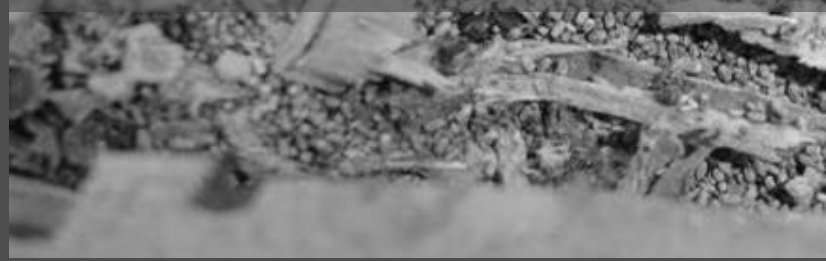




"UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL!"

Empowerment and commitment in the local action

A risk communication program on the governance of an urban termite plague in the Azores



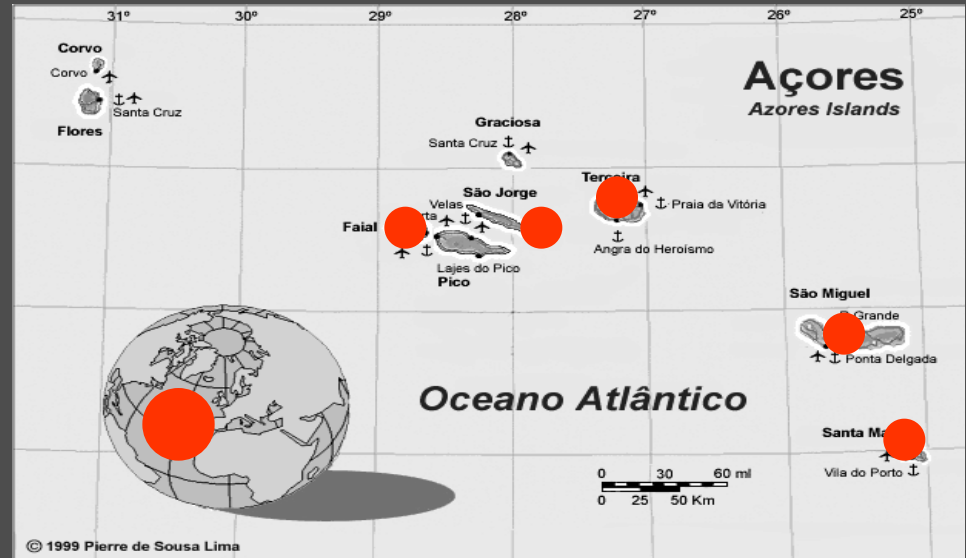
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WE COME FROM...



The Problem

TERMITE PEST

Damages by *Cryptotermes brevis*



What we came to know from research developed by risk assessment...

- The situation has **generalised** to other islands, and is even **more serious** ;
- The infestation **cannot be completely eradicated**;
- The two types of wood typically used in building construction (*Cryptomeria japonica* and *Eucalyptus spp.*) are among the species more consumed by the *C. brevis*;

- Some of the more efficient techniques of mitigation are **very difficult to implement** in Azores, due to its urban characteristics (e.g. fumigation);
- Specific desinfestations' technology in Azores is giving its first steps and is still very **incipient**;
- More affected areas are located at the historical city centres, whose buildings are old and its inhabitants are aged, and with low socioeconomic and literacy resources.



VULNERABILITY OF THE LOCAL SOCIOECONOMIC SYSTEM

INCREASE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE IMPACT OF THE PEST

Who has been the “*guilty one*”?



The citizens!

- City council complains:
 - Low public participation ;
 - *‘They don’t ask for help’* (few number of inspections requested);
- Researchers complains and attributions:
 - *“They are ignorant and don’t care!”*



new research was needed...

“How do citizens see the problem?”

TERMIPAR PROJECT

“Citizen Participation in the Control of Termite Infestation in the Azores”

- Impossible to be eradicated but could and should be controlled;
- *“Nobody listens to us”*: (government and citizens).

RESULTS



RISK CONTROLABILITY AND MANAGEMENT



Uncontrollable due to:

- It's a private problem and should be controlled by citizens;
- The problem is 'pushed' from one entity to the other (*i.e.* the Government vs.the city government)



- Powerlessness:
 - Lack of economic resources;
 - Feel abandoned by authorities;
- No assumption of responsibilities from the Government: 'If they don't act, why should we?'

- Decision makers: don't show the political will to manage the problem;
- Citizens: *'Ignorant, passive, and careless'*.

- Researchers: trustworthy in risk assessment
- Decision Makers:
 - Are deceptive for promising what they don't accomplish!
 - Only act when there's no way out.



