re-imagining government

government

Barry Quirk

origins of good government

Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1338)
Allegory of Good Government
Palazza Pubblico, Sienna

the swirl of change

- "On or about December 1910, human character changed." Virginia Woolf (Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown, 1924)

- 2010: the rise of "screenagers" and the altered nature of attention and knowledge …

- recession > retrenchment > recovery ??

- the flowering of "identity politics" and the growth of new sources and sites of conflict …

the Golden Gate Bridge

30 suicide attempts each year; 1,500 over past fifty years; less than 2 per cent survive

How do these private tragedies become a public problem?
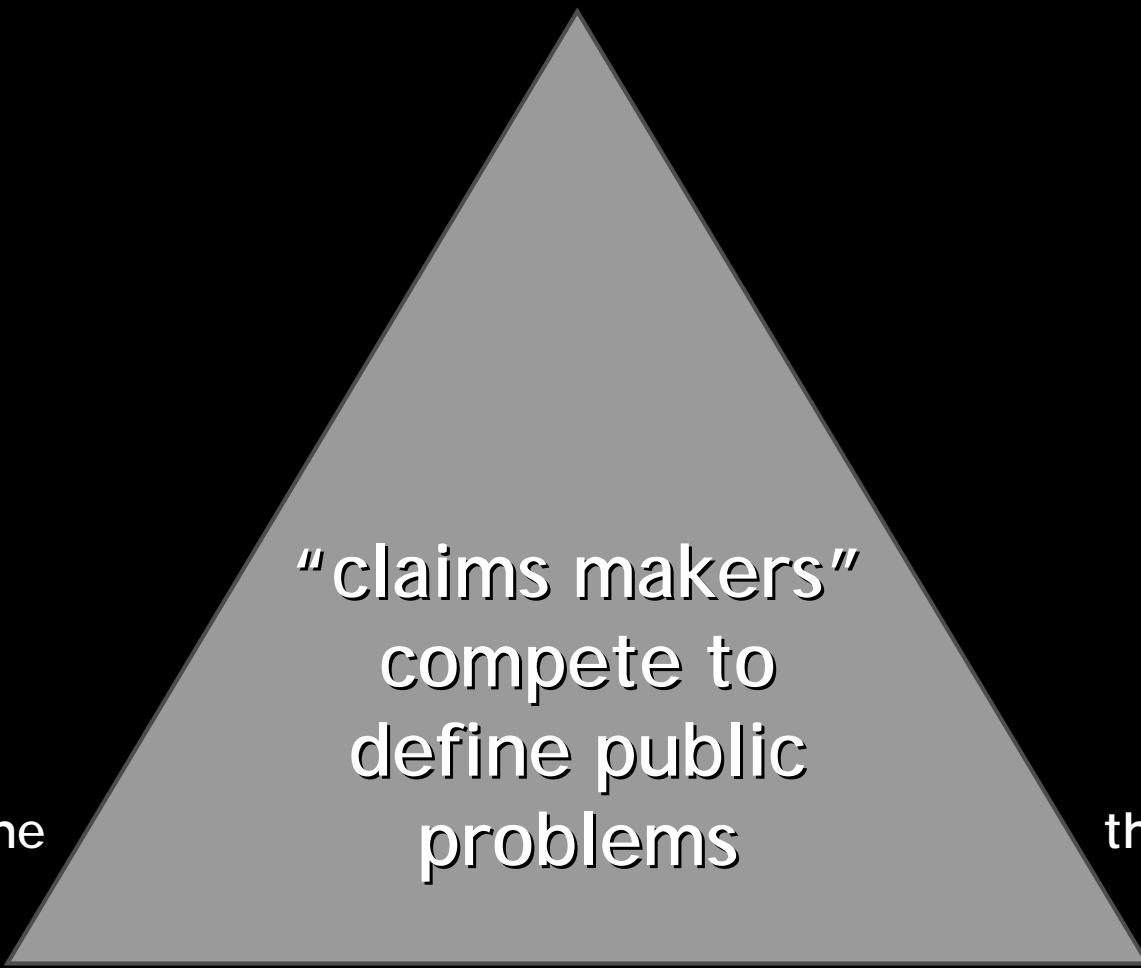
three layers of public interest questions

Q1 - is this a pressing public problem that needs attention more than other problems?

Q2 - what is the best and most cost-effective solution to the problem?

