

# **The Decisive Reset: Attainable Governance for Revitalising Democracy**

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**Paul Robert Honeybone**

Department of Civil, Environmental & Geomatic Engineering

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'I, Paul Robert Honeybone  
confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.  
Where information has been derived from other sources,  
I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.'

## Abstract

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To improve democratic legitimacy, successful resolution of public policy challenges has to emerge from highly pressurised political predicaments. Increasing civic functionality requires integrative Civil Service practice, building trust in adaptive oversight. With the task of effective governance stretching out-of-reach in straining institutional arrangements, a proposition is developed for an “Attainable Governance” reset to revitalise democracy. Motivated by the need for progress that is sensitive to the reality and risks of the present *and* embodying requirements to hold open unforeseen possibilities for future action, the groundwork is laid for a new “decision architecture” that improves policy-framing and decision-making.

With a mission to compose a conceptual framework for “facing the future” in the United Kingdom, I make the case for refreshing democratic arrangements, including a proposed structural intervention to the policy-making system with a correlative cultural step-change in leadership. Laying out a novel framework, the analysis draws widely on strands of thinking in social theory and political philosophy, public administration and policy-making, systems thinking and design, planning and strategic management, anticipation and futures, economics, and sociology.

Taking an “integral” methodological orientation, in three parts I: (1) diagnose the converging *Predicament*, (2) develop a conceptual *Proposition*, and 3) sketch-out an approach to leadership that facilitates operational adaption in *Procedures* for applied practice. Positing that we have to deal with systems-of-problems (“messes”) and system-of-systems (“systemic messes”) with an analytic primacy on expanding temporal considerations to factor in more anticipative insights, I take a Complex Adaptive Systems-informed stance. The need for a “Decisive Reset” to refresh democracy, featuring phased systemic reordering and tactical modularity to produce better public decision-making that is responsive and agile in the short-run, while actively gauging medium-term realities and future-proofing for long-run uncertainties, results in a new decision architecture and methodology.

## Impact Statement

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The purpose of the research is to contribute to the public governance debate, with a focus on the development of a functional decision architecture that can assist arriving at better long-run decisions. By designing an alternative schema to support integrated, agile and dynamic governance, the *impact sought* is to help extend thought about how to “pivot” strategic policy-making. Given the work is theoretical in nature, the impact will largely be brought about by developing, conducting and disseminating contributions through academic outputs.

The key proposed benefits *inside academia* include contributions to public governance, public policy design and strategic decision-making. Outputs will be targeted to the areas of complexity, temporality and integrality, cutting across a range of disciplines including social theory, politics and economics. Hence *scholarly impact* will be sought via publications and engagement including:

- Governance in social theory, political philosophy, organisational strategy and institutional fields of study (e.g. guiding axioms and principles for integrated Civil Service functions)
- Bridging systems thinking and public policy (e.g. Complex Adaptive Systems and political philosophy, public policy theory and practice)
- Time and temporality in social theory (e.g. timespace in sociology and decision-making fields and the emerging area of anticipation in futures thinking)
- Rethinking policy and decision methodologies (e.g. for updating procedures and applied practice systems)
- Contributing to critical thought about economics and public policy framing to improve solution-making (e.g. implications for the “beyond neoliberalism” agenda impacting on economics, politics and public policy).

Applied engagement with targeted public policy makers is also planned. This is likely to coincide with and involve further research. Benefits *outside academia* include potential input into the design of governance arrangements, decision frameworks and supporting procedures that can enhance strategic policy innovation. The *applied impact* proposed will be sought via engagement with senior Civil Service leadership in the UK with responsibilities for strategy policy practice. Public policy-oriented institutes and think-tanks with an interest in governance innovation and improvement, are also potential audiences.

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# OPENING: *Democratic Duress*

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## Focus and Field:

- *setting out the research's navigable terrain to be explored and the general orientation pursued*

### **0. Preface: *Dilemmas in Practice***

### **1. Introduction: *New Governance Challenge***

- 1.1 Outline
- 1.2 Context: *One Generation*
- 1.3 Situation: *Progress Constrained*
- 1.4 Optics: *Pressured Governance*
- 1.5 Challenge: *A Decisive Reset*

## Method and Process:

- *an explanation of the research's phased construct and the critical assumptions while setting the scope*

### **2. Methodology: *Establishing the Direction***

- 2.1 Outline
- 2.2 Overview: *Intent, Orientation and Scope*
- 2.3 Stance: *Methodological Settings*
- 2.4 Limitations: *Doing Systems Design*
- 2.5 Summation: *Integration, Imagination and Intervention*

## 0. Preface: *Dilemmas in Practice*

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If the success of progressive governance today is the democratic achievement of stated objectives, based on current performance, excellence is evasive. Inclusive sustainable growth in light of new technologies, environmental pressures, inequalities and cultural expectations, lags behind what is known and possible. With outcome attainment and impactful results not being experience in both the Civil Service and politics, something about how we arrange and oversee progress is amiss. Democracy as a form of civic issue resolution is under strain. I therefore apply intellectual energy to strategise how to make tangible headway, establishing a navigable pathway forward.

First, I make a series of opening remarks to establish my research orientation and disclose my worldview. With the purpose in mind of making progress to unlock the systemic potential for better policy framing, making and decision making, I draw on over a decade of practitioner experience in the public sector.<sup>1</sup> I brought applied experiences addressing housing development pipeline constraints, planning system problems and legislative improvements to streamline construction on one hand, and affordability crises, public provision and social issues on the other. These issues significantly mirror UK dynamics e.g. urban development and affordability issues experienced today. In this example, I see housing provision and affordability as symptoms of broader systemic design i.e. outside the immediate sphere of housing policy, making improvements based on a series of interconnected issues.

Further, my practice-informed perspective is that the neoliberal economic paradigm in public policy still strongly emanates out of the Civil Service and Western public sectors. The ensuing “policy-based evidence making”<sup>2</sup> plays a central role in shaping the dominant narratives and processes. Core to this orientation is the centrality of quantification-based decision-making (the “numbers”), a rational “mindset” and risk management pathways consistent with New Public Management (NPM).<sup>3</sup> My belief is that the “State” as institutions and government entities

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<sup>1</sup> I have worked in policy, strategy and management roles in social, economic and industry development in New Zealand. My most recently role was Housing Policy Manager at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), New Zealand.

<sup>2</sup> The pejorative term for working back from a predefined policy to produce underpinning evidence is a play on evidence-based policy credited to Boden and Epstein (2006). Recent discussion of “Policy-based evidence” (PBE) by Cairney (2019) positions “evidence-based policymaking” itself as a political position advocating a certain type of evidence (“scientific”), noting fallback on a simplistic binary limits advancing helpful understanding and analysis (Cairney, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding the argument that “New Political Governance” (Diamond, 2019a) or “New Public Governance” (Osborne, 2010) has replaced previous “traditional” paradigms, New Public Management (NPM) has left an indelible imprint on Western democracies. This is discussed in further detail in section 3.2.1.

significantly matter in shaping what is possible for our future. Less about a simplistic conception of more or less government, the emphasis I go on to develop is about fit-for-purpose oversight and leadership to enable strategic market and non-market solution-making to flourish together. The bandwidth of the “politics of possibility” are enabled or constrained by the arrangements and culture of the Civil Service and its procedures, by the functioning of the Executive and the constitutional design of the Legislature. In the context of the UK as the home of the Westminster system, how “arrangements” evolve is of importance here and afar.

To motivate my point of departure, I comment briefly on the case of urban development and affordability in the UK. Urban development is a complex undertaking comprises of place-making activities, with ingredients ranging from land to housing, requiring networks amenities such as energy and communications to deliver liveability. Cities like London are under pressure to grow and change, with democratic disconnects and the cost of lack of coherent progress impacting outcomes. A high level characterisation of urban development is that it is the interplay of three primary dynamics: (a) *A Supply-side Shortage* – where attempts to overcoming the lack of new housing, infrastructure and community production are not working to the extent necessary to meet current and projected demand, (b) *A Demand-side Mismatch* – where what people want and need is not adequately being provided by the private market or existing social providers, and (c) *Decision-making Fragmentation* – or democratic stewardship oversight disconnections, where the way of dealing with the range of issues in the political system is not resulting in coordinated responses that are working to mitigate for improved outcomes. The urban governance issues that travel with this include: (i) *Strategic deficit* – a lack of an integrated vision and unresolved directionality for the future, (ii) *Delivery shortfalls* – a lack of private and public provision in terms of enabling affordable options, and (iii) *Leadership deficits* – with stakeholder capture in the interests of the present, and institutional design and political process issues for achieving more inclusive outcomes.

A “housing crisis” is a combination of a failure of *insight* for adequately resourcing development (e.g. personal finance and societal infrastructure), a failure in *foresight* for adequately enabling development (e.g. enabling provisions such as planning), and a failure of *oversight* for adequately orchestrating development in practice (i.e. the governance systems to guide decisions). These failures prevail in advanced democracies today. Strategic policy development has emphasized interventions on the supply-side. While progress has been made with the interventions in the UK, they have had limited impact. My key out-takes are that often there are issues of (a) *timing* – i.e. making useful moves, but being too slow in decision-making and implementation for impacts within political cycles, (b) *threats* – i.e. exercising national regulatory muscle to move local

governments who are often the manager of local planning and associated policies, and (c) *timidity* – namely a reluctance to intervene in the market. Behind this is often a myopic adherence to simply solutions fortified by ideological rigidity in the context of multi-dimensional problems. This can lead to dealing with contradictions by reverting to simplistic ideological “cover” to protect existing system interests. This “default” then produces high-grade difficulties for political and public sector leadership. Managing stakeholder relationships, forming coherent messaging and facilitating momentum with multi-levelled discontinuities is highly fraught and stressful.

Dilemmas of *development* (progress, including negative and unintended consequences) and *distribution* (resource allocation, or redistribution after the fact) are at the heart of societal challenges. My position is that the “accommodations” and “reconciliations” to render meaningful change digestible – and the “nonconformities and dissensions” to leave open the inconclusive and leave some elements unresolved – are taken together as the focus for social, environmental and economic stewardship. I go on to make the fundamental point that the task of democracy has to be ensuring long-run stewardship. In periods of increasing uncertainty or systemic instability, as the old decays and the new finds its nascent roots, there is a need for stable, viable and flexible forms of governance to keep-up with and deal with the dynamic and at times fragile, state of affairs. My starting point is that in the UK we have:

- unfolding negative issues that can intensify and drive political change that is highly unstable unless systemic transformation is guided and managed.
- an intellectual and ideological transition underway that is early into its reform process, without a clearly discernable pathway emerging.
- a widening fracture in the democratic system in terms of functionality and legitimacy, that has to undergo transformative change to establish a reconstituted conception and practice of governance.

This view is consistent with a “post-normal perspective”, recognising that the policy space is complex and uncertain, contains competing ideas and incomplete knowledge and is where values are in dispute.<sup>4</sup> When governance systems and the institutions that make-up democracy themselves are under stress, so to are the people who constitute them and carry the day-to-day burden of public accountability and service. What can functional advancement that is sensitive to people in political life and the Civil Service look like? How do we not treat poorly our high-performers and the array of committed people, contributing their careers to the public good? How do we not “injure” our political representatives who at the top are making personal sacrifices to

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<sup>4</sup> For example, as outlined by Sir Peter Gluckman (Gluckman, 2018).

operate at the level of demand necessary when systems are under stress? More broadly, if significant transformation is required or inevitable, how do we make it a humane and peaceful transformation? How are we directive on the right issues yet realistic with citizens who will bear the impacts on a day-to-day level? It is within a cultural period where these concerns loom large in democracy, that this work is pursued.

# 1. Introduction: *New Governance Challenge*

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## 1.1 Outline

Democratic systems of governance are facing a broad array of pressing and underlying challenges. To strive for the essence of why attempts to make constructive changes in democratic societies are sometimes successful and yet often fail – despite all that we know about problems and their solutions – asks us to consider our ways of interpreting, treating and handling difficult public policy issues. It also gives cause to question the design of the system of governance that sees democratic “arrangements”<sup>5</sup> under duress. The way affairs are conducted to address disconnection for greater alignment requires decision-making to have relevant meaning and lead to discernable impact. There will always be a range of potential solutions (and as I will contend, “resolutions”) available that have the potential to impact positively on even the most apparently difficult issues. In part it is a question of collective will, i.e. does the mandate to act exist? In part it is a question of how to go about making change, e.g. what should we do first? In part it is a question of where to act, i.e. in what places should changes be introduced first? In part it is also a question of timing, i.e. when should we act or not?

I introduce the case for the study of *time* as a key dimension of understanding how to affect change. I also make a case for the importance of integration to reduce issue fragmentation. In arguing for enhanced integration and temporal considerations in the practice of governance and the operation of government, first I contextualize with the current focus on climate change (or the “climate crisis”<sup>6</sup>) as the defining critical challenge of the era. Against this backdrop, intergenerational equity and government functionality in democratic arrangements set the stage. Second, I more broadly situate the nature of the current challenges in democracies, working from UK circumstances. Given the pressures on governance, I outline the contours of the challenge and the focus that can help to guide analysis, seeking to illuminate improved path-finding given the “New Governance Challenge”.

## 1.2 Context: *One Generation*

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<sup>5</sup> By *arrangements*, I mean both (a) social “structures” in a traditional institutional theoretical sense and inclusive of all organisational entities; as well as (b) “networks” and nodes, from a social network theoretical standpoint.

<sup>6</sup> A proposed discourse shift has been a feature emerging from civic pressure to reframe the predicament as more immediate, of high importance and requiring new responses on an “emergency” styled footing. In the House of Commons (UK) the Opposition Day Debate saw a motion passed that the “climate emergency” is the “most important issue of our time” (May 1, 2019). Refer to: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2019/may/mps-debate-the-environment-and-climate-change/>.

*“We built our economies, our governance systems and our societies on the assumption that if you ‘punch’ Planet Earth she just responds incrementally, linearly and predictably. ... that’s where our governance systems come from, that’s where our economic assumptions come from. ...the science is clear... We are the first generation to sit on this mountain of evidence of risk, on this mountain of evidence of opportunity, but still we are not going to scale. How we can do that in one generation?” – Johan Rockström (April 2018).<sup>7</sup>*

If the “post normal” is instability where change “tipping points” are unpredictable, how do we now orient efforts towards sustainable progress in the best interests of humankind? The challenge of an increasing pace of change as Rockström (2018) articulates, is seeing inter-generational policy issues become intra-generational governance realities. Rosa (2005) broadly posits that the pace of social change has moved from inter-generational in pre-modernity, to generational in “classical” modernity, then further to an intra-generational pace in what he calls “late modernity” (Rosa, 2005, p. 447). His point is that the “basic contours of our life-world no longer remain stable even for the period of an individual life span.” (ibid). Bringing questions of speed and intra-generational challenges to the fore, the *IPCC Report of 2018*<sup>8</sup> provided a strong warning to focus with urgency.<sup>9</sup> While the level of penetration into civic consciousness is difficult to quantify and contestable, the report has played a sharp role in recalibrating expectations with implications in multiple arenas. What was commonly viewed as an inter-generational transition, has transmuted into an intra-generational transition with the establishment of a 12-year horizon to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Our collective response is undeniably material to the question of the state of planet and the quality of human life that is supportable. The survival of life and the continuity of our social arrangements are in the balance. Solution-oriented decision-making cannot be delayed as the cost of avoidance escalates and negative feedback loops increasingly bite harder.

The backdrop of institutional commitment to future generations has been a feature of international rhetoric since the *Brundtland Report* (WECD, 1987.)<sup>10</sup>. More recently, the UN continues to underline the commitment required to future generations.<sup>11</sup> With a gradual

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<sup>7</sup> Johan Rockström, Chief Executive of the Stockholm Resilience Centre, “*The Abundance within Planetary Boundaries*” presentation (Rockström, 2018).

<sup>8</sup> The best scientific evidence, set out in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC’s) latest report, with an objective to limit global warming to 1.5° above preindustrial levels, requires global CO2 emissions reaching zero by 2050. Source: [https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15\\_spm\\_final.pdf](https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> The report identified that pathways limiting global warming to 1.5°C with no or limited overshoot would require rapid and comprehensive transitions across key sectors e.g. in energy, infrastructure and transport. The world faces significant changes if we fail to keep temperatures below 1.5C, sending a stark warning about the significance of the window of the next 12 years to make progress. Upscaling investments for deep emissions reductions in the near-term becomes necessary.

<sup>10</sup> Commonly referred to as the “Brundtland Report” (WCED, 1987).

<sup>11</sup> “UNESCO, for example, acknowledged in its 1997 Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations towards Future Generations that ‘at this point in history, the very existence of humankind



demographic shift as the UK's projected age structure evolves, there is the open question as to whether an ageing profile will translate into a shift towards or away from thinking and acting with a short-term emphasis (ONS, 2016).<sup>12</sup> With increasing life expectancy, the number of people over 85 will have doubled by 2041 to around 3.2 million, from a 2016 baseline (ibid). If older people are less likely to be incentivised by longer-run issues, it is possible that having increasingly younger and older demographic profile skews internationally can impact political horizon-setting and subsequent priorities.

*Short-termism* and *intergenerational justice* are hence important civic issues. The depth of the horizon considered appropriate for adequate public management and the dulling effects of "harmful short-termism" (Caney, 2016, p. 5) are recognised as a contemporary challenge in philosophy for steering progress. In economics, short-termism is part of the neoliberal condition. With a focus on trade-offs discounting the future in ways that often turn a blind eye to externalities (e.g. environmental impacts), or mute future costs given equilibrium assumptions, how we evaluate expenditure and activity, often undercuts long-run good practice. As elucidated in the *Kay Review* (2012) of equity markets, short-termism is myopic behaviour in search of immediate gratification, resulting in overlooking investing in the tangible and intangible aspects of competitive advantage. It can also manifest itself as hyperactivity, such as a failure to sustain attention to tasks, or in business terms, focus on internal reorganisation such as financial re-engineering instead of the relevant underlying business capabilities (Kay, 2012, p. 14). Likewise, public governance is not immune to these conditions.

