Successful collaborative information management means striking a balance between facilitating a democratic approach where participating stakeholders have a say and role in the collaboration while at the same time maintaining enough order and control to support effective communication. In other words, frameworks, technologies, and protocols should balance the closure necessary for orderly practice with opening processes enough for stakeholders involved to understand decision-making processes, how they fit into other participants' processes, and what they can gain from engaging with them that is necessary and unattainable alone. Revisiting the roles of data controller and data processor and looking at the evolving nature of any joint data controlling relationships can help to shape policy in this area. This can also be aided by on-going revisiting of the data protection impact assessment and updating it as relationships between stakeholders evolve.

Guiding Questions

How could negotiations between parties support coordination in ways that neither undermine authority nor require consensus?

What can you do to achieve a balance between keeping control while allowing multiple participants a say and role in the collaboration?

In some cases giving up control might be more beneficial than keeping control. To what extent, if at all, could this be true for the case at hand?

Further Information

Policy analysts and international efforts like the UNISDR Sendai Framework assume that open and people-centred approaches can leverage important and local knowledge, and enable a more democratic, broad-based understanding of the complexities of risks and thereby foster more effective preparedness and response. Principles of 'netcentric' work have been developed in the Public Protection and Disaster Relief domain to 'improve the exchange of information between heterogeneous actors' (Boersma et al. 2010). In the Netherlands, where Boersma and his colleagues study it, this approach is based on a break with 'established patterns of command and control … [and] supposed to enable new networks of communication'.

Examples

1. In the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear disaster which was characterised by an absence of information from public authorities, private individuals, companies and

voluntary bodies initiated multiple projects of 'critical mapping' of radiation (Plantin 2011). Individuals bought or built their own Geiger counters, learnt to measure and map results, and, as their activities coalesced, they shaped official information strategies: "official information were not the only available anymore as parallel sensor-networks were created; when the official data were published online, they could not be confined to non-readable formats but were harvested to be shared and remix[ed]; finally, official data could be verified by comparing them with other sources of data, as aggregation prevailed over selection (Plantin 2011). Because of a lack of official efforts to inform the public and enable public engagement, the public created an alternative set of information that challenged the authority of the official sources and practices, creating distrust in the official response and forcing authorities to make their practices more transparent and thus able to be debated. Networks of trust like these are emerging as a social 'technology' that allows communities of risk to bring those who live with risk to the same table as those who produce and profit from taking them, necessitating and enabling pluralist considerations of risks.

2. The Grenfell residential tower block fire in the UK left many individuals and families homeless and in need of social and health services. This includes refugees, some with unclear immigration status. Government registration mechanisms help to provide support for them, but also collect extensive data about them, to be shared across different agencies, without enabling refugees a say in how data is shared. This has raised concern amongst civil liberty groups (e..g. Liberty). In Europe, efforts are under way to enhance security cooperation frameworks and information tools to fight against terrorism, organised crime and cyberattacks. Ideas and systems for parallel searches, a shared biometric matching service and a common identity repository across multiple European information systems are set out in a report by a High-level expert group on information systems and interoperability. These have sparked criticism from the European Data Protection Supervisor, because they have the potential to undermine civil freedoms (EU Commission 2017).

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