



The influence of multilevel governance systems on the climate adaptation practices of Australian organizations

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Sustainable Ecosystems / Climate Adaptation Flagship

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Overview

Climate adaptation

- complex collective action challenge

Governance concepts, perspectives, dimensions

Organizational focus

Networks & forums

- Function, structure, role

Institutions

Case study findings

Upcoming work

Wrap up





Major research questions

Contribution and role of networks forums & arenas to climate adaptation at the regional & inter-organizational level

The role of policy 'games' in regional outcomes – substantive, process level & institutional

Influence of institutions (formal, informal) on adaptive practice & co-ordinated action – how they structure, organise, regulate behaviour

Overview

Concerted adoption of climate adaptation practices is imperative and overdue.

Adaptive actions by individual households, organisations and across sectors are at best ad hoc and uncoordinated.

Addressing the implications of climate change is clearly a collective action issue

Role of collaborative practice among organisations

- largely undocumented
- significant role in awareness, perception and response to CC issues at the local to regional level.

Climate Adaptation

Pervasive

Confronting

Multi scalar

Cross boundary

- cultural / religious / national / north-south / developed developing

Conceptual

- Uncertainty
- Confusion with mitigation
- Risk of maladaptation
- timelines

Governance of climate adaptation

international politics

national, state, local gov

regional

the vulnerable

- aged, disabled, poor, indigenous
- Megalopolis, urban, rural, remote

households

business corporations

non-governmental organizations

not-for-profits

utilities – water, energy...

research / science community

communication – the message

sceptics / denialists

Multi level gov framework



Governance

The conditions for **ordered rule and collective action** (Stoker, 1998)

Appropriate decision-making frameworks are needed to help organizations engage in *processes that reduce vulnerability and lead to changed practices*

Complexity of climate change system requires an **adaptive governance framework** where

- trustworthy information at the correct scale;
- a mechanism for dealing with conflict;
- ability to induce institutional compliance (rules);
- the provision of infrastructure (physical, technical and institutional);
- an ability to support and encourage change (Dietz et al., 2003).

Organizations

Much attention focussed on individual responses

Organizations cover a significant portion of society

- Include government agencies (Fed, state, local)
- Multi-national companies (public & private)
- Not-for-profits
- Non government organisations etc...

Values, attitudes, leadership, resource allocation decisions

Socio-political context: lobbying, manoeuvring, strategising

Investment decisions

Infrastructure

Production decisions: relocating, downsizing, upsizing, product and skill development