Caney (2018) notes three interrelated types of responsibility to future generations, namely: (1) *economic responsibilities* such as the distribution of wealth and deferred debt attributable to future generations, (2) *ecological responsibilities*, i.e. rates of non-renewable resource use, population levels and negative ecosystem impacts from current practices, and (3) *bioethical responsibilities*, e.g. healthcare practices that may benefit people now, like antibiotic solutions that may have known reduced future beneficial effects, e.g. due to increased drug resistance from overuse (Caney, 2018, pp. 476-7). Temporally, the distance into the future that is deemed within scope of policy-making on any given issue is a defining consideration. For example, intergenerational wealth transfers due to demographic changes pose different challenges to costs

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and its environment are threatened' and that 'present generations should strive to ensure the maintenance and perpetuation of humankind'." (Global Priorities Project, 2017, p 23).

<sup>12</sup> UK demographic projections support the thesis of a growing population, reaching close to 70m in a decade, assuming approximately half of the growth is from net international migration (the other half being births exceeding deaths) (ONS, 2016) Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/nationalpopulationprojections/2016basedstatisticalbulletin>

that could be borne in the distant future, such as non-renewable resource exhaustion in future centuries. Combined with the discernable physical boundaries of the issues (e.g. local to global), this brings to the fore the need to collaboratively generate agreed ways to guide decision-making. Caney surmises: “...we need principles of justice that both extend globally and include current and future generations.” (Caney, 2018, pp. 478). It is evident we do not have the cultural practices and the institutional mechanisms to do this given the state of politics and the state of progress on “grand challenges”.<sup>13</sup>

As has been increasingly recognized in the UK, it is clear that the *social contract* between generations is being “dismantled” by forces including housing costs and the general cost of living (Willetts, 2015). The Resolution Foundation’s *Intergenerational Commission* issued its final report in 2018 pointing at wide-ranging intergenerational issues. In the political sphere the failure to look ahead has prompted discussion about extending the voting franchise to younger people. For example, Runciman’s (2018) article posed lowering the voting age to six years, stimulating a mixed response (Runciman in Weaver, 2018). Nonetheless, this brought to the fore the limited range of methods available to achieve greater traction on thinking further ahead in the UK’s current system of representation with two party domination. In the UK, post-war institutions and investment were seemingly dovetailed with democratic advancements, supporting the rise of the middle class. Technological developments and social expenditure on health, education, welfare and housing tempered poverty and improved social wellbeing. Today our challenges have expanded in scope, with connectivity beyond nation-state boundaries vexing the treatment of a number of global-scaled issues. Key contemporary issues are also starting to erode, “squeeze”<sup>14</sup> or “hurt” the middle class in the West (OECD, 2019). The middle has started to stall and the normalised pathways that parents assumed for their children are more noticeably uncertain (i.e. investment in education leads to professional jobs and financial security).

The ways to progressively address issues are still being handled via the same institutional formats that are out of kilter with the content of societal concern and potential fixes. Organisational structures and legislative legacies established to deal with prior problems often do not align well to dealing with contemporary challenges e.g. the globalised digital economy that evades nation-

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<sup>13</sup> As Mazzucato (2017) notes, the “grand challenges” thinking so far in the 21st century is defined by the need to respond to major social, environmental and economic challenges. These include climate change, demographic and wellbeing shifts and generating sustainable and inclusive growth. The UK Government released a policy paper on “the Grand Challenges” (May 2019), targeting AI and data, ageing society, clean growth and the future of mobility in the context of the Industrial Strategy (BEIS, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> For example, in UK politics, Ed Milliband is attributed with using the phrase “squeezed middle” in 2014 to reference the “hollowing out” processes where housing, educational costs and purchasing power are comparatively reduced or stalling post the baby boomer generation, so continuous improvement in living standards is not guaranteed (Elliott, 2019).

state containment for taxation and civic accountability, or issues associated with intergenerational equity in present day decision-making about service provision and investment priorities. It is this dilemma – the dilemma of democracy’s functionality or dysfunctionality today – that sits central in this investigation and is explored in due course.

Why the focus on how democracy is done? Democratic methods are at the heart of developing new approaches to improve conditions in the UK and other societies. Our political and governmental arrangements have come to be viewed as incapable of the levels of work required of them to guide constructive progress (e.g. Flinders, 2010; Dunleavy, 2018).<sup>15</sup> This is not to infer that previous practices and periods were exemplary and provide a state to return to. Rather, today it is the case that many people do not experience Government providing what they expect at both a personal level, e.g. healthcare system expectations (Middleton, 2017); or at the collective level e.g. balanced stewardship of ecological continuity and economic development in unison (Frank and Schlenker, 2016). Not experiencing pathways that attend comprehensively to the personal and collective in tandem, while generating confidence in the democratic system of governance itself, erodes trust.<sup>16</sup>

In this cultural state, reduced confidence in politics and the “Westminster Model” has become inseparable from dissatisfaction with democracy as the prevailing institutional form itself. Traditional political analysis often underplays this, as Hall documents (Hall, 2011, pp. 1-6, 216-220). However, increasing skepticism and misgivings in governmental performance are pervasive themes in Britain (Flinders, 2017b, pp. 233-250). A lower level of confidence in politics and trust in institutions has a corrosive effect. This is particularly so when societies are without shared intentional leadership (i.e. sustained collective purpose with wide-ranging buy-in) and where people in civic roles are not taking clear responsibility for active change that delivers tangible advancement for the interests they purport to represent. To continue to background the *New Governance Challenge*, I set out key elements of the “meta” *situation* within which progress is

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<sup>15</sup> For example, at the constitutional level, Flinders (2009) frames British politics as being weak with “oblique responses to the challenges of constitutional anomie” (Flinders, 2009, p.1-20). Likewise, the “protracted, lagging and trouble-prone” pathway in Dunleavy’s terms, of a fraught democratic period vexed by Brexit-expressed populism (Dunleavy, 2018, p. 428), points to the dominant theme that deep problems exist whereby the “sheer difficulty of attaining a sustainable democratic state” (ibid, p. 427) makes functional contemporary governance highly challenging. In terms of societal outcomes, a deterioration over the phase of austerity – with for example, welfare cuts from 2010 (Fetzer, 2018) – saw decisions at the centre of power cultivating a wider perception of less effective and responsive democratic stewardship for equitable progress in the UK.

<sup>16</sup> For substantive analyses that underpin this position that is the subject of wide-ranging intellectual discussion and critique, I note two OECD reports (2017, 2019) and the Edelman studies (2017, 2019) as analyses that substantiate the worldview and associated assumption that democratic practice and trust in levels of performance are sub-standard today in light of what we know about contemporary issues and processes.

being constrained, governance strained, and institutional arrangements stressed.

### **1.3 Situation: *Progress Constrained***

*“...We have crumbling parts of our infrastructure... we are patching at best but not designing anything for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. You step back and say: that is a really peculiar political system. ... Just ask the question: Can a society address real problems and move to solve them? I would say America has been unable to do that for probably about 30 years. ... where was the structural change? Where were the long-term solutions?” – Jeffrey Sachs (October 2018).*

Much has been said about the decay of democracy over the past decades. From governance in “liquid times” (Bauman, 2007) drawing attention to uncertainty, or to Runciman’s reckoning of Western democracy experiencing its “mid-life crisis” (2018, p. 218), the prognoses tend towards pointing at decline in the liberal democratic order. This is often termed a “backsliding” (Runciman, 2018, p.3),<sup>17</sup> manifest as the rise of populism in the context of prolonged neoliberalism (Kramer, 2018), with the West experiencing deteriorating moral authority and weakening soft power. In sum, a multitude of “discontents” are being raised to the point of giving cause to question the ongoing viability and veracity of democracy in its current form to deliver fit-for-purpose leadership in the twenty-first century. While talking about the American condition, Sachs’ point resonates across advanced Western democracies (Sachs, 2018). We are not renewing strategy and regenerating activities across a range of fields at a rate commensurate with our latent potential, given institutional knowledge and the array of resources embedded in societies and people. Nor are we moving at a speed to maintain strategic alignment with the inherent challenges of the operating context and wider environment.

I therefore argue for a change in public governance design and practice as a significant change of state to effect how we do transformation. While the direction of change for beneficial public outcomes is interconnected with the political conditions, it is not satisfactory for the bureaucracy to blame the politics, or vice versa. The practices of government sit within politics (as they should), but are not without their own agency. It is in the interactions between governors (e.g. politicians in power) and government officials (i.e. civil servants), set within wider networks of governance and influence in the civic realm, that there is scope for advancement complementary to and supportive of, political agendas. As progress is inevitably constrained by prevailing conditions, I further précis high-level circumstances.

#### **1.3.2. *Anthropocene Risks and Uncertainties***

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<sup>17</sup> Runciman (2018) in the UK, alongside political commentators such as Larry Diamond (2015) in the US, point to the decay of trust.

*“Current approaches to decentralized, centralized and multi-level [governance] approaches have not always lived up to the promise and alternatives are needed that are able to influence cross-scale dynamics of the Anthropocene, not just react to them.”* (ICSU, 2018, p.18).

This insight, cited by the International Council for Science (ICSU), highlights governance shortcomings. At the level of human impact on the planet and the state of correlative global governance functionality, we face serious challenges. Humans are using the power gained to modify, shape and significantly influence earth-scale ecosystems (e.g. freshwater systems and ocean currents) (Tonn et al., 2013, p. 103). Additional to the climate crisis, the convergent of new technologies e.g. the synergistic combination of nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology, and cognitive sciences (referred to as NBIC) (Roco, 2006, p. 9), are likely to transform and reshaping societal relations. With advances in computing power resulting in pushing at the boundaries where AI can compete with and challenge human cognition, next-generation technology transformations can re-chart what human agency can do in decision-making to the planet and its inhabitants in ways that may yet prove to be negative (Müller and Bostrom, 2016). How we handle ourselves has stark new implications for future survival and the extent of prosperity. The limits of the Anthropocene age,<sup>18</sup> as the geological era where humans are the primary shaper of planetary ecology, will increasingly require building a new collective politics to contend with making important adjustments (Dryzek and Pickering, 2019). Systemic ecological degradation and unprecedented flow-on effects, including rising global inequalities, suggest the need for new forms of ecologically reflexive governance to adapt to changing conditions (ibid, p. 34).

The level at which I evoke governance as both an institutional mechanism and an express of cultural value in a systemic framework, serves to encompass what is the orchestration of human progress in relation to its supporting environment.<sup>19</sup> The degree of connectivity now achieve as a species creates new types of risk exposure (Bernstein, 1996). Dealing effectively with these issues requires squarely recognising that uncertainty and complexity are baseline features in political

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<sup>18</sup> The Anthropocene age refers to the period where human activity transgressions of “earth systems”, consisting of the interrelated physical, chemical, and biological processes of the planet as a whole, are resulting in an emerging epoch where human influences become decisive in affecting system parameters, with the potential to generate “state shifts” uncommon in planetary history (Dryzek and Pickering, 2019, p. 1-2). It has become popularly accepted in the past decade (ibid, p. 3).

<sup>19</sup> This is discussed in detail at 3.2.1 (Conceptions of Governance). In short, I follow the view that governance is the oversight process where various actors “...interact to design and implement policies within a given set of formal and informal rules that shape and are shaped by power.” (World Bank, 2017, p.3).

economies. With the “risk society” as the prevailing global form (Beck, 1992)<sup>20</sup> and the “broadening of risk-taking and risk-bearing as properties of human life” (Appaduri, 2013, p.3), individual agency interacts with institutional power determining the location of risk allocation. Douglass North (2004) reflects that the key drivers of economic change increase both uncertainty and complexity:

*“All three of the sources of economic change—demography, stock of knowledge, and institutions—have been fundamentally altered. Population has grown at an unprecedented rate and the increase in human capital has been equally unprecedented. ... The resultant institutional development has created more and more complex structures designed to deal with the consequent novel problems facing societies. Institutions as the incentive structure of societies have produced diverse inducements to invest in, expand, and apply this growing knowledge to solve problems of human scarcity.”* (North, 2004, p. 43).

In this context, risk management has become a ubiquitous consideration with all forms of “asset” valuation – be it capital or knowledge. “Systemic risk” is a developing field that marries policy processes and systems thinking (IRGC, 2018). Risk-sensitive modes of strategy to deal with instability, accentuating flexibility as an attribute to orient to what Sennett (2006) views as the culture of “new capitalism”, where insecurity is “programmed in” and feeds a short-term orientation (Sennett, 2006, p. 187). As an inevitable condition, it becomes necessary to extrude system designs for democracy that are convincingly able to handle uncertainty and risk. I will contend they must allow some conditions to be flexible – at times far more flexible than present – while at other times be capable of being relatively “fixed”.

### **1.3.2. Global Challenges and Neoliberalism**

Handling issues in a wider context places new demands on national and local governance, requiring new systems of policy and decision-making to be able to account globally connected challenges. In contemplating the UK facing the 21<sup>st</sup> century, various thematic syntheses of the future have similarities. The “five giants” as per Beveridge’s original report (1942)<sup>21</sup> have been remade by the RSA<sup>22</sup> who settled on the “new giants” as: Inequality, Isolation, Intolerance, Disempowerment and Environment (Cox, 2018). A report by the IPPR<sup>23</sup> identifies key issues in the

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<sup>20</sup> The Risk society, as explained by Beck, was a structural reality in advanced industrialization where it “is increasingly occupied with debating, preventing and managing risks that it itself has produced.” (Komlik, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> Refer: [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/citizenship/brave\\_new\\_world/welfare.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/citizenship/brave_new_world/welfare.htm)

<sup>22</sup> RSA, as in the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, London, UK. Refer: <https://www.thersa.org/>

<sup>23</sup> IPPR, as in the think-tank the *Institute for Public Policy Research*, London, UK.

next two decades<sup>24</sup> and five shaping factors were set out by the OMS report.<sup>25</sup> *The Economist's* Democracy Index<sup>26</sup> concluded that just 4.5% of the world's people live in a "full democracy". The case that the new dividing line of 21st century politics is a globalist versus nationalist cleavage, forcing some degree of political re-alignment, is growing.<sup>27</sup> If so, the new divisions surfaced explicitly in the political machinations of Brexit have begun to re-sort allegiances, with the globalist or more "open" line of orientation not yet clearly represented in politics. Globalization's future in its current form is the subject of concern, with both proponents of and objectors to more economic openness stating that current arrangements must be re-thought in the context of nationalistic resurgences. The "backlash" when cross-boarder cooperation was assumed as "irreversible, in part because it was expected to lead to a universal acceptance of liberal and capital values" (De Vries, 2018), amplifies issues of moral fairness, inequality and identity.

As an economic and cultural situation, Appaduri (2013) establishes more deeply that culture arcs towards a globalized homogeneity, only to inevitably fragment away (ibid, p.293). Baldwin (2019) argues that globalization combined with robotics is leading to significant socio-cultural change at a rate faster than we might have anticipated. Rapid "digitech" changes enabling "telemigration"<sup>28</sup> and machine learning enhanced robotics can cut into white collar service jobs like automation impacts manufacturing (Baldwin, 2019). This can filter into Western politics, producing new dynamics of change that disrupt existing work and lifestyle expectations. Meanwhile the World Economic Forum (WEF) is advocating for "Globalization 4.0", recognising that climate change, a multipolar world order and social discontent (inequality) combining with the current wave of technological disruption, produce a new trajectory requiring the adaptation of public and private governance models to upgrade our "operating system" (o/s) (Samans, 2019).

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<sup>24</sup> These were: disruption from demographic tipping points (growth in ageing and diversity), technological transformations (radically shifting economic power), a changing world economic order (fragile globalisation, Asian power and secular stagnation in developed economies), and global institutions under intense pressure as the post-war international order fades while the Global South rises (Lawrence, 2016).

<sup>25</sup> The "five shaping factors" from the *Oxford Martin Commission for Future Generations* (OMS, 2013) serve to summarize the "less successful characteristics of modern politics": (1) *Institutions*: Too many have struggled to adapt to today's hyper-connected world, (2) *Time*: Short-termism directs political and business cycles, despite compelling exceptions, (3) *Political Engagement and Public Trust*: Politics has not adapted to new methods or members, (4) *Growing Complexity*: Problems can escalate much more rapidly than they can be solved, (5) *Cultural Biases*: Globalisation can amplify cultural differences and exclude key voices." (OMS, 2013, p.6).

<sup>26</sup> The index rates 167 countries by 60 indicators across five broad categories (EIU, 2019).

<sup>27</sup> For example, see Malloch-Brown (undated).

<sup>28</sup> Telemigration is global-scale labour freelancing matching process for work allocation on digital platforms. Typically, they serve the need of efficiently accessing low-cost labour by matching skills with tasks, irrespective of location. This facilitates bypassing local employment laws.