Q3 - who should be involved in deciding what needs to be done?

the public triangle

the demands of
public reason

"claims makers"
compete to
define public
problems

how to decide in the
public
interest

the need to build
public
value

decisions are difficult

personal decisions

social decisions among a group of people

public decisions affecting everyone
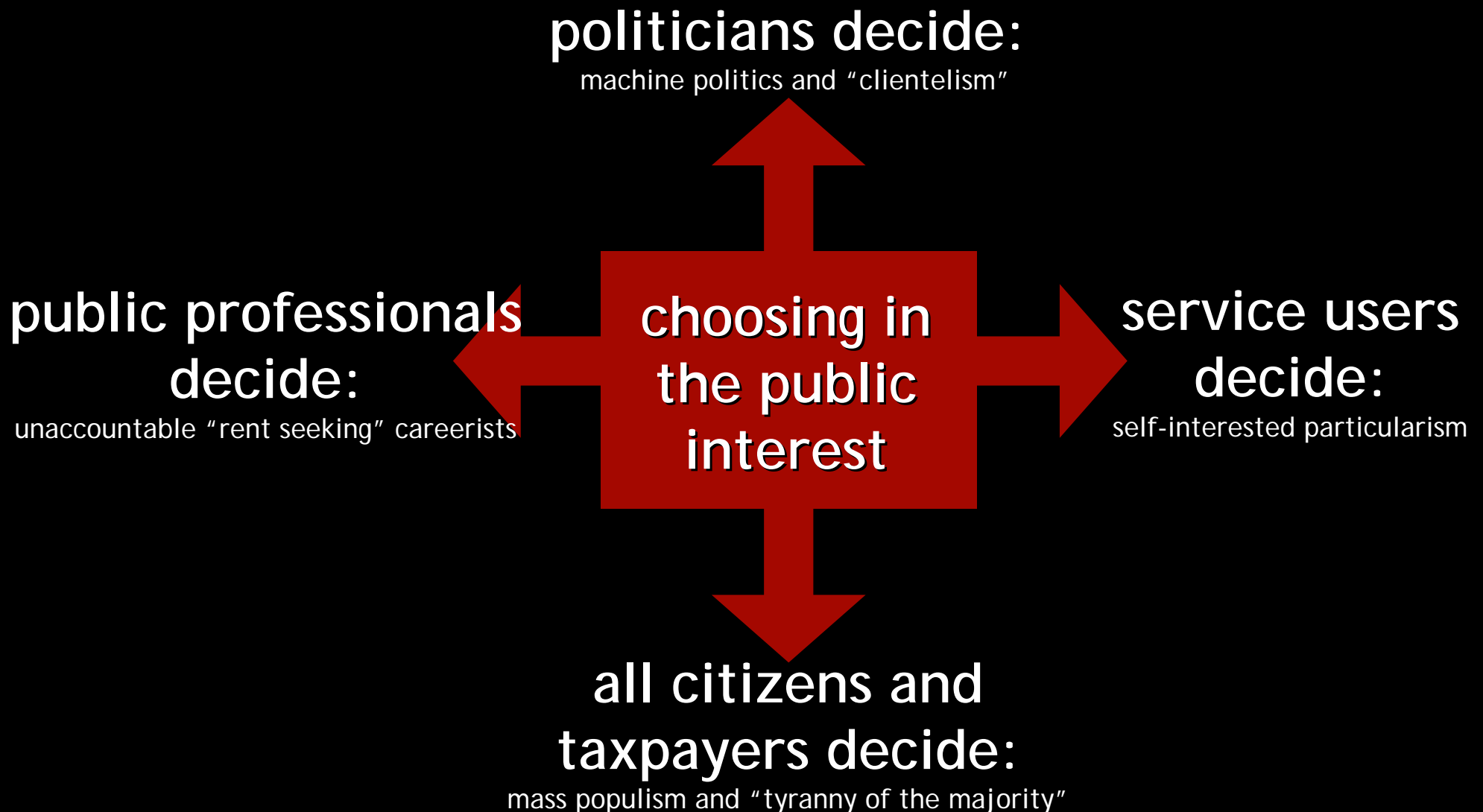
ethical quandaries

choosing between incommensurable claims

Three children squabbling over a flute: one says "I am the only one of us without toys, I have more need of the flute"; the second says, "I'm the only one of us who can play the flute, it should be mine"; while the third says, "but it was me who made the flute, so it must be mine". from Amartya Sen (The Idea of Justice, 2010)

balancing biases:
the four options and their inherent biases

politicians decide:
machine politics and "clientelism"

public professionals decide:
unaccountable "rent seeking" careerists

choosing in the public interest

service users decide:
self-interested particularism

all citizens and taxpayers decide:
mass populism and "tyranny of the majority"