- Researchers: Doubtful of the researchers risk 'scenario':
 - They exaggerate: anticipated worse social impacts than they end up being
- Citizens:
 - Lack of interest and public participation
 - counting on... a "paternalistic state"

RESULTS



citizens

arguments for not participating:

UNCONTROLLABILITY

OF THE PEST

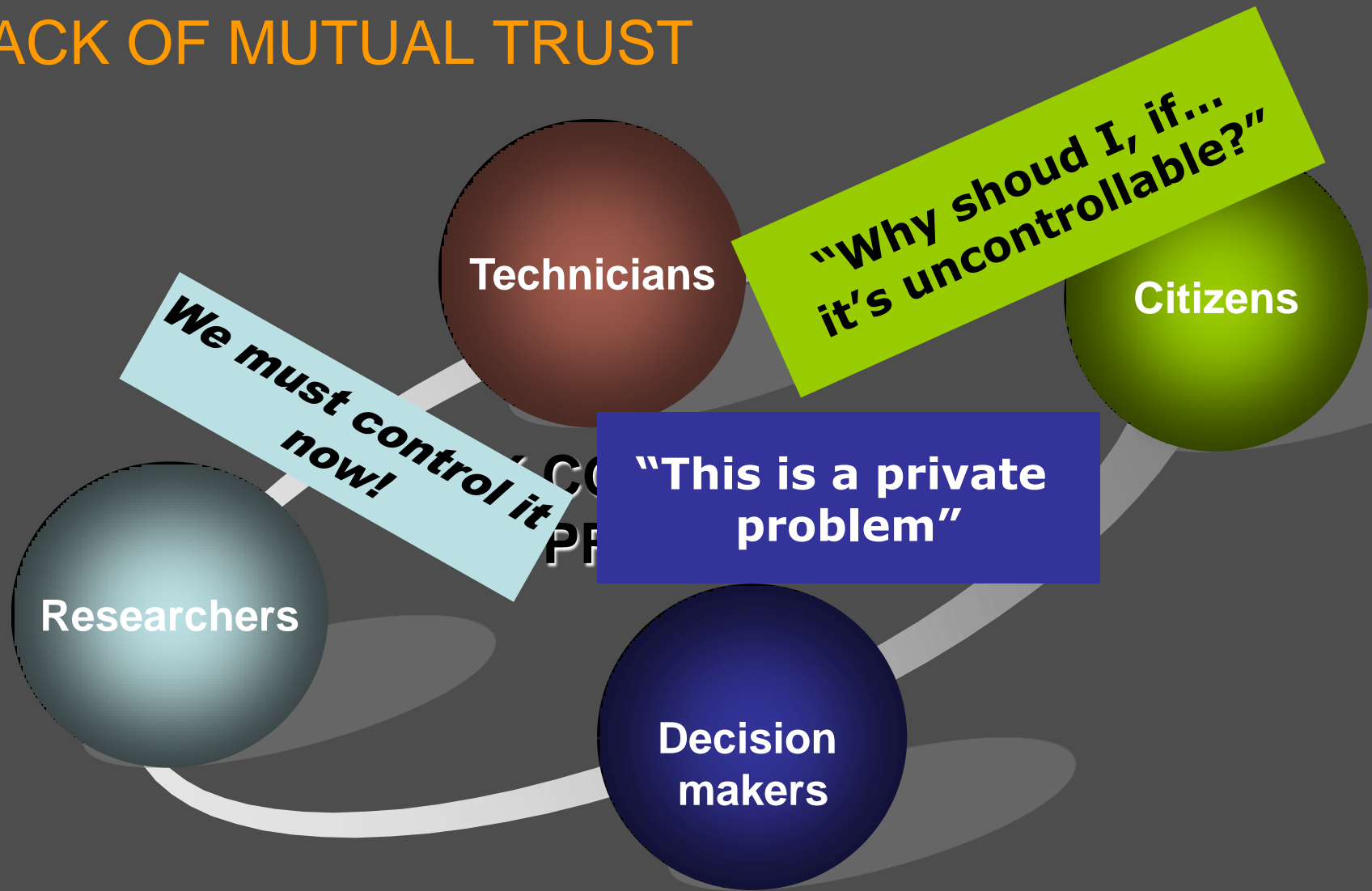
- invisibility: *When you see it, it's too late!*
- impossible to eradicate according to international experience.