In this environment from a “thought leadership” perspective, public policy’s parameters and therefore the “business of government” is shaped strongly by the academic discipline of economics. This has resulted in a growing call for an end to “market fundamentalism” (Stiglitz, 2019).<sup>29</sup> With influence cascading into public governance with an indelible influence on Treasuries, economic theories have been the intellectual basis for resource allocation and seep into the rationale for many controls. This is especially so when neoliberal economic ideas prevail and the procedures of government are concordant, as characterised by New Public Management (NPM).<sup>30</sup> Despite the loss of trust in the core ideas that a highly marketized society elevates as a dominate methods for devise value and exchange, economics and disciplines have been responding slowly. There has been over a decade-post Global Financial Crisis (GFC), of fulsome and far-reaching critiques of neoliberalism, un-matched with a coherent set of new ideas, concepts and schematics. The “so what now?” political prescriptions falls short of the contemporary predicament. In recent debate between initiatives to advance the field, complexity economists Beinhocker et al. (2019) comment:

*“Complexity economics provides an alternative framework. It portrays the environment not as an “externality,” but rather the economy as a complex system embedded within the larger complex system of the environment. And it portrays the shift to a zero-carbon economy not as a marginal problem, but as an epochal system transformation on par with the shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture or the Industrial Revolution. It is a problem that requires extremely rapid responses that go far beyond what the standard optimization models even consider, including major changes in our technologies, institutions, behaviors, and cultures.”* (Beinhocker et al., 2019).<sup>31</sup>

It is inevitable that system-wide assumptions about the nature of exchange and the construct of value (i.e. economics) will imprint on the social life and cultural conditions. The persistence of narrow assumptions (i.e. neoliberalism) have produced systemic instability. While pointing towards behavioural sciences and intra-disciplinarity, Beinhocker et al. (2019) do not single out public policy per se and the fields of public administration, political and social theory, or political science as generative sites for collaborative efforts. Despite ample generic critique about capitalism’s dysfunction alongside calls for more government action and participative engagement for locally responsive approaches (e.g. SPERI, 2019), institutional solution formulation is largely unexplored. Systemic arrangements underlying contemporary issues

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<sup>29</sup> "After 40 years of market fundamentalism, America and like-minded European countries are failing the vast majority of their citizens. At this point, only a new social contract – guaranteeing citizens health care, education, retirement security, affordable housing, and decent work for decent pay – can save capitalism and liberal democracy." (Stiglitz, 2019).

<sup>30</sup> For further discussion, refer to 3.2.1.

<sup>31</sup> This is consistent with many post inception of Club of Rome (1968–) and ecological economics conceptions placing the economy within the sphere of the environment and subject to ecosystem limits, e.g. as conceptually captured in the concentric circles for sustainable development (attributed to Moore, 2000) and more recently expanded in Raworth’s “donut” economics (Raworth, 2018).



require deeper consideration and longer-term action. There will always be contractions to be worked with and on e.g. a dependence on ecosystems and developments that undermine them. Rather than re-issuing condemnations of capitalism, I work to move past critique to a new schema and mechanisms for guiding refreshed possibilities.

### **1.3.3. Turbulence in late Marketization**

Businesses and government activity in advanced neoliberal contexts are inadvertently producing operational turbulence for quality service delivery. Questions of ideological related over-reach and cases of substandard implementation are being called into question in the wake of substantial failures.<sup>32</sup> Efforts to improve public sector performance in the areas of outsourcing and procurement are underway.<sup>33</sup> On top of climate change-related events (e.g. flooding) this necessitates dealing with the substantial transformations, demanding innovative responses to crises and mainstream reform in parallel. Governments cannot “stop the clock” and regroup. Upgrading systems while “in-flight” presents a unique set of challenges for dynamic improvement requiring responsive and farsighted oversight in tandem. Furthermore, institutional stasis is a barrier given the nature of bureaucracy as an auto-correcting stabilising influence often designed to resist or slow change.

In assessing the state of affairs in governance, I work from the premise of grounding the shift as a manageable evolution *within* the current system of democratic government. I view that as eminently preferable, compared to a wholesale lurch into a radically different form of oversight, or worse still, a catastrophic series of crises. I work from the premise that we have neither the luxury of time or tolerance for destruction. Change communications have been able to be directed from highly centralized nodes of power in the past, yet that style of assertion is now more problematic. I also work from the premise that the public sector or Civil Service, is far from irreparably broken. I take as an opening assumption that although there are significant challenges and failures that signal the need for significant refinement of arrangements, there is a functional “base” system to be positively worked from. I develop a proposition to chart a new line of development to become more “fit-for-purpose” in the current climate.

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<sup>32</sup> For example, Grenfell Towers and the *Hackitt Report's* (Hackitt, 2018) account of systemic failure in the building and construction system, the UK Probation Service's “irredeemable flawed” procurement of services (Leal, 2019), or the *Carillion* collapse as an example of the financialized firm and inter-temporal balance sheet manipulation (Leaver, 2018).

<sup>33</sup> For example, refer to Dunton (2018) and IfG public procurement “explainer” (IfG, 2019).

The British Civil Service (Whitehall) current performs comparatively well in relation to its contemporaries.<sup>34</sup> In light of the overall systemic health of underperforming democratic societies, this status offers a less flattering prognosis. Given the widespread concurrence that we need to govern better – that populism is not a sustainable or constructive answer in the long-run – the challenge is simply *how* in a democratic frame to do this. We know that we need different ways to grow civic capacity and capability to sustain ongoing learning for progress. To borrow the gardening analogy: We may need to prune and fertilize particular plants, we may need to replant and experiment with different species for a better yield, but ultimately, we need to expand the scope of the productive terrain and lift the fertility of the soil in the long-run. This is because we have to do better now and we have to do better for those coming next. Both a longer-term view and a more integrated view taken together, necessitates a different form of functionality for quality advice and the chance of excellent decision-making.

#### **1.4 Optics: *Pressured Governance***

Despite, and indeed at times because of its inevitability, change is many things to many people. What is a source of inspiration and wonderment to some, is a source of fear to others. In systemic or political terms, these conditions have been stylized usefully by some as “open” or “closed” e.g. as developed in systemic terms by Beutement and Broenner (2011). Open situations and systems in their terms are relatively organic, shifting and dynamic in nature, whereas the closed situation is relatively stable, structured and optimisable (Beutement and Broenner, 2011). A “closed” state can signify a more control-oriented response or even conditions of active resistance (ibid). In political agenda terms, Bhattacharyya (2015) offers a critical perspective of the “closed” sentiment in the UK, articulating it as a slide into a condition of “diminishing expectations” as part of the austerity project (Bhattacharyya, 2015, pp. 75-78).

In a fundamental sense, our democratic apparatus has to “path-find” and shape our future in relation to wide-ranging worldviews about change and our relationship to each other. The associated scale of implication for political orientation, governmental function and civic engagement is widely recognised as profound, unprecedented and highly challenging (e.g. Sachs, 2008 ,pp. 3-7). Conceptualising what I call the *New Governance Challenge*, is a response to government’s being under pressure to attend to today’s policy and decision-making crises. With system functionalities “charged-up” under operational pressure with resource constraints,

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<sup>34</sup> One global ranking of central public administration effectiveness is the International Civil Service Effectiveness Index (InCiSE). It sees Whitehall at the top of the league table, rising from fourth place two years ago (InCiSE, 2019). This measures input performance by assessing 12 indicators that include comparisons of “openness” and “inclusiveness”, along with the general quality of policy-making, regulation and procurement. It does not rank the resulting outcomes of activities conducted.

coherent politics is highly problematic. The pressure on governance mechanisms, upon which a case for change is subsequently based, is multi-dimensional. The key contribution developed through this work is the establishment of a conceptual framework for a new way to “act, see and interact” in the practice of governance.

My starting point is that an affirmative response to a change process requires the production of “space” (in other words, time in people’s heads and days) to do three key steps. Namely (1) form at least a conceptual understanding of and realistic view of the present situation; (2) imagine new possibilities where improvements could make life better and be able to articulate in a generalizable fashion; and finally (3), come up with a way to process, deal with and resolve the ensuing differences between what actually is and what could be achieved by doing things better. The challenges of this process at a systemic level is developed, given current institutional heritage and associated path dependencies. I take on the challenge of generating new language to talk about and deal with governance phenomena. To produce meaning and supporting narratives calls for the “ideation” of concepts and theories. The challenge I seek to contribute to is the systemic design and operating principles of how we do democratic “governance” itself and more specifically, how we advance the government.<sup>35</sup> I aim to contribute to the debate to reinvent democratic governance because I see that as a significant challenge requiring attention.

If we assess the current situation (the *predicament*), this raises a set of questions about the form, function and culture of governance. The focus is to assess the situation drawing on systems-based and temporal insights, with the purpose of working towards how to frame a general reset and enliven democratic effectiveness. I do not sketch or offer a perspective of the better future, either in general manifesto terms or via policy prescriptions. Instead, I pursue how to produce the systemic architecture and institutional environment that can deal with this situation. I also do not detail the application of change in practice i.e. this is not the formulation of an ideological argument to undergird a political movement or the précis of an explicit policy programme.

It remains that political “coherence”<sup>36</sup> is a necessary condition to “do democracy” well, yet political clarity (when achieved) and consensus for change is not enough. Even with political foresight there are systemic barriers to delivery on progressive outcomes. An ability to (a)

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<sup>35</sup> I define *governance* and the distinction with government in 3.2.1. For introductory purposes, I simply mean that governance is the general act of oversight that is both formal (government as such) and other forms of guidance (i.e. non-governmental or informal sites and sources of civic steerage).

<sup>36</sup> I use the term *coherence* and *functionality* interchangeably, from a systems-oriented viewpoint. The intention is to signal an emphasis on the ability to “get things done” where there a capacity to organise with logical consistency.

conceive of the salient issues and association range of policy options, (b) formulate and devise a strategy critical path to achieve the desired outcomes; and (c) to ensure the capacity and capability to implement e.g. the organisational constellation of entities, their interactions and adequate monitoring and feedback for continuous learning and adjustment; is highly vexed and problematic in the current context. This can be made more difficult by a constantly shifting situation where the dynamics of the issues are outside the range of the relative dynamism of the institutional context overseeing and managing them. In other words, the governance system is not fit-for-purpose in its current state. Further, the ensuing dysfunction feeds back onto the oversight mechanisms making their ability to deal with immediacies, and deal with what is ahead, doubly difficult. As a result, the ensuing dysfunction erodes confidence in delivery agents (i.e. the public sector and associated stakeholders) and system leadership actors (i.e. the political sphere, beneath which senior civil servants form a layer of organisational leadership).

Therefore, my argument centers on the reality that to make governance progress in this predicament requires not only political change, by fundamental system change. To oversee change at a rate in proportion to the nature of challenges faced evokes the need for systemic reform, opening up examination in the dynamics between politics and the Civil Service in particular. Given that wholesale Civil Service reorganization would add further destabilization and lags into a system already under acute stress, the situation requires an absorbable shift or “reset”. Re-organisation of boundaries of accountability and reform in the traditional sense, of shifting power into nodes that favour the incumbent governing worldview (e.g. decentralising or re-centralising control) is not going to deliver time-relevant results. This leads to the case for taking a “reset” as the main route to premise systemic advancement upon.

To see existing and embedded dilemmas anew, requires fresh “optics” to illuminate complex issues with sharper clarity. To develop an approach embodying a hybrid lens to conduct analysis of, and practice for, better governance, the treatment of *time* is the connecting thread that runs through the approach developed. By changing the way dilemmas are viewed and treated in governance systems, new solutions can be worked with to attain greater impact. Accordingly, my proposition has three optical angles: (a) *time* must be actively considered with space in civic analytics, (b) *trust* can be reconstructed with appropriate levels of civic direction and engagement, and (c) *value* determination that accounts for intergenerational implications refocuses what to do for advancement of the civic greater good.

It remains that territorialism is a key driver of political machinations and a means of asserting control through aggregating or decentralising power spatially. Concerns with control over

geographic locations and the sphere of organisational domains often dominates processes of organisation. Restructures can glue together clusters of issues in different ways to shift the centre of gravity to more inclusive or holistic conceptions of progress, or they can be used to tease apart fusions of issues so progress is thwarted. Either way, the orientation towards conceptualising and operationalising domains of oversight is typically underpinned by spatial characteristics that see a contestation of geographies of governance and power as central. Given this focus on physical terrain is a longstanding and enduring phenomena that has ongoing importance in organising governance, my position is not to try and eliminate it, rather complement it. The *spatial scope* of an issue, driven by consideration of the setting of boundaries in terms of topical treatment and area of coverage, needs to be clearly and intentionally complimented with a *temporal scope*. Some issues will have shallow or immediate concerns, while others will have deeper roots and longer-run ramifications.

### **1.5 Challenge: *A Decisive Reset***

Today, the salience of reflecting on what is not working and re-thinking how to make governance systems work better, is pressing. The challenge has become amplified as some democracies stumble with an erosion of legitimacy and lack of progress triggering new forms populism. Frustrations with difficult interconnected issues and actions being held-back by either participative grid-locks and consultative delays on one hand, or crises where normal protocols are over-ridden on the other, serve to undermine confidence. It is something for example, that Nation-states and cities across the globe are facing these pressures as they work to bear-up under simultaneously grow economies successfully, improve the quality of live for people, and become more inclusive for all citizens. While it may yet prove that the UK has to face the contradictions and downside implications of operationalising Brexit through trying to re-assert the power of its nation-statehood in the global domain, the overarching context is challenging in and of itself at a fundamental level. For example, moving beyond neoliberalism as a dominant ideological orientation is a substantive challenge being faced in global politics. It cuts into the heart of what new economics needs to address and has implications for governance assumptions and design. The situation challenges what public policy needs to be able to conceptualise and deliver. I make a case for the need to reconceptualise the nature of – and subsequent methods of treatment of – the democratic governance problems pervading contemporary life. My primary assumption is that the critical issue for investigation is one of how to conceive of and practice better public governance.

To “reset” the systems of governmental advice production and decision-making practices where directions are decided, requires an achievable shift in arrangements and practice if it is to be viable

and timely. I propose moving away from what I broadly characterise as a closed, resistant and tumultuous system of governance. This is where fragmented and divided problem-solving encounters resistance at the intersection of competing issues. It is where divisive, often negative and sharp forces collide, further perpetuating differences. Significantly, this sets up a dynamic where the prevailing governance culture is of inconsistent and interrupted decision practice. Leadership becomes reactive and by virtue of circumstances, often defensive.<sup>37</sup> This narrows the space for creativity and innovation. It can also squeeze issues and actors in the system – be they “Govenors” (politicians in power) or Civil Service advisors – into positions of uncomfortable but unavoidable confrontation or unacceptable compromises.

Standing in contrast is what I characterise as an open, adaptive and “peace-seeking” stance in governance. This is where integrated and collaborative resolutions are the new default setting to ensure pace with incremental and modular improvements advanced at relevant speeds. It is where actors are incentivized to combined positive interventions and “shape” forces for a culture of continuous improvement to consolidate gains and minimize unintended consequences. Importantly, this sets-up a dynamic where the prevailing culture supports more consistent high-level decision practices in politics. Leadership becomes more strategic, less operational and by virtue of circumstances, proactive while listening to feedback. This expands the space for creativity and innovation. It can help enable issues and actors in the system – be they politicians or Civil Service advisors – into positions of managing expectations for delivering the attainable in realistic timeframes.

The *New Governance Challenge* requires both a systemic adaptation and updating in particular for the Executive (government and the supporting Civil Service), as well as the Parliament and the Judiciary in turn. My focus is on the former and the interaction with the politics of the day to better bend the arc of progress towards mutually desirable goals. In political terms, we need to learn from what is not working. As Collier (2018) summarises the UK situation:

*“The centre-left will recover as it returns to its communitarian roots, and to the task of reconstructing the web of trust-based reciprocal obligations that address the anxieties of the working families. Similarly, the period of domination of the centre-right by assertive individualism will come to be recognized as the seduction of a great tradition by economic man. As it recovers its ethical bearings, it will return to ‘one nation’ politics. The new anxieties are too serious to be abandoned to the far left. Belonging to place is a force too potent and potentially too constructive, to be abandoned to the far right.”* (Collier, 2018, p.215-6).

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<sup>37</sup> Defensiveness itself can take various forms, from narratives of denial or humour to diffuse tensions, to offensive attacks to neutralise or distract, as is prevalent in the populist “playbook” leveraging multiple media channels to saturate mainstream understanding.

Making the case for a type of functional centralism as the solution space to chart our way forward, Collier arrives at advocating for reduced political polarisation and desires “a process by which the mainstream parties are driven back to the centre” (Collier, 2018, p.205). He lands on proposing changes including (a) The Labour Party’s elected MP’s electing the leader and (b) Proportional Representation to improve the representativeness of governments. While this may well help to unlock a more sensible and stable Parliament, my stance that is developed further in this work is that this is far from enough in-and-of itself. With deeper implications, Collier drives at the significant underpinning issue of the need for politics where “...shared identity becomes the foundation for far-sighted reciprocity” (2018, p.213). If this is indeed both desirable and necessary, what systemic and culture changes could help move in this direction?

I aim to be bold and practical, bringing ambition and concrete practice implications into a governable orbit. Why? Political advancement and remediation that minimises pain and disruption is not a given. History shows us that remedies have often proven costly and violent in resolution. Global progress remains “perennially disappointing” (Stirling, 2015, p.4) despite achieving the articulation of shared objectives such as the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs).<sup>38</sup> Alongside this exercise are attempts to update international governance architecture to better align with the nature and dynamics of contemporary issues. There are direct and impactful reasons in advanced Western societies to update approaches and institutional architectures. Western nations are not immune to, and indeed inextricably linked to, the grand challenges even when not bearing direct impacts. Being comparatively well-placed to afford greater equality and build resilience to weather an array of challenges and actual storms, what the West does is highly significant for the type and rate of change globally achieved. Key variables, as I have introduced, include (a) institutional shortcomings and failures to deal with the nature of presenting issues, (b) a loss of trust in and impact from democracy as a fair system to effectively govern, and (c) an inability to deliver timely results even when we are actively trying to do so. I go on to develop a fuller framing of governance dilemmas through Part 1. The methodology chapter follows next, serving to outline the thesis structure and overview the methodological stance taken.

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<sup>38</sup> United Nations (2014) *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014*, UN, New York. *Agenda 2030* (the United Nations’ Agenda for Sustainable Development) is the formal blueprint with seventeen SDGs. They are at the next level broken down into 169 specific targets. The status of the goals and targets is categorized as “aspirational”, requiring the “best knowledge, innovation and application from all sectors” (IAP, 2017) for future planetary survival and wellbeing.