place and locality matters

UK mapped by population
Sheffield University

No Place
County Durham

organisational effectiveness matters

outcome orientation

ethical corporate governance

align resources and energies to goals

competence, capability, confidence

leadership matters

intellectual drive and emotional labour

hardware

strategies & plans

structures

reporting lines

programmes

projects

products & services

activities

deliverables

outputs

software

ambitions

relationships

responsibility

hopes & fears

dynamism

the act of becoming

the craft of work

confidence

pride

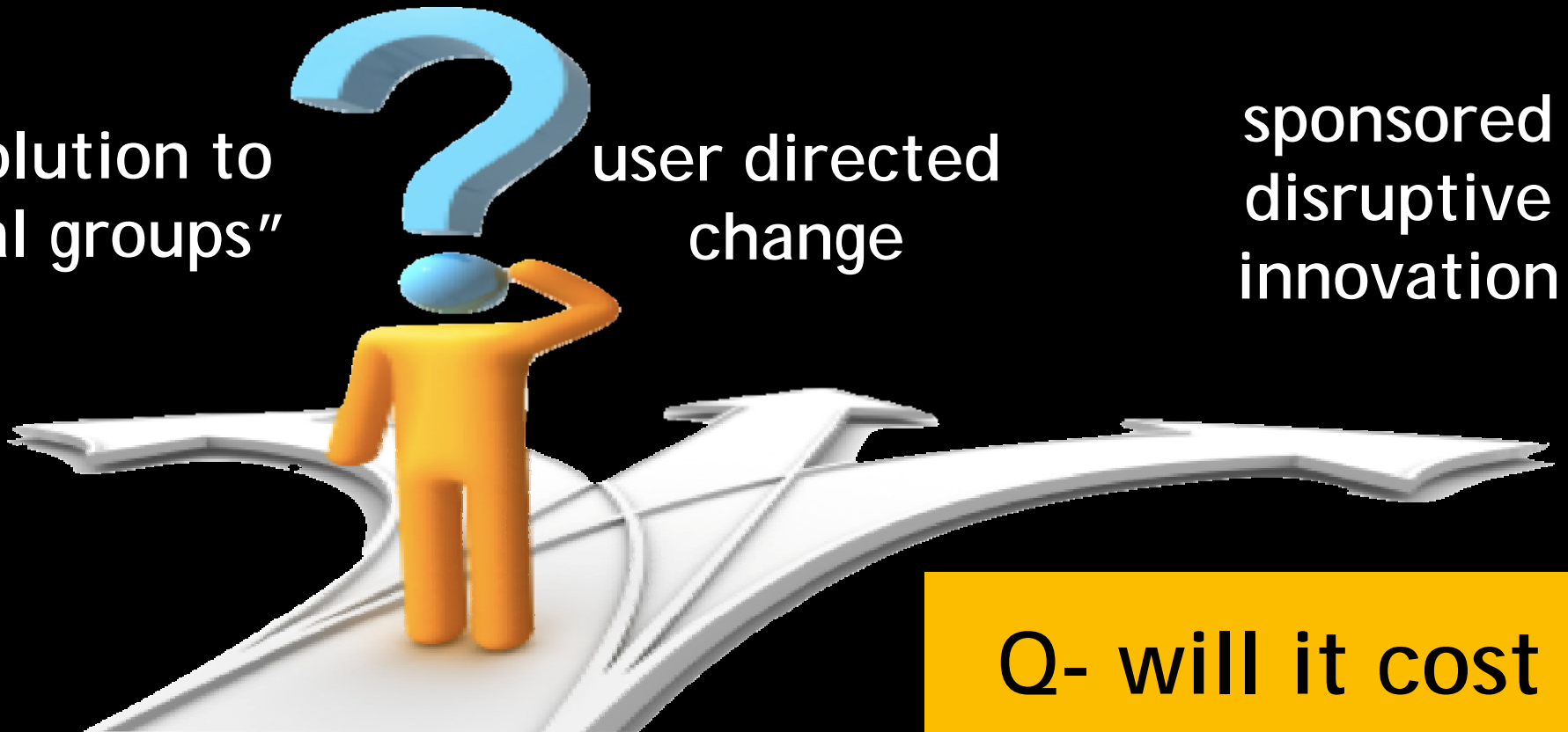# managing difference

services for neighbourhoods

services for individuals

monopoly services for all

devolution to "local groups"

user directed change

sponsored disruptive innovation

2010: strategic planning and inter-agency collaboration

Q- will it cost less?

successful innovation relies upon

1 competition between political ideas

2 new policies or strategies

3 entrepreneurial managers and professionals

4 service users and their advocates

Far too much emphasis is placed on the power of the 2nd source with little stress on the 3rd and the 4th despite the fact that we know that these are the most usual sources of successful innovation in service design and delivery
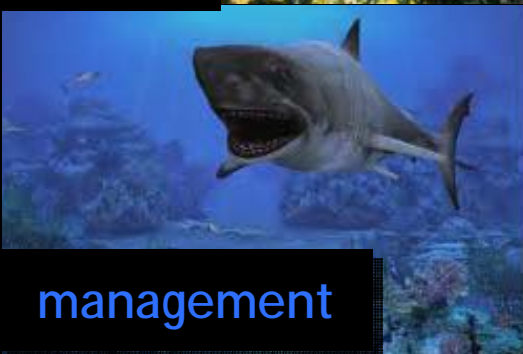
tigers, hawks and sharks

politics

policy

management

humanities - the world of meaning and interpretation …. semantics
"let's change the world through words"

social sciences - the world of representation … schematics
"let's change the world through models"

natural sciences - the world of explanation and prediction …
mathematics
"let's change the world through practice"

Jerome Kagan (2010) The Three Cultures

Kagan argues that the styles of thinking, enquiry and action that make for potency in one environment can lead to impotency in others. Skills that breed success in one domain (politics, policy or management) do not guarantee in success in other domains

man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible

but

man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary

Reinhold Niebuhr (1944)

thank you …