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 27(2), 7-13.

- McLennan, BJ, Handmer, J (2011a) *Framing challenges for sharing responsibility: a report of the Sharing Responsibility project.* RMIT University & Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre, Melbourne.

- McLennan, BJ, Handmer, J (2011b) Framing responsibility-sharing for risk management and community safety. *Paper presented at AFAC and Bushfire CRC Conference. Sydney, 2011*.

- McLennan, BJ, Handmer, J (2011c) Mechanisms for sharing responsibility: a report of the Sharing Responsibility project. RMIT University & Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre, Melbourne.