## 2. Methodology: *Establishing the Direction*

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### 2.1 Outline

Having identified the navigable terrain to be explored and the general orientation (chapter 1), I now establish the direction of research, providing the map and method. I also introduce the key literature strands drawn upon as the focus of the work and its findings are inherently methodological in nature. To address the *New Governance Challenge*, the thesis is arranged in three parts. The *Predicament* established (Part 1), the *Proposition* developed (Part 2) and the supported *Procedures* elaborated upon (Part 3), all work towards making a case for a systemic transformation that improves the the functionality of democracy. I initially detail the research's intent, orientation and scope to sketch out the parameters within which I work. Central in seeking to advance the governance challenge outlined is the need to consider ways to explore and advance the redesign of “arrangements”<sup>39</sup> in contemporary market capitalism with democratic oversight.

The ensuing proposition is a construct that proposes an adaptive (experimental and potentially incremental) treatment of policy issues on one hand, and a pivotal shift in existing Civil Service and political decision-making practice on the other. By virtue of the academic “mission” to explore such possibilities, I am extrapolating from the present to explore ways to fundamentally re-orient governance practice. Consequently, I explore political theory and practice with a specific purpose of informing the revitalisation of liberal democratic activity beyond the trajectory of treating problematic issues in partial and incomplete ways (e.g. fragmented policy framing and decision-making). As this is a process of establishing a “stance”, at this early juncture in the work I introduce the key theoretical angles of inquiry pursued, namely *complexity*, *temporality* and *integrality*. These concepts and their associated literatures introduce methodological issues which are discussed. I then develop an investigative strategy and outline the approach taken. In doing so, I identify limitations and seek to reconcile the work's parameters given inevitable research constraints. First however, I orient the inquiry.

### 2.2 Overview: *Intent, Orientation and Scope*

#### 2.2.1. *Statement of Intent*

Structured into three parts reflecting different stages of research and analysis, the thesis is a three-part production. *Part 1* is diagnostic and depicts the current system of policy issues. *Part 2*

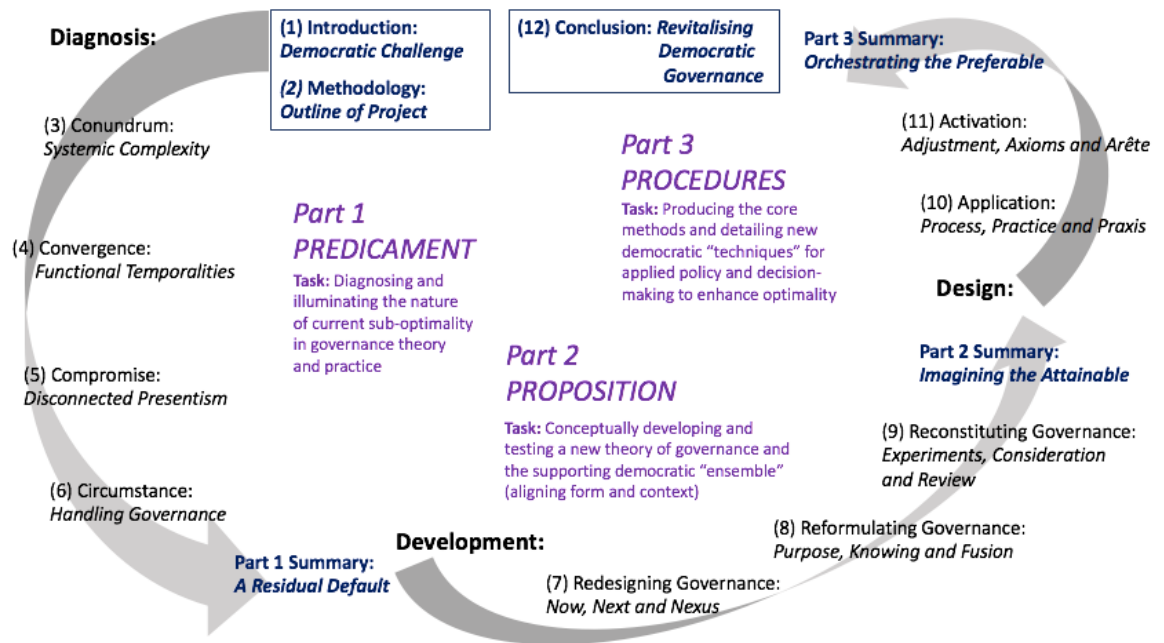
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<sup>39</sup> *Arrangements* is used as an inclusive term to encompass all organisational entities, i.e. social “structures” in an institutional sense as well as “networks” (and nodes) from a social network perspective.



elucidates a system at a theoretical level for improved policy solution formation, while *Part 3* begins to outline the guiding attributes that would go towards enabling better policy decisions in practice. The thesis structure is summarised as follows:

Table 2.2.1: *Overview of Thesis Structure*



### **Research Goal, Objectives and Results**

The overall *research goal* is to generally devise a refreshed contemporary democratic system and supporting practice that deals with progressing the nature of enduring issues encountered today. Decision-making systems and their oversight (i.e. governance) are proving to be inadequately "fit-for-purpose". This research develops a theoretical synthesis to re-conceptualise governance in advanced Western democracy, as well as a solutions-oriented re-design for a new "decision architecture". While theoretically producing potential for wider application, the context under consideration and within which this thinking is development is the United Kingdom as the home of the Westminster system.

I express the semantic meaning attributable to key terms used and build a discourse in the three parts accordingly:

Table 2.2.2: *Three Part Structure – Objectives and Goals*

PARTS		OBJECTIVES	GOALS
<b>Part 1: Predicament</b>	- as the situation experienced, faced and within which we find ourselves embedded in intellectual and institutional terms	<i>Objective: (Part 1)</i> Depicting the current state of policy issues and theoretical approaches to governance	Diagnosis: <i>Integrated Assessment</i>  An integrated assessment encompassing key strands of literature reviews
<b>Part 2: Proposition</b>	- as the proposal, comprising a conceptual framework of governance	<i>Objective: (Part 2)</i> Elucidating a system for improved policy framing (formulation of advice) and decision making (acts of direction setting)	Development: <i>Conceptual Production</i>  A conceptual platform (or design theory) for attaining better results given Part 1's theorising
<b>Part 3: Procedures</b>	- as the principles and processes to activate the proposal	<i>Objective: (Part 3)</i> Outlining the culture or system attributes to offer the potential of better policy and decision performance	Design: <i>Core Strategies</i>  An applied agenda of practice content and heuristics to establish the operationalization of Part 2

Part 1 therefore draws on academic literature and generalised empirical “real world” conditions to establish a perspective on the nature of the key issues and policy-making limits being experienced. Part 2, accounting for the context established, engages in the pursuit of a theoretical model or framework of design – what I call *decision architecture*. Based on clear premises and logics, it works to elaborate a scheme of resolution to the predicament being encountered in governance. Therefore, it is not currently existing, rather a conceptualisation. If it already was structurally implemented or coherently in practice, the novelty and contribution of the claims I make would fall short. In the last element, Part 3 builds “procedures” on Part 2 by developing applied details from the general design a step further. While not seeking to engage with a specific operating context to empirical test the heuristics, Part 3 does work to “round out” practice implications of the perspective developed.

### **2.2.2. Research Orientation and Ethics**

I specify the orientation of the research with the *core issues* (questions) driving the inquiry. They are focussed on progressing what might be best done with respect to primary governance matters, namely:

- *How to effectively govern* – so as to achieve accelerated progress towards democratically agreed goals (or desirable outcomes)<sup>40</sup> by both expanding options (pathways) to achieve results and solutions that overcome the rate of decay occurring (i.e. a deteriorating existing system state or entropy<sup>41</sup>).
- *How to accountably operate* – for a fair and transparent “present” where risks can be taken in the short-term so as improve democratic health (engagement, participation and trust), while concurrently decisively acting in the best interests of the long-term (i.e. for people in the future).
- *How to make timely headway* – for a rate of change that is commensurate with the situation and presenting issues, despite current activities to remedy pressures, where the rate of deterioration of prevailing conditions is out-running the rate of system improvement (in systems terms, where entropy prevails).

Working with these three lines of inquiry is central to the research’s orientation, for the purpose of getting new governance insights. The research is seeking to examine and explore ways of ensuring we can motivate progress for the (a) betterment of people (i.e. development), allowing us to (b) share resources fairly (i.e. to distribute), so we can (c) release the entailed societal capacity and capability to help both individuals participate and for the collective arrangement of affairs of guidance and oversight (i.e. to govern).

Given the nature of the lines of enquiry and the focus on developing a new theoretical framework of governance system design, a decision was made not to conduct primary research. This position was developed on a considered basis as the bulk of relevant material drawn-upon resided in academic literatures. The policy-making methods pursued are of a conceptual nature. To formulate an innovative framework to pivot governance practice, an inductive and additive strategy was best suited to “reframe” policy-making and decision processes. In developing a new type of “attainable governance” premised on “integral” and meta-theoretical” conceptions,<sup>42</sup> the investigative strategy employed to guide the research was underpinned by extensive reading and reflection on a range of theories and conceptual models in public policy practice. Particular

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<sup>40</sup> I reference both *goals* as predetermined targets and *outcomes* to encompass a desired broader resulting condition. This is to inclusively capture preferred objectives before actions are undertaken in an attempt to change a particular state, as well as to capture the more dynamic “real time” learning that occurs in practice so as to adjust settings within democratically acceptable parameters (i.e. undertaking actions that are responsive in nature and therefore are not explicitly predetermined).

<sup>41</sup> By *entropy* I mean lack of order or predictability; and the gradual decline into disorder that increases in systems over time. Source: <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/entropy>

<sup>42</sup> Refer 2.3 for a fuller exposition, including unpacking the meaning of integral meta-theory (Edwards, 2010), and the ensuing staged “investigative strategy” undertaken.

attention was paid to the conception of public governance processes and their supporting strategic decision mechanisms.

Additionally, of concern were the conditions in the UK at the time, particularly the Civil Service situation for senior leaders with Brexit uncertainties and high levels of stress occurring during the research period. Based on advice from former senior civil servants, the bureaucracy was under considerable strain and access to key people was likely to be problematic for deep engagement and systematic conceptual testing. Further and more importantly, adequate material for the purposes of this type of work was accessible in the public domain via a range of secondary sources. For example, recorded interviews of senior civil servants presenting about or responding to relevant lines of enquiry at publicly accessible events such as the Institute for Government (IfG) and in printed and online sectorial publications, proved invaluable insights into the prevailing thought leadership at the time. Subsequently, “in the round” given the nature of the project and its contribution, a decision was taken to pursue work that contributed primarily to public policy theory and governance methodology. Thus directly interviewing practitioners in situ was not a substantive requirement. To adhere to ethical standards in social research, no ethical approval process was therefore necessary to meet UCL requirements.<sup>43</sup>

### **2.2.3. Literature Scope**

I introduce and position the literature “anchor lines” I tether to and the associated disciplinary relations. By way of preliminary orientation, I connect to public policy and administration, critical social theory, political theory, philosophical and sociological thought about social systems and other particular works (e.g. systems thought in engineering) that help illuminate ways to see, think and advance the design of public governance. Given the nature of the inquiry, three key lines of work have come together in concerted sequence to animate this research.

- One anchor line moves from the grounded practice of applied policy-making and the ability of a government in a broader network to manufacture solutions to problems that generate measurable outcome for citizens. This brings into focus governance *system diagnostics* and an analytic synthesis to search for an insightful perspective into the nature of the issues that are in contention, so as to attain a meaningful grasp of concerns and their implications. This leads

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<sup>43</sup> Engaging in interviews directly with research subjects requires ethical approval. This work is based entirely on content available in the public domain. Quotes are used from interviews conducted by others, such as journalists and academics in reported and published work. Therefore, *UCL’s Ethical Guidelines* (Refer: <https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/>) are adhered to and due processes followed.

to consideration of the capacity and capability of governments to resolve difficult problems through processes of standard policy-making practice and decision-making.

- Another line travels from the direction of questioning the conceptual framing of public policy-making and the theoretical underpinnings and working practices that are taken as the “givens” upon which contemporary practice is predicated. Taken together, these strands are concerned with the state of, arrangement of and ways to change, social and *institutional processes*. These processes may be in the strategy-formation, policy-framing, or decision-making stages of governance oversight and associated leadership functions.
- Thirdly, another line of inquiry pertains to the ability to account for the future adequately in the present state. This consideration of the nature of *anticipated possibilities* and the potential form of the future, opens-up in this work a specific focus on temporality as a critical condition to understand in relationship to spatial factors.

As much governance analysis focusses on the bounding and interpretative analysis of issues or their physical territorial treatment, I make a case for the time and space interaction as the illusive but insightful point of “knowledge-making”. By this “making” I mean to interpret and propose better issue treatments and decisions that can achieve meaningful outcomes. Put more colloquially, it is about the “right actions being taken at the right time in the right place”, to make a genuine impact and tangible difference to the issues under consideration. In combination, these lines and strands of inquiry are woven together in a process of “building out” a new *proposition* of public governance to refresh democratic design, behaviour and enhance impactfulness. To do this, I range across a number of disciplinary fields. Scholarly fields of affiliation are wide-ranging though the social science where there is a demonstrable interest in systems, complexity, timespace, institutional arrangements and change processes for systemic transformation. Table 2.2.3 provides a positional “snapshot” and summary:

Table 2.2.3: A Summary of Key Areas, Primary Fields

<b>Key Areas: Intellectual development drawn upon</b>	<b>Primary Fields: “Home” disciplines</b>
Governance and Decision-making	Politics, Public Policy, Law, Management and Sociology
Strategic Thinking, Planning and Management	Management, Public Policy and Administration
Systems Thinking and Complexity	Engineering, Management and Economics
Temporality, Conceptions of Time and Intergenerational horizons	Sociology of Time, Philosophy and Political Theory
Political Theory and Political Philosophy	Politics and Philosophy
Public Management and Administration	Public Policy, Management and Politics
Political and Institutional Sociology	Sociology, Management and Law
Futures and Anticipation thinking	Mixed, Futures Studies
“New” or Complexity Economics	Economics and Public Policy

Bearing in mind the thrust is to produce new democratic arrangements that can advance mutual understanding of key issues, facilitate Civil Service improvements and empower a meaningful political oversight, the scope had to start wide, with a view to honing in onto some key concepts of investigation within the “anchor zone”. This required a taking of risk i.e. my judgement was that working on tackling resolution to resistant multidimensional issues has benefits that outweigh the costs and risks of pursuing disciplinary purity. I now detail the ensuing methodological “stance” given the intent, orientation and scope established.

### **2.3 Stance: Methodological Settings**

I have taken the position that to theorise usefully in the social sciences about social organisation in its rich variety of forms, it is necessary to “open out” across a range of disciplines in the tradition of generating social and political theory. I comment on what it means for the undertaking. Giddens (1981) represents “social theory” as a label with limited precision, but useful in signalling that it involves the analysis of issues that spill-over into philosophy, but are not primarily philosophical endeavours. He states:

*“Social theory has the task of providing conceptions of the nature of human social activity and of the human agent which can be placed in the service of empirical work. The main concern of social theory is the same as that of the social sciences in general: the illumination of concrete processes of social life.”* (Giddens, 1981, p.xvii).

The illumination of concrete processes of social life in this case, relates to the advancement of political theory, insofar as the object of study is the arrangement of and style of governance that

is (and could be) conducted to guide societal progress on key contemporary issues. I outline and develop my methodological “stance” in three steps. First, acknowledging my social “theory-making” emphasis, I establish the rationale for the focus on and orientation towards *focal concepts*. This sets-up the theoretical contribution. Second, I establish the *investigative strategy* employed and the resulting value of assuming a trans-disciplinary stance. Third, I produce and explain the guiding “conception of analytics” that I use to layer my understanding building, sense-making and proposition development. In combination, these elements offer methodological contributions and produce results. I end by discussing the research’s limitations and offer a summation of the approach taken. In short, the objective of the *stance* is to devise a synthesising way of building understanding and constructing knowledge to support theorising to improve governance.

### **2.3.1. Establishing Focal Concepts**

To establish foundations for the *stance* pursued, I build from three focal concepts, namely: *complexity*, *temporality* and *integrality*. The reason for focussing on *complexity* is that it is a central phenomenon in understanding and constructing coherent governance for improved functionality e.g. as articulated by Colander and Kupers (2014) from a public policy-making perspective that forms part of a complexity worldview based on scientific and engineering based understandings of physical and social phenomena (Ramage and Shipp, 2009). It is a general wellspring of knowledge that increasingly infuses today’s social theorising and practice. *Temporality*, in concert with spatial conditions, is where the bounding parameters of all social organising occurs and within which interactions occur e.g. as outlined by Adam (2004) from a sociological angle of analysis. I then take *integrality* as a way to advance a unifying conception to help to mesh together and synchronize interconnected understandings of social phenomena.<sup>44</sup> In this regard, I connect to the realm of what has become known as “Integral Metatheory” (Edwards, 2010). Therefore, this section serves to establish the nature of the concepts and literature I choose to situate the work within.