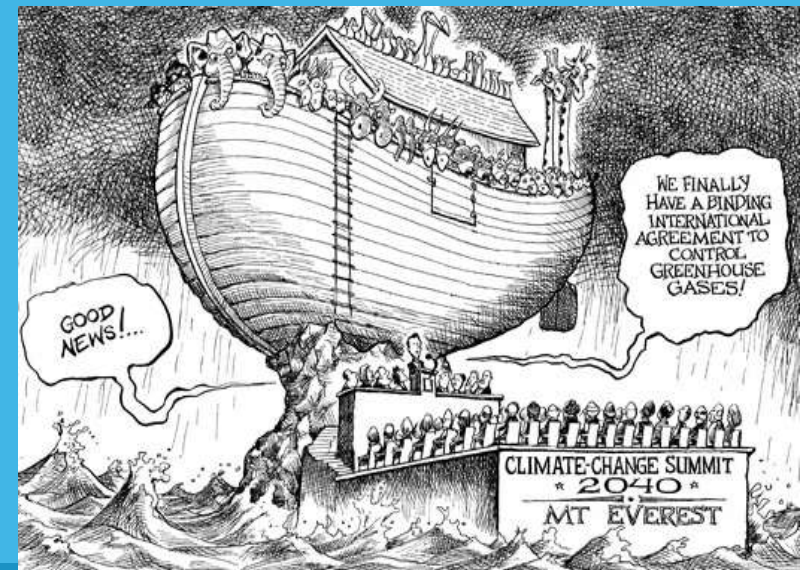
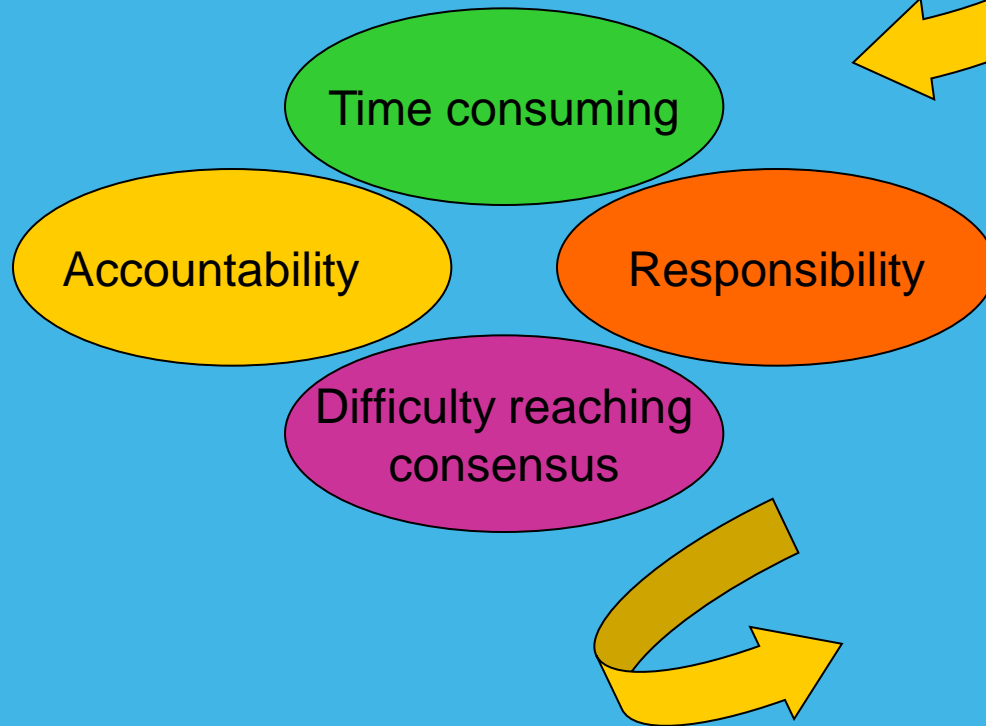
Marketing decisions etc

Substantive impact on individuals, society, government

Contribute multiple layers of complexity

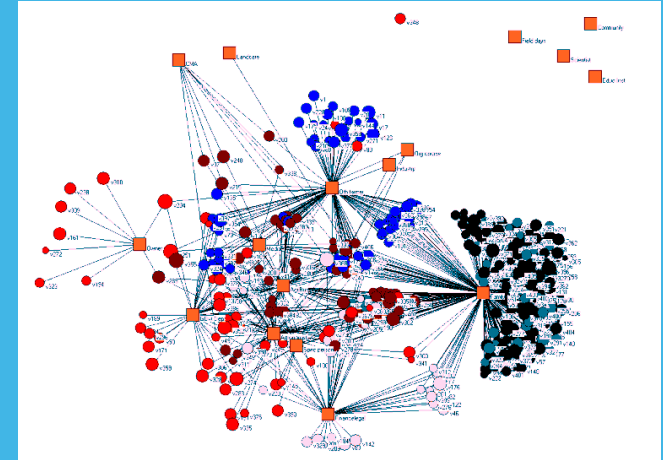
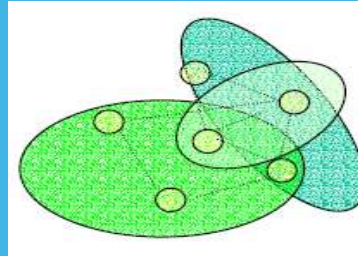
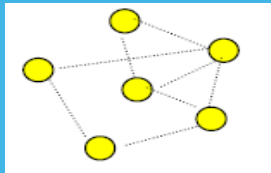
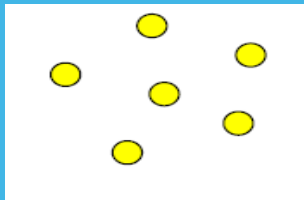
BUT.....