OF THE MANAGEMENT

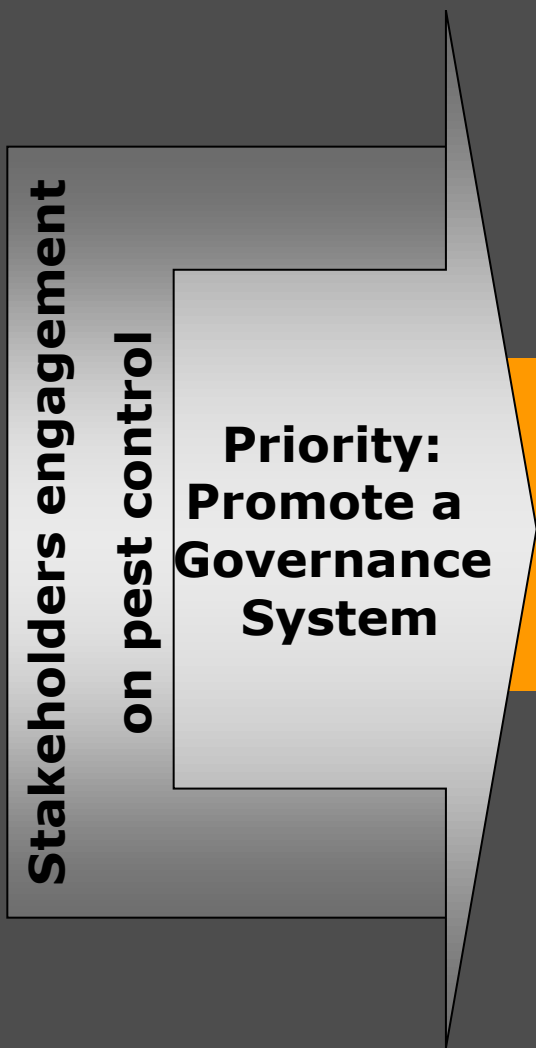
- efficient technical solutions non existent;
- financial support non existent;
- government management non existent;
- misbelieve on the stakeholders joint effort.

*Why should I if there's no worth...
...I cannot do it by myself...*

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS AND LACK OF MUTUAL TRUST



The Risk Communication Program



**"UNITED WE STAND,
DIVIDED WE FALL!"**

OUR PRINCIPLES

- There is no quality risk governance without all **parts involved**
- Risk governance is above all **a two-way communication process**
- Risk communication, **through mediation,** intends **to empower stakeholders** by building progressive **authonomy**

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Share responsibilities by compromising:
 - City & Regional Governants: Financial and logistic support
 - Researchers: Knowledge expertise
 - Technicians: Technical competence and professional proactive behaviour (on pest identification and peoples' guidance)
 - Citizens: Practice control measures on their own homes
- Build commum trust
- Consolidate the social consciousness on the pest
- Involve the diferent stakeholders

COMMUNICATION DEVICES

**T8 SUMMIT
MEETING**

COMICS

**SPOT TV
+ RADIO**

**MAGNETS
& TRAPS**

T- SQUAD

OUTDOORS

**TRAINING IN
PROFISSIONAL
CONTEXT**

T- PARADE



Royal Mail

MAGNETS & TRAPS

CONCEPT

- Content

Show how citizens can participate in the control of the pest with a simple but effective action

- Form

Trough direct mail, citizens receive a trap with an instructions' magnet



T- SQUAD



CONCEPT

- **Content**

Need help?

You are not alone. You can count on us! (local government)

- **Form**

Door-to-door counseling by young students on how to do-it-yourself

OUTDOORS



CONCEPT

- Content

Be ware!

Protect yourself!

Together we can do it!

- Form

Vernacular language by using rimes and proverbs to transmit scientific concepts and concerns 18

T8 SUMMIT MEETING

CONCEPT

- **Content**

Let's take control of the situation, by implementing an effective risk governance system and rebuild the lost public trust.

- **Form**

Dialogue between researchers, local government and risk communicators to negotiate commitment

ONGOING RESEARCH :

Regulation & Impacts Assessment

COMMUNICATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

ANALYSE RESSOURCES EFFICACY (Internal & External) (Before)
- Comics; Spots

IMPACTS EVALUATION (diagnostic, control & reconstruction)

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES – Low/Hight

OUTCOMES

SHORT TIME

Rememberance
Atractibility
Credibility
Intention to Act
Critics Review

Prevalence increase (more people asking for help)

Participation index in traps monitoring

MEDIUM- LONG

Incidence decrease (less people asking for help)

ACTUAL BALANCE....

- CONQUESTS

- Change in the local government's attitude towards the problem (from a private to a public one);
- First step on the building of a common platform for dialogue;
- Successful financial negotiation of the Program.

- CRITICAL ISSUES

- How to reach, select or approach the citizens, if they are not formally represented?
- Will we manage to engage stakeholders with a positive strategy of communication, when "the state of the art" tell us not to?

- DEVELOPMENTS

- Urging need to expand the initiatives of the Program, when faced with the fact of a lack of technical expertise reported by governants.
- Facilitate, mediate and analyse, from a researcher's point-a-view the foundation of a formal association of inhabitants, in order for them "to be heard.
- To design and test the implementation of a termite help pilot cabinet.²¹



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azorean
biodiversity
group



Thank you for
your attention