#### ***The Complexity Worldview***

While applied systems methods in governance often still remain relatively marginal in mainstream policy practice, systems thinking has been gestating over the past half century and has impacting

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<sup>44</sup> Integrality, or an integral approach, drives at the idea of: “something deeper than a categorical framework within which to neatly organize one’s untidy reality: it suggests a certain attitude for how one can approach knowing, conceptualising, and theorising. It suggests not so much what *is* true about the world but *how* people can work together to discover what is most true, just, and useful in a particular context (ie, it includes an epistemology as well as an ontology).” It has threads of conceptual development and application progressed in, for example, healthcare (Jarrin, 2012), education (Murray, 2009) and psychology linking to Wilber’s work (Jarrin, 2012).

thinking. At its core, instead of focusing on parts or discernable elements of a problem (i.e. analytic reductionism), complex problems are generally conceived of as better understood by evaluating organisational design (e.g. structures, mechanisms and processes) and the consequential effects (i.e. the patterns and interactions produced) as emergent outcomes or resulting phenomena. Based on Ramage and Shipp's (2009)<sup>45</sup> key sub-categories, this area includes inputs from *General systems theory* (e.g. von Bertalanffy, (1968)<sup>46</sup>; Boulding (1956)), *Systems dynamics* (e.g. Forrester, 1994), *Soft and critical systems* (e.g. Ackoff, 1974, Checkland, 1981) and *Complexity theory* (e.g. Prigogine, 1987) (Ramage and Shipp, 2009, p.5). *Complex Adaptive Systems* (CAS) has also become a discernable area in public policy e.g. as developed by Rhodes et al. (2011), Room (2011) and Gerrits (2012). Applied work has also become more common from UK think-tanks (e.g. Mulgan and Leadbeater, 2013). Importantly, underpinning systems thinking in public policy, is tied to the advancement of complexity in economic thought. Taking a complexity worldview to interpreting economic progress, recognising systems complexity and networks to understand market phenomena, was sweepingly surveyed by Beinhocker (2007). More recently, Arthur (2015) updated progress moving beyond standard neoclassical assumptions, alongside a growing body of work emanating from the Santa Fe Institute and the Institute for New Economic Thinking (INET) Initiatives.<sup>47</sup>

Commenting on the evolution of complexity in governance, that is arguably slower than in academic economics more recently, Duit and Galaz (2008) point to the positive and negative feedback loops that characterise developments over time, noting that periods of incremental change are often punctuated by "fast and often irreversible change and 'surprises' with immense consequences for economics, vital ecosystems and human welfare" (Duit and Galaz, 2008, p.312). CAS as a field itself may be nearing a tipping point, in its own terms, where unstable equilibriums in traditional understanding undergo "chaotic change" with new emergences, resulting in a shift in system behaviour that has limited prior predictability. Meanwhile systems and complexity-informed thinking in the governance field is beginning to mature. For example, Room (2011, 2016), Rhodes et al. (2011) and Gerrits (2012) exhibit the span of recent work attempting to take complexity into the domain of public policy.

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<sup>45</sup> Ramage and Shipp's (2009) classification of systems thinkers, albeit an incomplete analysis of the many fields involved, provides general signposts.

<sup>46</sup> Ludwig von Bertalanffy is attributed with proposing systems theory in the 1940's as a biologist who was reacting against reductionism and attempting to revive the unity of science, furthered by Ross Ashby (1957) in the field of Cybernetics (e.g. Ashby, 1957).

<sup>47</sup> Santa Fe Institute: <https://www.santafe.edu/>; INET (Oxford): <https://www.inet.ox.ac.uk/>, and INET (USA): <https://www.ineteconomics.org/>



Despite advocating for progress, Cairney and Geyer (2015, 2017) astutely observe this is difficult insofar as there is a “complexity tension” in action. This is where the desire (political or bureaucratic in origin) for a rational and orderly approach to “control” results in overly simplistic problem management (i.e. reductionism). Rather than holding to a pragmatic recognition of knowledge and understanding limits, where appropriate accountabilities are calibrated so as to not over-extend into misconceived linear conceptions (Geyer and Cairney, 2015, p.459-460), there is a constant temptation to claim control to exhibit leadership. It can be argued that complexity theory, bringing stronger parallels to the natural sciences in terms of systems modelling, has already intuitively found its way into public policy as a domain of study (ibid).

This type of complexity-oriented worldview can be summarised as thought that sees the operating environment as system in a social context. Systems can be best conceived of as a bounded sphere of activity that encompasses three primary types of phenomena. They will encompass (a) individual or organisational actors (i.e. nodes), connections between nodes (networks), and the interactions (signals) between nodes and through networks. It remains that new ideas and theories continue to be developed, with complexity-derived analysis and associated policy models not yet fully incorporated in mainstream policy processes and delivery mechanisms (Beinhocker, 2006). In line with this “worldview” or general direction of thinking, I take an applied urban governance example to illustrate the implications of this approach and what it analytically brings to the fore: (see Table 2.3.1 over)

Table 2.3.1: *Conceiving the city as a system for excellent Governance*

A systems orientation that conceives:	Bringing into governance focus:
<b>Platforms and networks</b>	
- Seeing cities as physically and digitally connected platforms	- The structure of networks and dynamics of flows - The relationships between networks
<b>Connectivity and interdependencies</b>	
- Seeing cities as a complex mesh of connected interactions at human, economic and technological levels	- The nature and meaning of interactions - The implications of changing patterns of connectivity
<b>Self-organisation and distributed designs</b>	
- Seeing cities as merging nodes for decentralised elements of wider systems (e.g. food production) and as distribution modes that adhere to sub-system logics outside local government (e.g. supermarket provisions)	- The significant, 'non-governmental' sphere of activity that is essential to a functioning city - The issues, relationships and implications that require more or less governance focus
<b>Evolutionary change and adaptiveness</b>	
- Seeing cities as being in a constant state of flux, modifying to their wider context and responding to internal activities	- Rates and timing of change - When stresses might trigger instabilities or build better resilience
<b>Anticipatory practice and responsiveness</b>	
- Seeing cities as both reacting to emergent risks and opportunities, but also anticipating possibilities with future-focused thinking	- The value of increasing attention and investment into looking ahead - The value of preparedness for a range of potential adversities

Source: Honeybone et al. (2018).

As various theorists argue, complexity by its inherent nature is a rejection of the traditional modernist world view of order, causality, reductionism, predictability and determinism. These modernist attributes are foundational in New Public Management (NPM) and Evidence Based Policy Making (EBPM) (Ansell and Geyer, 2017, p 156-7). Taking a complexity perspective, key phenomena are understood in terms of:

Table 2.3.2: *Outline of Phenomena from a Complexity Perspective*

<b>1. Partial Causality</b>	- can exhibit both orderly and chaotic behaviours, cause may not lead to effect. Therefore, basic targets may help improve a system, but direct causality will be uncertain.
<b>2. Reductionism and Holism</b>	- while some things are reducible, others are not. Therefore, at best, degrees of separation between targets will limit their relevance and evaluation.
<b>3. Predictability and Uncertainty</b>	- can only be partially modelled and predicted Therefore, basic targets matter, but minor ones can have unpredictable "butterfly effects".

<b>4. Probabilistic</b>	– there are general boundaries to most phenomena, but within these boundaries exact outcomes are uncertain. Therefore, long-term impacts are unknown for all major targets and policies.
<b>5. Emergence</b>	– policy systems exhibit elements of adaptation and emergence. Therefore, targets create new strategies which create new targets and so on.
<b>6. Interpretation</b>	– actors in a system are aware of themselves and the system as they strive to interpret and impact it. Therefore, public opinion shapes targets, and vice versa (Geyer and Rihani 2010).

Source: Ansell and Geyer (2017, p 156-7).

Implicit in this worldview, requiring sensitivities to context and change being understood in a transparent and explicit ways, is a degree of sophistication that is not practiced in most public policy. Currently analytic practices fall short, as does the operational scaffolding to support the type of work required to inform complexity-based policy framing and decision-making.<sup>48</sup> What is under-analysed and under-developed is the political philosophy and the institutional architecture that is desirable to be able to (a) “see” and (b) “handle” the implications of new methods premised on non-linearity and other key assumptions. I see the institutional arrangements in the current governance system as fundamentally problematic to support a complexity-based governance culture in the UK and abroad (refer Chapter 3 for development). Meanwhile, I pause and introduce the significance of temporality as it relates to understanding governance systems.

### ***The Temporality Angle***

*“In our confrontation with temporality... we find our common humanity.”* – Barbara Adam (2004, p.151).

The importance of time is often at once well-known and overlooked. The problem of slowness to react to existing problems and address barriers to realising benefits can make government actions inconsequential. I contend public policy is “time light”. In analysis, rates of change in governance systems is a thread often left aside, while the light is cast onto magnifying details to see if they contain the DNA for replicable or scalable solutions. The challenge of temporality in social theory was taken-up and set in motion by sociologists Giddens (1994) and latterly Adam (2000), who press the point:

*“...there is an urgent need for time-sensitive social theory to enter the fray given that a timescape perspective not only re-adjusts our understanding of nature, but also re-focuses attention on that which tends to be ignored in conventional analyses. An unease that is neither verbalized nor conceptualized or explained cannot be addressed and thus cannot be put on the policy agenda.”* (Adam, 2000, p.140).

<sup>48</sup> There are substantial literatures repeating the limitations and shortcomings of evidence-based policy-making, be it conceived in practice as “policy-based evidence-making” (Boden and Epstein, 2006), or the “flying of the tattered flag of enlightenment” (Pawson, 2006) to acknowledge the dynamics of political machinations into processes and attempts to establish rational thought underpinning decisions.

Adam expands that the conventional way to make sense of change is to tell sequential stories premised on chronology, whereas social science traditions often impose dualistic categories, e.g. traditional and modern, quantitative and qualitative and other binary constructs to cleave complex issues. Providing highly useful means of setting boundaries and illuminating differences, the conventional “leave[s] unaddressed the relation of discontinuity to continuity, that is, continuity in the light of fundamental change of change in relation to the past and the influenced of context on the merger of present and past.” (Adam, 2004, p.150-151). Enhancing temporal inclusion suggests a shift towards focusing on processes and interdependencies – to “reanimate the ossified” in Adams terms – working against losing sight of the importance of the distant past and future, along with the primacy of the immediate. If not, processes that unify, contextualize and reveal negotiated “constructedness” and norms are lost (ibid). To assert the role of producing theory, motivated by improving arrangements means that theorising work is on a pathway that is unavoidably “political”. By implying a requisite change in reality, Adam (2004) surmises:

*“[To] recognize the constitutive nature of knowledge is to understand social theory as political endeavour: political in its processes of re-presentation and in its social consequences. From this perspective there is no innocent position from which to produce neutral knowledge, no object realm from which to conduct acontextual investigations. Thus it deeply matters how we theorize the social relations of time past and present, their geneses and their projected futures.”* (Adam, 2004, p.152).

Placing a temporal consideration as the best lens to illuminate new understanding for socio-political transformation, I take as a starting point the premise that *structure* and *agency* are interacting and co-dependent dimensions of necessary understanding. Applied to my focus, organisational arrangements and people matter, as does how they interact in practice. Accordingly, I follow Giddens’s structuration theory, where embodying a mutual dependency between structure and agency is required for an adequate account of human activity. Structuration infers an active process as agents draw on the various rules and resources in systems to reproduce or adapt structural principles that organise arrangements. As Whittington (2015) summarises: “structuration theory admits structural continuity while allowing for deliberate innovation and change. Structures typically work like language: at the core, sufficient stability to allow the effective storing of knowledge over time; at the margins, the creation of new words and usages to accommodate changing needs...” (Whittington, 2015, p.149). This approach offers a way to look at change as a cultural artifact posited in time. Giddens tentatively formed a platform for social theorising and analysis that grasped the importance of time. Adam (2000) describes it:

*“When... Giddens set out the time challenge for social theory he formulated the Theory of Structuration to overcome the dualisms of structure and agency, system and process, synchronic and diachronic analysis. ‘An adequate account of human agency’, he argued at the time, ‘must situate action in time and space as a continuous flow of conduct’ (1979: 2) and ‘grasp the time–space relations inherent in the constitution of all social interaction’*

(1979: 3). *Drawing on the philosophical traditions of Heidegger, Husserl and Kant, Giddens set an ambitious agenda for social theory... few theorists have managed to bring time to the centre of their theoretical enterprise*" (Adam, 2000, p.125).

Hence I work in the tradition furthered by Adam (e.g. 2004), Scheuerman (2004) and Rosa (e.g. 2013), considered in Chapter 4 of Part 1. Time is also key when exploring prospective arrangements to improve performance in Part 2, then in Part 3 (procedures) re-engages with the sphere of strategic practice heuristics. I conceive of my approach as interacting with what Burawoy (2005) calls instrumental puzzle-solving and reflexive dialogue about ends for knowledge generation (Burawoy, 2005, p.11), adding a key anchoring to the conceptualisation of time. There is central applied and reflective problematising and solution seeking for temporally "fit" policy-making and societal goal-setting imbued through the work. With integrating understandings of time in mind, the act of "metatheorising" came into theoretical view and hence informs a focus on integrality. Imbued with methodological considerations, guiding the focus and nature of study, I now introduce this perspective.

### ***The Integrality Perspective***

*"...the systematic development of overarching metatheory has not been in fashion for many years and little research of this kind has been carried out in studies of organisational change. The move towards middle-range theory in the social sciences, the postmodern distrust of the 'big picture' and the contemporary concern for applied and empirical research have all meant that metatheorising has been neglected as a legitimate field of scientific inquiry."* (Edwards, 2010, p.2-3).

*Integrality* embodies a unifying conception that is central for helping to mesh and synchronize understanding of social concerns for unified theories of interpretation. Driving at a quest for a holistic and connected understanding of how to work together to construct solutions in context, applications emphasize the combination of integrated conceptual thought with the collective application of methods and skills (Murray, 2009).<sup>49</sup> More specifically, *Integral Metatheory*, establishes the type of the knowledge seeking conditions I work with. This level of abstraction emphasizes the "meta" as the generalisable perspective, recognising the pluralistic nature of the contemporary predicament, while not giving up in the quest to discern the ideological shape of social arrangements and the implications of them. Providing a way to methodologically classify and position the research, the core notion is that to build interconnected knowledge for an "integrative pluralism" (recognising different perspectives and systematically drawing them together) is to work integratively on "metatheory" (Edwards, 2010, pp.14-16). Consequently,

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<sup>49</sup> As Murray (2009) summarises: "'Integral' can be seen as pointing to four things: a (meta-) model or framework (a system of concepts for interpreting the world), a methodology (a set of injunctions or principles for inquiring about the world), a community (the embodied group or groups of people using integral models and methods), and/or a set of skills or capacities (a developmental stage that points past modern and post-modern cultural perspectives, and past formal operational modes of thinking). (Murray, 2009. p.97).

Edwards advocates for more than theoretical pluralism (accepting or embracing knowledge fragmentation) or “eclecticism” (a collaging of knowledge fragments), as we look to produce connected analysis of complex issues to met today’s challenges:

*“... theoretical pluralism do[es] not possess the necessary capacities for systemically linking multiple perspectives into an integrative framework. What is required is a balance between an integrative synthesis and a respect for the pluralism of perspectives. The creation of a more inclusive vision of organisational life will need a more nuanced approach, one that values the synthesizing instincts of modernity as well as the pluralizing intuitions of the postmodern.”* (Edwards, 2010, p.1-2).

Metatheoretical research is the systematic and deliberative study of theories so as to shed light on their conceptual focus and the ensuing implications (ibid). This is not a new idea or a new endeavour. As Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007) detail in their review, much “founding” or traditional academic work is this form of scholarship. As Edwards notes, it is “extremely influential” in the development of modern economies and systems of governance (Edwards, 2010, p.3) and just has become obscured in some intellectual pursuit where the quest for novel specialisation comes to the fore. Edwards (2013) provides a useful categorising resource to help distinguish different types of metatheorising:

Table 2.3.3: *Edwards Types of Metatheorising – Aims and Contributions*

Types	Aims	Contributions
M <sub>U</sub>	Reviewing extant theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find connections and differences between theories</li> <li>• Identify gaps in current theorizing</li> <li>• Identify assumptions and core lenses</li> </ul>
M <sub>O</sub>	Building overarching theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build more integrative models</li> <li>• Generate new concepts and relationships</li> <li>• Include new perspectives</li> <li>• Radically extends current theory</li> </ul>
M <sub>P</sub>	Preparing new middle-range theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative source of theoretical insight</li> <li>• Generates new middle-range theory</li> <li>• Helps theorists to move across existing boundaries</li> </ul>
M <sub>A</sub>	Critically assessing other theories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critically assess theory and the application of theory from an overarching perspective</li> <li>• Critically add to the store of theoretical knowledge</li> </ul>

Source: Edwards (2013, p.8).

Further, Edwards places complexity and integrative pluralism as “3<sup>rd</sup> wave” ongoing thinking:

Table 2.3.4: *Waves of Emergence in Systems Science and Metatheorising*

Order of emergence	Systems science	Metatheorizing
Phase 1 (1st wave)	<i>Functionalist</i> Seeks to demonstrate law-like relations among objects, produces nomothetic science, values efficiency, effectiveness, survival and adaptation	<i>Positivist</i> Seeks to discover universal social laws, and build theoretical accumulation of knowledge, methodological codification and systematization, builds nomological explanations
Phase 2 (2nd wave)	<i>Interpretive</i> Uses methods of hermeneutics and ethnography to interpret language and cultural systems	<i>Hermeneutic</i> Aims to understand intersubjective meanings, aims for fusion of existential horizons, through interpretative accounts
Phase 3 (3rd Wave)	<i>Emancipatory</i> Seeks to unmask domination, cultural and ideological critique	<i>Critical</i> Seek social justice, human emancipation, social praxis, aims for Normative theory,
Phase 4 (3rd wave continues)	<i>Postmodern</i> Seeks to reclaim a space for lost voices and sees conflict as a source of overcoming dominant paradigms, methods of deconstruction and genealogy	<i>Postmodern</i> Aims to construct local narratives, uses methods of deconstruction and delegitimation to produce relativistic stories from the margins
Phase 5 (3rd wave continues)	<i>Complexity/Creative Holism</i> Integrate complexity and simplicity thinking, uncover genealogy patterns and multiparadigm and multimethodology	<i>Integrative Pluralism</i> Recognizes the validity of each perspective, aims for balance of integration with diversity by multiparadigm and metamethods

Source: Edwards (2013, p.12).