Multiple, diverse participants



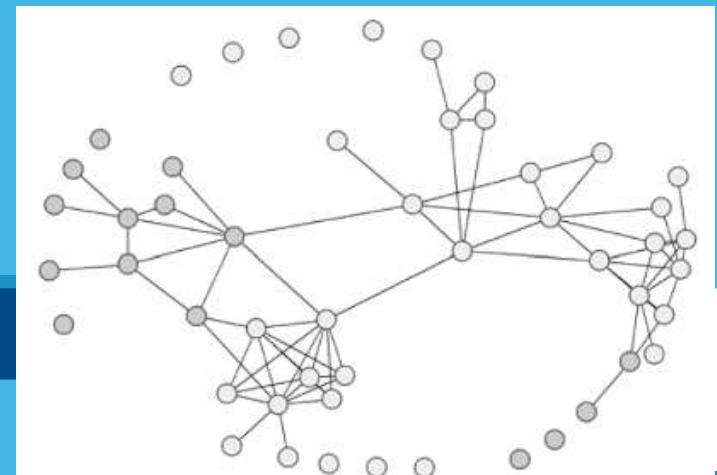
Networks

Network analysis helps to explain *why structures emerge* and the *behavioural consequences of these structures*



Structure

patterns, tie strength, sub nets, cliques
collaborations, partnerships,
power distributions
conflict, acrimony