Aiming to contribute in the *overarching theory* space (generating new concepts and perspectives) and contributing within Phase 5 (complexity/integrative pluralism), I utilise the lens metaphor to help establish my viewpoint. In conceptual systems, lenses provide a metaphor for concepts in theorising, as they (as we do) affect what we see and shape what we create. Lenses embody both active functions in themselves as well as providing interpretive windows on subjects. Edwards puts it that “a conceptual lens does not merely interpret organizational objects, it is core to the process of constituting those objects.” (2010, p.42). Therefore, the theorising and conceptual framing undertaken requires (a) awareness of this interactive process, (b) some reflection upon the nature of it in the work, and (c) some acknowledgement of the influence it carries into the findings or research’s “landing position”. I cover this in the methodological reflections (12.3). By way of transitioning at this point, I note that it is in the process of development and then working with the potential synthesis of these three focal concepts in parts 1 and 2, that I drive from an integral stance to develop a new conceptual proposition for doing democratic governance. In light of the research direction and concepts set out, I now describe the research’s staged process of interactive development.

### **2.3.2. Investigative Strategy**

*“Everyone... who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones [is a “designer”]. The intellectual activity that produces material artifacts is no different fundamentally from the one that prescribes remedies for a sick patient or ...a social welfare policy for a state.” – Herbert A. Simon (1996, p.111).*

In Simon's terms, the thrust of the project was to design a way to work from, within and beyond existing governance design. The investigative strategy guiding the overall research process has been a drive to find out "what is happening?", to progress thinking about "what could happen?", to improve democratic governance, given the nature of contemporary circumstances. Retrospectively, it can clearly be depicted as three stages of development that were interactive and evolutionary, i.e. not purely linear or rigidly sequenced. I summarise them as *Issue Investigation*, *Issue Directionality* and *Issue Optionality*, arriving into the methodological sphere of transdisciplinarity as a useful conception.

### ***Stage 1: Issue Investigation***

Based on field-engaged "diagnostic discovery" about the prevailing situation, I conducted context-setting research to test empirical understanding of the "wicked policy problem" of urban affordability confronting Greater London and other global cities. Exploring an urban system-based perspective, I began constructing the predicament with respect to the empirical issues of urban development in London and the Greater South-East. I also in this stage researched issues of urban governance, planning and the legislative frameworks within which central and local government are operating. The resulting work filtering into the UCL Upgrade<sup>50</sup> I conducted midway through the research. Combined with practitioner experiences and observation of events in the UK, some of the insights garnered at this stage have produced background understandings that have filtered into the proposition and procedural implications. However, the substantive work of this stage was more specifically sensitized to unpacking and analysing local issues, networks and particular issue dynamics in urban development. The associated intelligence gathering has become a byproduct of the process and not included in the thesis, given the decision to focus on governance design with the view of developing an overarching theory given the metatheorising stance adopted.

Hence theoretically, I began exploring the importance of time, space and value in the construction of economic theory and the resultant public policy assumptions and implications. Feedback on the potential importance of temporality in the Upgrade<sup>51</sup> prompted a deeper consideration of time and its relationship to space. "Public value" as is popularly utilised in Public Administration as per Moore (1994)<sup>52</sup> does not in my view offer an adequate conception to challenge and rethink what value means. This led me into economics and in particular, complexity economics, as I explored systems thinking and how it has evolved in socio-economic theory over past decades. The need to navigate the revival of "value" as a core economic concept, whereby the theory of value

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<sup>50</sup> Midpoint process in doctoral research to meet academic requirements. Refer: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/status/research-students/upgrade>

<sup>51</sup> A UCL PhD Upgrade is the review process to fulfil academic requirements to upgrade to PhD degree.

<sup>52</sup> Refer to 11.2 for further discussion of *public value*.



determines price rather than price determining value (Mazzucato, 2018, p.271), is a key aspect of recalibration. Given the scope of the not insignificant task of redefining public value – and in light of the preliminary work of Mazzucato (2018)<sup>53</sup> – I made the decision to orient intentionally on *space* and *time* as an interrelated concept and deem “value” as out of scope. Thus consistent with the chosen task of rethinking governance design for the purposes of theorising a new approach, urban development and the connection with climate change considerations became motivating factors for the work rather than empirical foci.

### ***Stage 2: Issue Directionality***

Seeking to explain and reveal driving forces in governance design and the subsequent form of prevailing decision-making, the need for integrative solutions and importance of timing emerged as central concerns. The emphasis of this stage centered around exploring decision process designs in policy-making and the associated factors, such as how to embed future-facing variables into contemporary decision-points so as to not be on the “backfoot”, or constantly dealing with lags and synchronization failures. In particular, working from a line of literature-engaged enquiry into “design for the future”, I explored “anticipation” and future-oriented methods of prediction and the associated limitations. Consequently, I draw on some general theories (e.g. Voros, 2009) in devising the “viewfinder”. However, I do not deeply extend into methods of anticipation and supporting techniques in this work. Rather, I develop an orientation or conceptual framing with a structural logic devised to bring into focus the anticipative aspects of organisational and strategy-leading systems (i.e. looking ahead as a task in the governance oversight process of doing civic leadership). The focus therefore became on the institutional arrangements and the “meta” design specification to enable a consistent decision-making structure supportive of operationalising the focal concepts. This translates into the application of integral metatheory as the strategic direction of theorising and conceptual development, as previously outlined.

### ***Stage 3: Issue Optionality***

To harness high quality governance with a complexity-informed and temporally-sensitive style of operation, the analysis centered on systematically assessing current proposals to reform governance (e.g. Caney, 2016). Further, the “optionality” stage focused on devising a conceptual framework and guiding axioms (principles) and support procedures to operationalize the proposal. A primary consideration in the theorising and conceptual design was to ensure that the framework contained robust practice assumptions and the inbuilt flexibility to endure and add value across different contexts, political domains of practice and can inform differing ideological suppositions in applied practice. At this level, the quest was for a “systems and cultural re-

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<sup>53</sup> Plus see subsequent work with collaborators in 2019: Mazzucato and Ryan-Collins (May, 2019), and Mazzucato and Rainer (June, 2019).

orientation” widely (but generally) informed by field considerations, key literatures and prior practice reflections. For integrated change strategies and policy interventions to work requires the development of analytic methods that can for example, “fix and flex” to enable adaptation. Hence, the nature of the proposition and the developmental procedures reflect the desire for a system design that can accommodate a range of issues and help advance the resolution of a range of possible options in a useful way.

In sum, the emphasis was on path-finding a new way of doing democratic decision-making – namely designing a new governance modality requiring a theoretical foundation and discernable conceptual form. That meant a reliance on probing, learning and processing across the three stages of development so as to formulate a novel theoretical outcome, embracing the associated learning from a methodological stance taken that was consistent with the inherent meaning-making implied by combining the concepts of complexity, temporality and integrality.

### **2.3.3. Conception of Analytics**

*“The hinterland between different disciplines in the social sciences is often a barren space. Despite proclamations to the contrary, multidisciplinary research remains sparse, its success hindered by differences in method and ideology, and a touch of obstinacy.” – Kaushik Basu (2018, p. 2).*

Working across disciplines to garner knowledge was a given at the outset, despite the issues Basu (2018) flags. While not intentionally pursued as a way of conducting research at the outset, it became clearer as I developed the investigation that the method of learning, with the ideation of different theoretical perspectives and practice insights, was evolving in a way that fell more clearly under the “transdisciplinary” banner. Finding it difficult to clearly find anchorage in particular disciplines to narrow the focus and short-circuit the methodological options, I experienced “drift” to a multiplicity of sources of knowledge and insight. I began to more seriously reckon with inter and transdisciplinarity as conscious positions to hold. It became not just a refusal to adhere to a box as an act of “intentional homelessness” or resistance of tribal identification, but a preferred “home” reflecting the reality of the phenomena being studied and task being undertaken. Seeking to develop greater integration among related policies or entities in an issue area, so as to be able to produce and implement policies that can address contemporary challenges, requires synthesizing disjointed knowledge located across a range of disciplines. Consequently, transdisciplinarity as a field of social science, has developed a body of work exhibiting potential to address the “apparently intractable problems of society.” (Fam et al. 2017, p.6).

Transdisciplinarity also syncs with the conceptual focus developed centered on time. Given the potential for entertaining the complexity bound-up in the conception of time, moving beyond

'monological' or 'monodisciplinary discourses' as advocated by Morin (2008)<sup>54</sup> to a transdisciplinary paradigm is a natural fit for engagement with this type of subjectivity. Further, the quest is to find integrative or integral understanding of issues also dovetails with a transdisciplinary position giving additional credence to this methodological stance.<sup>55</sup> With this episteme in mind, I produced a "conception of analytics" as a methodological construct to guide future application of the conceptual framework established.<sup>56</sup> I propose four "layers" of analysis, namely the *micro*, *meta*, *meso* leading to a new application of "*macro*" as synthesis.

This follows standard applications of analytical categorisation in the social sciences, but varies insofar as the "macro" layer is the cumulative site of synthesis rather than the meta level.<sup>57</sup> Instead, I emphasize the "meta" as the realm of generalised ideas and their expression, acting as a prefix with notions of "between", and "beyond" (Vermeulen and van den Akker, 2010, p. 2). Taking cues from Vermeulen and van den Akker's "meta-modernist" position, characterised by the oscillation between "a typically modern commitment and a markedly postmodern detachment" (2010, p. 1), the conception I advance is meaning-making as high-level ideation recognising inherent indeterminacy from an ex ante perspective. With account for the need to "know" when there is the reality of the unknown, the *meta* in the sense advanced is the terrain of the ideologically preconceived or doctrinal-styled predetermined guiding notions. This position is in contrast to the micro as specified detail that can be judged as right or wrong ex post, even at the level of the specifics being strategic or policy-oriented.

In summary, Table 2.3.5 outlines my categorisation and is followed by further explanation:

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<sup>54</sup> Refer to Alhadeff-Jones's discussion on Morin's thinking in this regard (Alhadeff-Jones, 2017, p.29).

<sup>55</sup> I base this statement on a reading of Klein (2015), Mitchell et al. (2015), Fam et al. (2017) and Nicolescu, (2000).

<sup>56</sup> That is, as a way to think and do applied work based on the theory I go on to produce, rather than as a methodological devise to do the work of producing the theory or conceptual framework itself.

<sup>57</sup> For example, Dopfer et al. (2004) provide an extensive exploration of the "meso" middle-range theoretical emphasis in the context of evolutionary economics, pointing to the macro domain as abstracted from micro detail in order to focus upon the "aggregate consequences" where coordination can occur – often of meso-level units (Dopfer et al., 2004, p. 267-8).

Table 2.3.5: Ordering of Layers – Four M’s (X) by Four I’s (Y) for Systems Analytics

LAYERING: 4 M’s		
OBSERVATION: 4 I’s		SYSTEMS ANALYTICS: <i>the proposed principle levels of attention</i>
<b>Micro</b>	<b>Interests:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attention on <b>areas</b>, being issues as specific detailed policies and plans</li> <li>- a “specification” viewpoint</li> </ul>	<i>Analytic focus on areas:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- being the composition, quality and strength (or weakness) of <b>strategies</b> (i.e the stated situations formulated in nodes and networks containing key actors/agents)</li> </ul>
<b>Meta</b>	<b>Ideologies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attention on <b>approaches</b>, being general ideologies, theories and concepts</li> <li>- a “generalizable” viewpoint</li> </ul>	<i>Analytic focus on approaches:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- being the composition, quality and strength (or weakness) of <b>signals</b> (the messages articulating the discernable “ideological pulse”)</li> </ul>
<b>Meso</b>	<b>Institutions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attention on <b>architectures</b>, being structures, networks and clusters shaping functionality</li> <li>- a “mechanistic” and “systemic” viewpoint at a form or entity level</li> </ul>	<i>Analytic focus on architectures:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- being the composition, quality and strength (or weakness) of <b>structures</b> (the institutional design of entities)</li> </ul>
<b>ANALYTIC GOAL:</b>  <b>Macro</b>	<b>Interactions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attention on <i>amalgamations</i> integrating the micro, meta and meso for synthesis</li> <li>- a “holistic” viewpoint or a “360-degree view”</li> </ul>	<i>Analytic focus on synthesis:</i> The interaction of – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Strategies</b> – <i>expressing the areas of interests</i></li> <li>- <b>Signals</b> – <i>articulating approaches to ideas</i></li> <li>- <b>Structures</b> – <i>revealing the architecture of institutions</i></li> </ul>

By way of further explanation, specific concrete *micro* issues are important to understanding change. This can mean that particular details, when applied to, for example an issue with a cluster of policies, need to be closely understood. Additionally, the overarching *meta* philosophical level of general theorising about the nature of the issue warrants attention. I also add that sound analysis requires specific consideration of the *meso* level issues of institutional arrangements. This is because this is usually where framing decisions are made about how to see and treat the focal problems and opportunities.

Hence I propose that to make headway on complex issues necessitates engagement, in ways rarely systematically done, with the interactions between the *micro*, *meta* and *meso* “levels” of critical issues for societal progress. This approach has similarities to Barry et al.’s (2016) conception of a multi-level perspective<sup>58</sup>. In this approach to analysis, I conceive of the *macro* as the “amalgamating focus” that is a synthesis of the prior layers. Given the primary research objective is to (a) understanding the contours of a set of connected issues, (b) sketch-out of structural form and new parameters to approach the issues in an authentic way, and (c) consider applied culture, (namely the devices and operator attitude that would be required for system change), the trade-off to generate this combination is that only a relatively “granular image” is possible. The approach taken by working to the 4M’s analytic pattern – namely: *micro* (specific and concrete), *meta* (generalized and abstract) and *meso* (intermediate and applied) pattern – endeavours to provide a “layering” of knowledge to form a picture that offers insight with the added benefit of a synthesizing summation (i.e. the *macro*). Having set this out, this applied approach is further developed in relation to the *Attainable Governance Framework* (7.4). Recalling my purpose is to advance and test a new public governance design to support better analysis and practice, where the treatment of these levels of analysis is included, I now outline the limitations of the study.

## 2.4 Limitations: *Doing Systems Design*

*“...when we want to get a sense of something big and complex, we step back, squint a bit to shut out distracting details, and take in its outline. ...as I see it, we sorely need synthetic, integrative, and action guiding knowledge...”* – Miroslav Volf (2015, p.2).

The call for integrative thought in scholarship continues across disciplines. Be it Drucker (1995) in management, Benckler (2011) in law, or Volf (2015) in religious studies, the chorus expands for

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<sup>58</sup> From an ecological systems standpoint, Barry (2016) explains a multi-level perspective as where “...system wide transitions can be best analysed in terms of the dynamics between three levels - niche, regime and landscape. Here the regime level includes the dominant structures, cultures and practices of the energy system; the niche level includes innovations which might catalyse change. The energy system is viewed as embedded in a broader landscape which includes the physical landscape and other related systems as mentioned above (such as transport, housing etc.)” (Barry et al, 2016, p.2).

producing action guiding knowledge. The implication is that to achieve these types of insight the researcher must be prepared to “step back” from the safety of traditional methods in the social sciences that seek containment, precision and the inevitable narrowing of scope. A more inclusive scope does not have to mean inattention to detail, methods and the production of knowledge with value. It does however at the beginning of a development process when theorising and synthesizing work is undertaken, have implications on what is viable from an applied empirical point of view, to both qualitatively and quantitatively inform progress. If the intention is to actively place an emphasis in the design process of a new way of developing theories and concepts, trade-offs are made. By actively choosing system design as a task and the results as findings, I introduce a series of limitations. In this section I seek to show awareness of these constraints. I start with the limitations of designing what is “decision architecture”.

#### **2.4.1. Decision Architecture**

In decision-making, advice framing and making processes influence the nature of options produced for governance consideration. The ensuing optionality presented to decision-makers has been inevitably whittled down in scope, constraining the ambit of influence any one decision may have. In reconceptualising governance at the level of the method of policy advice formulation and subsequent decision process, in Part 2 I seek to “pivot” the current practice onto a more functional footing, recognising in particular enduring temporal and integrative factors. By implication, a change in advice and decision protocols both enables – and potentially also constrains – the *decision architecture* of public governance. I use the term in a broad sense, wider than the common usage of “choice architecture” in behavioural psychology (Meder et al., 2018).<sup>59</sup> Complimentary to incentives, regulatory measures and education in the policy-making toolkit, devising “choice architectures” by setting out options in ways that in behavioural science “nudge” (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008) people towards “positive life choices” has gained prominence.<sup>60</sup> This approach is not without its critics, e.g. Farrell and Shalizi (2015) who note the potential for

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<sup>59</sup> For a discussion of the immediate framing and guiding of specific choices at the level commonly evoked in “nudge” thinking (e.g. designing forms to guide responses), refer Meder et al. (2018).

<sup>60</sup> In the UK, the “Nudge Unit” in Cabinet Office (Number 10’s Behavioural Insights Team) was headed by David Halpern who has since written about the experience (Halpern, 2015).

hierarchical reinforcement;<sup>61</sup> and Meder et al. (2018) for shortcomings “situating” or limited agendas to constrain the choices people are guided towards.<sup>62</sup>

Rather taking a narrower behavioural view of decision architecture, I use it to label the broader concern of methodological design at the organisation or issue level. Similarly, decision architecture is also sometimes used to convey choice-making structures in the fields of software design and information management.<sup>63</sup> What I propose in public policy terms is not a developed field of practice. The zone of design interest I pursue here crosses over territory that could be seen as constitutional design, institutional design and organisational design. Therefore, the nature of and the level of the “meta” design presents a proposition in novel terms within untested terrain. Given this, the advantage of the proposal and subsequently a limitation in the work is that it is without precedent to readily compare and test. I deal with this by contrasting it with existing relatable proposals (e.g. Caney, 2016) and focus on making a theoretical case. I seek to mitigate the lack of comparative analysis that can be conducted on the basis that solid logic foundations are developed and a coherent and cogent conceptual framework and supporting discourse is advanced. Further, I establish applied considerations in Part 3 to detail applied possibilities for implementing the proposed “Attainable Governance” conceptual framework. It would need to evolve in application and practice at the detailed level of implementation, while retaining the overarching design of decision architectural “form”.

#### **2.4.2. Issues with Time and Anticipation**

*“Taking time seriously changes social science at the level of ontology, epistemology and methodology. It transforms our subject matter, how we know it, and how we study it.”*  
(Adam, 2008, p.10).

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<sup>61</sup> Farrell and Shalizi (2015) are critical of the individual nudge level of choice architecture. They read Thaler and Sunstein (2008) as a “sustained brief” for hierarchical superiors solving complex problems. In this regard, policymakers are the people who have “responsibility for organizing the context in which people make decisions” where “their accountability flows from positions of authority within a firm or a government” (Farrell and Shalizi, 2015, p.219-20). Subsequently they are concerned that the reinforcement of hierarchy inhibits the type of “unconstrained exchange of views” that is essential to solving complex problems and reinforces the negative features of bureaucracy emphasized in Weberian critiques (ibid).

<sup>62</sup> “What has been missing from debates on nudging is a systematic consideration of the environments in which they are embedded. We argue that a detailed examination of the wider environment in which the policy issue is situated is essential for designing, implementing, and evaluating policy-making tools, nudge-like or otherwise. Successful policy making requires a good fit between intervention and the environment, otherwise we risk miscasting policy issues and designing futile interventions.” (Meder et al., 2018, p.36). Sunstein (2016) does consider the ethics of how choice framing can influence government performance and results in governmental practice (Sunstein, 2016).

<sup>63</sup> For example, Wells and Chiang’s (2017) “Decision Architecture methodology” brings Decision Theory, Decision Analysis, Data Science out of their silos to build analytic solutions to monetize data in the territory of social media platforms.

As Adam (2008) goes on to say, everything we do is embedded within time. We are constantly making choices, weighing-up risks and calculating the likelihood of moves paying off within timeframes. The “future” is an “inescapable aspect of social and cultural existence”, as it is produced by institutions with varying degrees of short to long “temporal reach” and spatial scale ranging from the local to global (ibid, p.10-11). Making the straightforward point that what we produce now has implications “played forward”, actively working on propositions for future system designs can likewise have an impact on the near future if adapted. This goes to the heart of the purpose of social science work and the bounds of acceptable practice: If we are working to make the world a better place, then what does this mean for practice? Traditionally, founding thinkers saw social theory as “indissolubly tied to practice”<sup>64</sup> where science was to inform politics and prospection to a desired social outcome. As Adam (2008) summarises about earlier thinkers:

*“Their social science, therefore, was a mixture of social analysis (of the social world as it is), of social diagnosis (of what is good and bad or right and wrong about it), of social prognosis (of development, considering ‘if this... then that’), of vision of the good society (how the world could and should be) and of strategies for change (how we might achieve desired visions and goals).”* (Adam, 2008, p.11).

Not to ignore the challenges of being “scientific” and employing methods with precision where appropriate, as well as recognising normative engagement is problematic where proof is required, I nonetheless take a generalized cue from formative classical social theorists and methodological interpretations of the role of theory and “metatheoretical” research in contemporary social sciences. Along with the era demanding this type of intellectual pursuit, is also the temporal argument for looking at social processes over timescales rather than a focus on “moments in time” (Pierson, 2004, p.167). This raises both a project related limitation, but also a methodological finding implication about the limits of prediction. To comment on anticipation, prediction and the limits of looking to the future, it is a truism that making predictions is a constant part of being human and managing limited resources. We attempt to foresee so as to imagine how to achieve desired results, take short-cuts when predicting the best route from (a) to (b), and so on. We utilise our knowledge from the past, drawing analogies to inform our choices, and we use logic to derive what we think is most likely to occur or be the case.

Therefore, accepting prediction or anticipation can only be affirmed or proven by actual events as or after they have occurred, we are left with methods and tools that encounter genuine

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<sup>64</sup> Adam (undated) references French historian Manuel’s (1962) comments about Condorcet, Comte and other thinkers as having principal concerns of social steerage and directionality. This predisposition is not uncommon in the social sciences today, with much work oriented towards understanding and “solving real problems” by devising strategies for change. There is also a plethora of philosophising in a prognostic fashion. From a methodological perspective, Flyvberg (2001) provides a comprehensive discussion of producing “social science that matters” that can come from dropping excessive scientific pretentions, focussing on “taking up problems where we live” and communicating results (Flyvberg, 2001, p.166).



limitations. When looking to the future we make judgments to prepare for predicted conditions. We prepare for change. This introduces uncertainty into any activity or work that looks beyond the present and the past, and considers the future. What might be imagined is likely not to be what actually transpires. Therefore, how to treat building a new theory or conceptual framework requires consideration of the limitations of engaging in anticipative work. Likewise, building a conceptual framework of governance that proposes drawing on anticipatory activity, warrants reflection upon the nature of knowledge production this entails. This also applies to reflection about the practice checks and balances that present operational parameters and limitations.

I therefore do not devise or advance predictions per se about what will happen in the space of civic governance. Rather, I make a case premised on a perspective constituting my reading of and explanation of assumptions about how events could be better handled. This is achieved by constructing a logical argument based on an assessment of the “predicament”. This is then supported by “postulating” (or hypothesizing) what might make a difference in the quest to improve the performance of democracy and its supporting institutional architectures. The work produced is therefore creatively generating a design framework built on testable logics. The task is premised on a development process where I synthesize a range of evidence (theories, concepts and language) to create an innovative construct (the framework). I intentionally then do not speculate about the potential use of, or implications of, this construct in any specific context or operational way. Application testing was out of scope given the research time and resource constraints. Hence a weakness remains as to how the proposition would be activated, interpreted and implemented in various settings, and what the results might be.

By virtue of the scope of the work as explained, I take recognition of this limitation to be my primary defense. That is, I do not endeavour to over-stretch or make speculative claims about application scenarios in practice. Second, I discuss implementation issues in some detail in section 10.5.1 (Practicalities of Implementation), noting that a “pact” will be necessary between the government of the day and the Civil Service. Third, a further “layer of defence” is advanced by providing a positional declaration or “methodological disclosure”, where I make explicit my assumptions. This follows.

### **2.4.3. Disclosure for Transparency**

To make explicit by way of “methodological disclosure”, my research biases are:

- A preference for a *systems-oriented worldview* referencing Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS), seeking understandings of connectivity at a *high level of abstraction* that provides value in the

construction of inclusive and flexible knowledge i.e. ideas that can be worked with and deployed in different ways, recognising some core philosophical insights and associated logics.

- An *institutional or organisational focus*, expressed as a sociological or an investigative orientation to social arrangements, oscillating at a *moderate level of abstraction* i.e. considering the location of responsibilities and functions and the implications for organisational arrangements at a generalizable level of specificity.
- A practitioner-based *operational orientation* that drives a quest for pragmatic solutions that can be achieved in real-time dynamics in existing political systems and cultural conditions, seeking pathways for change at a relatively *low level of abstraction* i.e. design parameters for analytic orientation and decision-making practices in political practice and public administration.

This work therefore becomes a site of seeking reconciliation within the tensions between the levels of abstraction in my own thinking. Consequently, I endeavour to stay within the triangle these three nodes establish, seeking to “land” so the resulting proposition and procedural schematics are adding knowledge for concurrent advancement at these relatively high, moderate and low levels of abstraction. To reiterate, progressing this type of knowledge production makes it necessary to accept taking an inductive trajectory. Rendering notions of proof or disproof in a pure sense is impossible. The task becomes one of building confidence by compiling contextual analysis, concepts, logics – and evidence where applicable – through a transparent and discernable process. Hence there is inherent subjectivity in the endeavour. I look for pathways that evade rigid positivism (the adherence to the rigours of hypothesis falsification that overly constraints what can be studied and what methods are therefore “valid”) and the reality dissolving excesses of post-modernism (the adherence to nihilism and the rejection of methods to find patterns and construct valid meaning). Rather, the preference as outlined, is to strive to navigate “between” for straightforward systemic, institutional and operational positions.

## **2.5 Summation: *Integration, Imagination and Intervention***

*“The challenges that we face are complex and cut across scales, perspectives and processes. The research community is lagging in developing effective research methods for systems that capture relational (and some causal) linkages between physical and social variables of systems. Effort should therefore be focused on developing and testing research methods that support management of complex systems in an integrated manner.”* – International Council for Science (ICSU, 2018, p.18).

The mission undertaken is to develop an *integrated* complex systems-based view of governance to support advancing public governance design and culture that performs better in delivering future-facing outcomes. The quest is to find *imaginative*, but practical, ways to better understand

relational linkages within and between key systems, with an emphasis on the notion of and nature of “controls” and how they function (i.e. governance and the leadership roles undertaken to do policy *interventions*). A way of describing the work is to say the research methodology is the guiding process to explore and establish a new general methodology for public policy practice. Therefore, to a significant extent, the emergent and documented findings have a methodological tenor. They develop a systems logic for a public policy decision architecture. They are also therefore inherently of a theoretical nature, by way of working on the “positioning” of proposed new public governance methods and operating practices.

I look into the perception and philosophical underpinnings of the key concepts to “ground” the work, notably in the spheres of complexity, temporality and integrality as key factors impacting on the perception and practice of governance. In advancing the research agenda, issues with public governance are treated as inextricably political and bureaucratic in nature and practice. I work from the perspective that political power sinks or swims in a sea of economic realism, where a fragile grasp on “control” in the prevailing cultural currents of uncertainty and “presentism” (a strong focus on the present) constrains (a) expansive future-oriented ambitions; and (b) the reform of governmental machinery and decision-making design. By virtue of the direction advanced, findings manifest as a conceptual solutions framework (Part 2), supported by functional praxis development (Part 3), I have made the case that the focus being on developing underpinning rationale for fit-for-purpose decision architecture with argumentation for validity resting on logical coherence, conceptual clarity and novelty of the “package”.

Following the focal orientation to search for better urban governance solutions, I conduct theoretical “groundwork” (Part 1) that could contribute to helping in the further work necessary to enact the framework developed. This groundwork could impact: (i) *the partisan political process of direction-setting* – where manifestos and “promises” occupy the territory of binary UK de facto national “strategies”; (ii) *the potential for improved societal directionality* – where the respective strengths of different knowledge formation methods are drawn on for a synthesized understanding of new possibilities, roles and functions to improve emerging circumstances; and (iii) *the positioning of the public sector or Civil Service policy-making processes* – where the bureaucracy is primarily treated and consequently acts responsively as a network of de facto “operational delivery” entities.

Based on the learning undertaken I look to articulate the essential principles that can assist political reform; contribute to the task of crystalizing a new systems-based discourse for governments and public policy-making; and also help to move towards the necessary conditions

for change required given our predicament. I do not however, explicitly venture into developing the first two potential lines of uptake (*i* and *ii* being political and societal ideology in short); rather I advance developmentally into (*iii*), being the design of the Civil Service's decision architecture and the governance implications. I do not go into design details or a public sector "blueprint" mode. Apart from over-reaching in the context of a thesis, the nature of engagement and process of development required is significant to do this effectively. Unless the political sphere and the public sector can drive transformation together – all the time responsively adapting to global trends and unique local predicaments – expecting transformative change that unlocks a step-change for enhanced social and economic outcomes will remain elusive.

For completeness, I include a methodological reflection section in the concluding chapter (12.3). Next I outline Part 1, that carries forward my positional development of the focal *predicament* as the target subject of the research.

# PART 1: PREDICAMENT

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## Outline of Part 1: *Predicament*

### 3. Conundrum: *Systemic Complexity*

- 3.1 Outline
- 3.2 Governing: *Decision Problems*
- 3.3 Democracy: *Institutional Politics*
- 3.4 Systems: *The Systemic Mess*
- 3.5 Conundrum: *Failure to Functionality*

### 4. Convergence: *Functional Temporalities*

- 4.1 Outline
- 4.2 Time Expansiveness: *Design, Decision and Delivery*
- 4.3 Democratic Time: *Politics and Governance*
- 4.4 Timespace Governance: *Designing a Window*
- 4.5 Convergence: *Functioning in the Timespace Mess*

### 5. Compromise: *Characterising Disconnections*

- 5.1 Outline
- 5.2 Conform: *Pragmatism*
- 5.3 Cope: *Presentism*
- 5.4 Conjure: *Projectionism*
- 5.5 Compromise: *Practicability*

### 6. Circumstance: *Handling Governance*

- 6.1 Outline
- 6.2 Acting in Messes: *Designing for Integration*
- 6.3 Seeing in Messes: *Creativity for Progress*
- 6.4 Interacting in Messes: *Organising for Resolution*
- 6.5 Circumstance: *Pivoting the Predicament*

## Outline of Part 1: *Predicament*

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- The principal objective of Part 1 is to broadly depict the current system of governance and to establish a theoretical basis upon which to view contemporary governance issues and democratic dilemmas. Hence these chapters work in the service of establishing the context and theorising about the *predicament* (what I call the *New Democratic Challenge*) to develop a way of seeing to inform and motivate a new approach to governance design and better decision architecture.
- I identify the challenges faced with governing in the present day. I work with systems and complexity theorising to see what literatures may help illuminate how to deal with the problems that have emerged. I draw out temporality and the treatment of time in governance as a key under-realised challenge that can aid stronger analysis and decision support advice.
- Further, I provide an assessment of the current state of affairs and characterise existing thought and arrangements as *presentist*. To bring this part together, I then look at the convergent predicament and the nature of the challenges faced to govern better.
- The desired outcome is (a) a “diagnosis”, being a representative picture of what is wrong and in need of remedy, (b) a selective “policy review”, sampling, namely the application of some key issues to evidence the diagnosis and the assessment of the system, and (c); targeted “literature reviews” to establish theoretical lineage and anchor the key elements of thinking developed.
- In summary, the *task* is to:

<b>TASK: <i>Diagnose the principal issues and synthesize illuminating lenses on the nature of current democratic deficiencies.</i></b>		
<b>PART</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>GOAL</b>
<b>Part 1: <i>Predicament</i></b> As the situation experienced, faced and within which we find ourselves embedded in intellectual and institutional terms	<i>Objective: (Part 1)</i> Depicting the current state of policy issues and theoretical approaches to governance	Diagnosis: <i>Integrated Assessment</i> An integrated assessment encompassing key strands of literature reviews

## 3. Conundrum: *Systemic Complexity*

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### 3.1 Outline

Responding effectively to complex issues with multi-dimensional considerations is an all-consuming predicament in advanced democracies. *Conundrums*, as in difficult and vexing situations that puzzle, demand political and public policy attention. In beginning the process of establishing the *predicament* in Part 1, the chapter unfolds three key aspects of the “New Democratic Challenge”. First at a theoretical level, the initial task is to review and establish my approach towards “public governance”, drawing on literatures to define governing with a systems-angled lens. I narrow my focus onto governing in government, while recognising the wider context. I emphasize the contingent nature of governance and the associated difficulties for addressing issues and activating responses in evidence-informed operational situations. Second, I contextualise this focus within “democracy”, highlighting the institutional challenges to ensure that it can retain (and regain) integrity as a legitimate guidance mechanism. Third, from establishing governance as a complexity oversight mechanism, I advance the first key concept of inquiry (complexity) to coin what I define as the *systemic mess*. I conceive of this as the prevailing condition, leading to an emphasis on *integration* as a strategic focus in governance and policy-making.

To elucidate the conundrum, I draw together the associated catalogue of prevalent *failures* that mire the contemporary predicament for resolving inherent tensions in democracy. This encapsulates viewing the *problems* encountered and the *messes* experienced to distil the essence of the contemporary nature of failure within the ambit of interaction between the political realm and the Civil Service. The overall intention is to posit the “live” challenge interwoven with theoretical advancement, thereby co-producing a unique perspective and thematic understanding to lay out the predicament’s scope. The nature of inherent difficulty faced when currently governing is shown to be significantly difficult for current democratic arrangements to effectively contend with.

### 3.2 Governing: *Decision Problems*

The initial task is to review and establish an approach towards governance. Policy-making seeks to shine light into the black box of so-called “wicked problems” (Rittel and Webber, 1973) and illuminate the ideas, institutions and incentives that hamper or advance progress. The contingent nature of addressing problems and activating solutions in an evidence-informed environment is explored.

### 3.2.1. Conceptions of Governance

*“We are being challenged to think of the means of governance that can embrace comfortably the global aspirations of cosmopolitans, the national aspirations of nation-bound groups, and even the local aspirations of subregional interests. How to bridge these very different perspectives is not obvious. Neither the ideas nor the institutions for reconciling these perspectives are yet evident.” – Raymond Vernon (1998, p.28).*

With Vernon (1998) date-stamping the predicament of governance fragmentation at the turn of the century, it remains today that the new reconciling ideas and associated institutional adaptation to deliver governance have yet to become plain or evident. In part, this situation is bound with our economic trajectory, where the fortunes of the British middle class did not drastically suffer with the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) so as to drive re-examination and reform of governance system fundamentals.<sup>65</sup> Noting that the answer to the question of whether the first decades of the twenty-first century would see a recoil from globalization, Rodrik (2000) at the same time considered that the answer depends on “our ability to devise domestic and international institutions that render economic globalism compatible with the principles of the mixed economy.” (Rodrik, 2000, p.364). Governance faces difficult times, but what is it?