Forums & Arenas

solve complex, mutual problems

stay attuned with competitors

influence their industry

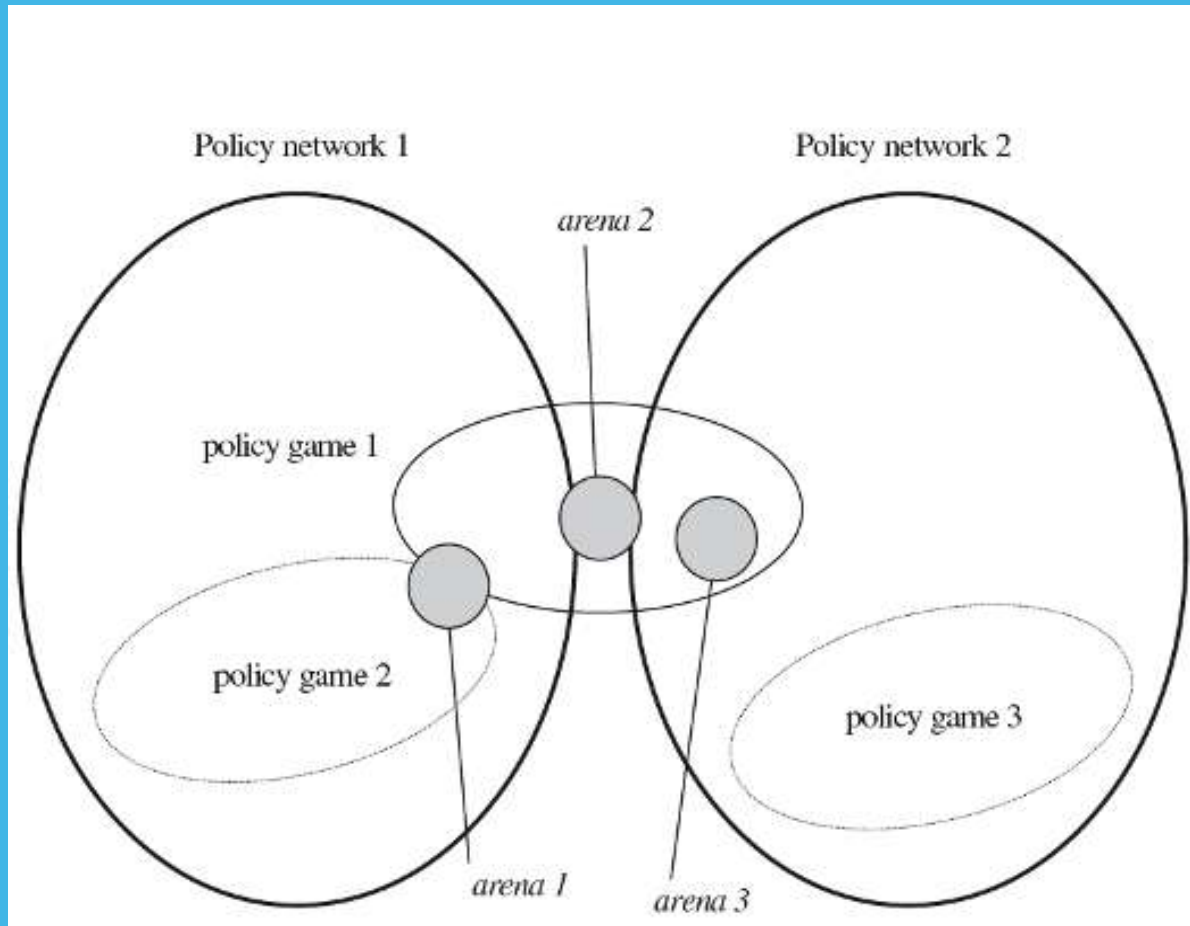
action or inaction

Participate in multiple games

Coupling of arenas → strategies

Games contribute to uncertainty

Like a sporting contest successive 'rounds, impasses and breakthroughs'



Australian institutions

Policies to address carbon emissions

Clean Energy Plan (2011)

- Carbon emissions tax

Carbon Tax (2012???)

- Aims to tax extraordinary profits

Mining tax 'discriminatory' - WA premier

Updated: 19:25, Tuesday March 20, 2012



Case Study regions



Regional Case Studies

Regional cities and coasts are national & international priority areas

Case study regions are of major significance in their respective States

Range of settlement: urban, peri-urban and agricultural

Diverse industry

Significant degree of contestation in resource use

On-going growth in population and settlement pattern

Significant investment in infrastructure

Method

Focus groups

total n=24; 12 in Hunter; 12 in Swan
to enhance local capacity for adaptation
among Local Govs in region

Semi structured interviews

total n=25; 13 in Hunter; 12 in Swan
Opportunity to discuss organizational issues related to CC
regional identity
impact of climate variability
familiarity with and use of terms (adaptation, mitigation, adaptive capacity)
governance arrangements
strategic planning
approaches to risk
uncertainty and decision making
participation in formal or informal forums or industry discussion groups

Results and analysis – focus groups

Impacts & adaptation challenges

Hunter

Creating awareness
in community
Sea Level Rise
Extreme events/natural
hazards/environment

Swan

Transportation
Water / drought
Internal collaboration &
communication
Sea Level Rise

Issue connections

building relationships and communication
strong link to adaptation planning and policy
Swan participants - connecting with state government

Results and analysis – focus groups

Strategies – identified by participants

understand the importance of their networks

establish ways to utilise these connections with other tiers of government

better communication with those outside their local government sector

Identify relevant government departments & key players

Develop relationships through invites to collaboration events focussed on climate change issues, planning and policy.

Results & analysis - interviews

- majority of organisations had **well structured governance** arrangements (board of directors, chair of the board and a level of managers responsible for day to day operations)
- **climate change issues overshadowed by imposts from energy** seen almost universally as uncontrollable and an ongoing burden
- **Terms** like climate adaptation, mitigation, adaptive capacity and others common in scientific and policy discourse were **not seen as relevant** or appropriate for everyday use within organisations
- The **principal focus** for most companies with regard to climate **was uncertainty** about the impact of the new carbon tax legislation rather than the potential impact of climate change
- Evidence of **strategic planning** to address the impacts of climate change was **sparse**
- Recognition of importance of **developing plans and regularly monitoring** performance and some had commenced planning as a result of a perceived need to prepare for the new carbon tax

Results & analysis – interviews (cont.)

- Environmental risks were seen as just one of a **broader range of risks** that companies have to consider such as
 - data security
 - intellectual property
 - corporate reputation
 - management of toxic substances
 - the global financial crisis
 - workforce stability.
- need for state and federal government **guidance** on the interpretation of climate change policy, its implementation and potential impact on business operations and financial liability

What next?







Status of climate change planning - Local Gov.

Draft strategic plan of local government actions and coordinated planning - (ALGA) in 2010

Included aspirational outcomes - 2014.

Calls for sectors to engage in collaborative efforts to address CC