Referencing key literatures to make clear my assumptions, *governance* is the provision of oversight to provide direction and guidance. Wider than “government”, that typically connotes the formal channels of government, governance at a basic level is simply the overall system of governing through which provisions are delivered. van der Heijden (2014) considers that “...governance can be understood as an intended activity undertaken by one or more actors seeking to shape, regulate or control human behaviour in order to achieve a desired collective end.” (van der Heijden, 2014, p.6). He goes on to note that scholars of governance often distinguish between governing through direct governmental means such as legislation (“old governance”) versus innovatively through multiple actors (“new governance”). Research demonstrates (e.g. Kickert et al, 1997) that government has become less directly involved in governing, while non-governmental actors do much of the “new”. The concept is ubiquitous in the social sciences and according to Powell (1990), represents “horizontality in the sense of non-hierarchical modes of co-ordination, steering and decision-making” versus a classical top-down government (Cattacin and Zimmer, 2016, p.23). This encapsulates the informal dynamics of

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<sup>65</sup> The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) did have a material impact on the British economy and resulted in a severe economic depression and a weak economic recovery. People were directly and indirectly impacted, however, medium incomes and the capital wealth of the average UK household did not radically dip. The effects arguably continue, despite not being perceived as related. As Mervyn King puts it: “That disaster was a long time in the making and will be just as long in the resolving.” (King, 2017, p.13). Arguably, Brexit captured the public mood-swing against a cumulative erosion of wealth, sustained austerity and a sense of slippage in living standards (e.g. Jessop, 2018).



“steering” that denote activities within public and private sector policy networks (Honeybone et al., 2017). To be specific about “public” governance, Voss’s definition is inclusively useful: that is “to refer to processes of shaping collective orders” (Voß, 2018, p.296). Or as advanced by Torfing: “We use the term *governance* to refer to collective attempts to steer society and the economy in accordance with common goals and norms subject to continuous negotiation...” (Torfing and Ansell, 2015, p.316).

I also use the phrase in this encompassing sense, similarly to Stirling (2015), recognising Sørensen and Torfing’s (2018) general “point of departure” being: “... a common understanding of the need to study the complex processes through which a plethora of public and private actors interact to define problems, set goals, design solutions and implement them in practice” (p.350), before they plumb the depths of particular “in-field” differences of meaning attributed and conferred (Stirling, 2015, p. 351-353). There are methodological implications that flow from choices of about where on the governance-government continuum, as Stirling articulates, noting governance as beyond government missions:

*“... More relational and indeterminate approaches are taken to the social processes in question. Understandings are more implicit, plural, contending and unbounded. Prescriptions centre not on policy missions, but more around culturally constituted (political) ‘causes’. Yet the greater the aspiration to transformative change, the more likely it is that associated knowledges will implicate governance in general, rather than just government. So, the more intense and ambitiously transformative the challenge for social agency, the more amorphous and distributed this concept itself seems to become.”* (Stirling, 2015, p.14).

Because I seek to primarily speak to the sphere of institutional design and cultural practice, I intentionally take a more instrumental approach. My principal focus is on the decision-making architecture of government (i.e. the formal mechanisms of the State) as the means of making change. While I am therefore primarily oriented to the machinery and culture of formal “government”, I do see this as functionally inseparable from the wider public governance milieu. I recognise that public governance is an activity that gets broadly practiced. In this regard, substantial non-governmental dimensions need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. I concur with the *World Bank’s* general corporate definition:

*“[G]overnance is the process through which state and nonstate actors interact to design and implement policies within a given set of formal and informal rules that shape and are shaped by power.”* (World Bank, 2017, p.3).<sup>66</sup>

In line with approach advanced in this work, I take public governance to be the understanding and capacity to *orchestrate a scheme in time and space*. However, I recognise that governance is more

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<sup>66</sup> This report goes on to define *power* as “the ability of groups and individuals to make others act in the interest of those groups and individuals and to bring about specific outcomes” (World Bank, 2017, p.3).

than decision-making itself: "... the concept also involves a structural component, the limited set of options that are embedded in a distinctive local culture. A *governance arrangement*, therefore, encompasses the constellation of actors in a given setting as well as path dependency, or the prevailing and hence limited set of choices that are inherent to a particular... context." (Cattacin and Zimmer, 2016, p.23).

There is the relatively current scholarly emergence of the "new" public governance school of thought. Osborne (2010) makes the case for *New Public Governance* being a "regime" of study in and of its own right (Osborne, 2010, p.5-6).<sup>67</sup>

Table 3.2.1: *Core Elements on "Paradigms" culminating in New Public Governance (NPG)*

<i>Paradigm/Key elements</i>	<i>Theoretical roots</i>	<i>Nature of the state</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Emphasis</i>	<i>Resource allocation mechanism</i>	<i>Nature of the service system</i>	<i>Value base</i>
<b>Public Administration</b>	Political science and public policy	Unitary	The political system	Policy creation and implementation	Hierarchy	Closed	Public sector ethos
<b>New Public Management</b>	Rational/public choice theory and management studies	Regulatory	The organization	Management of organizational resources and performance	The market and classical or neo-classical contracts	Open rational	Efficacy of competition and the marketplace
<b>New Public Governance</b>	Institutional and network theory	Plural and pluralist	The organization in its environment	Negotiation of values, meaning and relationships	Networks and relational contracts	Open closed	Dispersed and contested

Source: Osborne (2010, p.10).

Bouckaert (2017) in also summarising the scholarly sweep of change, references the "neo-Weberian" nature of taking citizens and performance into account, as well as NPG, that involves a wider combination of academic disciplines (Bouckaert, 2017, pp.45-47). The rise of New Political Governance (also NPG), as Diamond (2019a) interprets it, is the descent into a fundamentally altered operating model undermining the "Whitehall paradigm"<sup>68</sup> centred on increased political influence and encroachment on "administration" (Diamond, 2019a, pp.1-18). Stoker (2019) contends that populism presents a challenge to the "governance paradigm"<sup>69</sup> in that it channels hostility towards greater use of markets and networks (Stoker, 2019, p.5). This may see a shift back from "de-centring" power to centralise acting for the "us" (against "them" in simplistic terms), yet he remains confident that the general approach to thought in this field will adapt and survive (Stoker, 2019). With consideration of the practice environment, Grube (2015) emphasizes

<sup>67</sup> For a discussion of the NPG paradigm refer to (Grube, 2015) and Diamond (2019a) for detailed analysis.

<sup>68</sup> The *Whitehall paradigm* references Page (2010) and the emphasis on the virtues of non-partisanship, neutrality, parliamentary accountability, bureaucratic permanence and mutual trust between political and civil servants (Diamond, 2019a, p.3). Diamond documents the Cameron government's "radical intentions" in reshaping the institutional framework of governance (ibid, pp.11-18).

<sup>69</sup> Stoker (2019) highlights core assumptions in what he calls the "Governance Paradigm", including: (1) interdependence based on the mutual need of diverse social actors to work with one another, (2) the reconstitution of actors and the building of new identities to express mutuality and solidarity, and (3) the goal of self-governance is more prominent i.e. citizens expect to make more choices so governing becomes about supporting people to govern themselves. (Stoker, 2019, pp. 5-6).

the “remolding” of Westminster’s functions to contemporary realities, whereby a “stretchable” set of public service traditions endure to sustain institutional authenticity (Grube, 2015, p.477). My observation is that varying interpretations of governance in theory and practice are largely stable in public administration and public policy academic circles.

Another overarching conception that is referenced in some governance-related literatures is “meta-governance”, inferring devolved governance processes or the “governance of governance” (Peters, 2010, p. 37). Bouckaert (2017) refers to this conception as “supra-structure governance”, noting it is the interaction between the “hardware of organizations” and their “software in terms of ideas, values, and culture.” (Bouckaert, 2017, p.51). Recognising this level of governance as necessary, he goes on to develop the idea of “systemic macro governance”. He sees measuring progress in systemic governance requiring long-term data sets on key issues such as participation, decentralization and marketization (Bouckaert, 2017, p.52). This is in tune with what could be called “complexity governance” concepts, which I segue to next. To pause, despite the nuances within the fields of study where defining governance is a relevant, my view is that the core definitions are not highly problematic. It is the “doing” rather than the “defining” that is difficult. Each of the three waves in Osborne’s terminology retains differing degrees of salience in various contexts. New Public Management (NPM) still holds relevance at the centre of government in particular.

### **3.2.2. Towards Integrated Experimentalism**

*“At various times in my career I was involved with joining up budgets. For example, the single regeneration budget pulled together money from different parts going into the cities... That sounds massively sensible until you get into accounting officer responsibility and people saying, ‘I can’t have my money being spent there. My money was given to me for education, if it ends up being spent on housing how can I account for it?’ ... I don’t know what the answer is but I think it’s an issue that dilutes an awful lot of what we can achieve through public policy.” – Peter Unwin (2019).<sup>70</sup>*

Within a layered governance system, with an array of agencies and actors, directing, guiding and steering change with coherent and observable outcomes is difficult. Even “joining-up” within government is problematic, as Unwin reflects. National perspectives and activities for the good of the country may run-up against local preferences resisting change. “Meshing”<sup>71</sup> summons the need to shape and synchronize an array of contributions, including influencing strategically up, across and down. Colander and Kupers (2014) observe “...bottom-up and top-town choices [are] to be made as markets and the state ‘co-evolve’.” (Colander and Kupers, 2014, p.24). They

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<sup>70</sup> Comment by Peter Unwin (Former Director General of DEFRA) interviewed by Brecknell (Brecknell, 2019).

<sup>71</sup> I use the term as flagged by Colander and Kupers, (2014, p.26).

advocate a détente of the “left/right” political tension, instead putting a stronger spotlight on the “up/down” dimension of public issue management. New coordination functions are needed once issues are seen in this light. They see the government’s role being to create an “eco-structure of freedom” to enlarge the “solutions space” for innovation in what they call a “complexity frame” (ibid, p.25, 27). Acknowledging that specific policies are best conducted with “deep institutional knowledge”, Colander and Kupers recognise specialist delivery may lead to non-government delivery or “to separate branches of government that are to varying degrees removed from direct political pressures.” (ibid). This way of seeing change in a complexity mode aligns with Sabel and Zeitlin’s (2011) notion of “experimentalism”:

*“Experimentalism is based neither on a sharp separation between policy conception and administrative execution as in conventional hierarchical governance and NPM [New Public Management], nor on their fusion in the hands of local communities or citizens’ councils... Instead, it is based on the reciprocal redefinition of ends and means through an iterated, multi-level cycle of provisional goal-setting and revision, thereby giving structure to apparently fluid practices of ‘network governance’.” (Sabel and Zeitlin, 2011, p.11).*

Experimentalism, which I pick-up later as thread in the proposition, requires processes and trust to be operationally functional. The effectiveness of the “governance grip” in contemporary democracy is generally agreed to not be strengthening in the UK. Facilitating inclusive democracy requires activating trust and improving engagement. The ability to deal with the big challenges, critical issues and multi-dimensional problems and opportunities is hampered by either a poor grasp on issues, or a failure to implement. The “decoupling” resulting in lowered levels of trust – in government (e.g. Gallup, 2017), in elected officials (Axios, 2019),<sup>72</sup> and in democratic institutions (e.g. OECD, 2017)<sup>73</sup> – sheets home both to political and public sector leaders as influencers and operators of the system. The present general predicament often results in dualistic framing of problems as either “decentralised enablement” in the form of the democratic “participative fix”, such as devolution and techniques for deeper engagement with citizens, or alternatively, as “centralised directiveness”.<sup>74</sup> In terms of “giving voice” to citizens by improving engagement and distributing influence, there is ample academic support for participatory processes and governance (e.g. Fung, 2015) and design-oriented engagement practice (e.g. Nesta,

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<sup>72</sup> In results adapted from *Pew Research’s* Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey (% medians based on 27 countries), 54% of people agreed that “most politicians are corrupt”, while 60% concurred with that “no matter who wins an election, things don’t change very much” (Axios, 2019).

<sup>73</sup> “Trust in government remains below pre-crisis levels [2008]. On average in OECD countries, 42% of citizens reported having confidence in their national government in 2016 compared to 45% before the crisis. Satisfaction and confidence with public services and institutions remains relatively low in a number of countries particularly those affected by austerity measures.” (OECD, 2017, p.14).

<sup>74</sup> For example, in the form of strong government headed by a benign dictator, with historical references to the East or contemporary comparisons to China and Singapore’s capacity to act and drive progress without being fully captured by elite private sector interests, where elite public sector interests either interact with them, or prevail.

2017). While governance thinking generally recognises the nature of contemporary problems and categorises approaches to them (e.g. Grube, 2015), examples of governance theorising that steps past the dualistic framing critiqued by Sabel and Zeitlin (2011) remains scarce. Complexity thinking and experimentalism signal a direction I will work with to develop the proposition further.

### **3.3 Democracy: *Institutional Politics***

“Democracy” as a domain of interest is awash with reflection, exacerbated by its recent populist tarnishing and general demise. In general usage, democracy typically indicates an arrangement where a society has (i) regular elections cycles, (ii) citizens and the media can openly comment on issues (i.e. a relatively free press), and (iii) transparent contestability occurs as there is open competition for power (i.e. regimes can be voted out). In particular, to underscore contestability, an attribute is that it the “rule of people” prevails, whereas it may not in non-democratic regimes. This makes contemporary democratic forms distinct from, for example, autocracies and dictatorships (Runciman, 2013). “Democracy” as a potent concept has endured as an "instrument for thinking" about "ideological force and the sources and modalities of power" (Dunn, 2011). It has survived as a key institutional form despite it being imperfect to date in its application to deliver "political merit and cognitive insight" (ibid). If democracy’s “goodness” has become conceptual cover for a host of marriages of convenience of varying validity, it has come to embody under strain, the quest for genuine expressions of civic voice and the delivery of noble intent based on this expression.

Accepting that democracy conveys at its heart the capacity to follow the “voices of the people”, I take a view of democracy as an orientation to doing the endless work of striving to understand and solve collective action issues. A strength lies in the fluidity and adaptive practices than can flourish, from representative to direct forms of interaction. Rogers (2010) notes that Dewey (1927) is right to conceive of democracy as the “task before us”, reminding us we must continuously cultivate the democratic sensibility, “which we can never afford to abandon”, demanding “... an interventionist spirit on the part of citizens.” (Rogers, 2010, p.4).

As Runciman notes, a Tocquevillian conception of democracy is where the principle of equality has “taken hold” (Runicman, 2013, pp.1-34), with its hallmark being oversight exhibiting adaptability: “It can accommodate forms of politics that are hierarchical as well as inclusive, it can be identified with leaders as well as citizens; it can combine egalitarianism with many different forms of inequality.” (Runicman, 2013, p. xxiii). Where there is democracy of varying hues, there

is power<sup>75</sup> and politics<sup>76</sup> at play to lead reasoning and action. There can be degrees of democratic practice in a society. Wright (2010) categorises three primary forms of democracy with “thin” and “deep” levels of “democraticness”.<sup>77</sup> There has been recent focus on the participatory dimensions of governance in particular, with the quest of empowerment as a pathway forward (e.g. Fung and Wright, 2010; Fung, 2015). My perspective is that increased engagement can assist with problem definition and solution formulation in public policy. However, in and of itself, deeper involvement has not proved enough to remedy many policy dilemmas – and has arguably contributed to a resurgence in populism (Stoker, 2019). What is consistent in the background is the importance of institutions and wider culture that is expressed through them. As North (2004) expresses:

*“Institutions are the structure that humans impose on that landscape in order to produce the desired outcome. Belief systems therefore are the internal representation and institutions the external manifestation of that representation. ... When conflicting beliefs exist, the institutions will reflect the beliefs of those (past as well as present) in a position to effect their choices...”* (North, 2004, p. 49-50).

Following North (2004), our institutions contain our decision mechanisms that are devised to produce consistent structures to navigate towards shared societal objectives. Combined with our democratic “belief systems”, their design and practice is at the heart of governance scope. Institutions and their dominant cultures play a role “pre-shaping” how issues are framed and presented in policy-making processes. North (2004) reflected that culture is an expression of the intergenerational transfer of norms, values, and ideas. As an imperfect process, it remains that sometimes governing institutions can obscure or hinder the appearance of issues due to current cultural interests, leading to future-blind or dysfunctional policymaking. Dalton and Weldon (2007) comment that by “narrowing down the topics to an extent where they overshadow meaningful debate about the future of societies...” (Király et al., 2017, p.138), institutions can curtail integrated progress. The systemic capacity to effectively connect inter-related issues and curtail excesses so as to achieve a stable and positive trajectory of progressive development, is an increasingly problematic shortfall in advanced Western democracies. At stake is the institution of “democracy” itself. The constitutional integrity of government as a legitimate and effective mechanism to oversee and guide progress is at stake.

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<sup>75</sup> Power in this context is constrained to consideration of the degree of control or governing entities and governments exert “control” over critical variables in the relevant system. Power is “inextricably linked” with fundamental elements of governance and different types of power may be exercised and applied via formal and informal channels and measures (Barnett and Duvall, 2005).

<sup>76</sup> “Politics” also warrants definition. To this end to simplify specify what I mean by “politics”, I refer to Unger’s (1987) definition to use the word flexibly to signal the contest for power. To connote a narrow and broad sense of politics, he employs a narrow meaning of the “conflict over the mastery and uses of governmental power”; and more broadly, the situation where “conflict over the terms of our practical and passionate relations to one another and over all the resources and assumptions that may influence these terms.” (ibid, p.10).

<sup>77</sup> Refer to Erik Olin Wright (2010), Figure 6.1: Varieties of Democratic Governance (Wright,2010, p.154).

The challenge for democracy in its quest to guide advancement, includes a multitude of tensions. A fundamental dynamic tension exists between the issues of *progress* – as manifest in the development of particular places (e.g. cities and regions) to improve individual and collective outcomes – and issues of *distribution*, as manifest in the allocation of resources (e.g. access to housing in localities) while improving individual and collective outcomes. Ways of dealing more effectively with these fundamental dynamics, from micro-behavioural “nudges” to macro-economic model re-design from a complexity based perspective, unearth deep democratic challenges for resolving the nature and rates of development for societal progress.

Additionally, democracy faces global challenges with interconnectivity to deal with these same types of issues at inter-nation scales. Institutional design at an international level for progressing key civic concerns that have global implications have been increasingly shown to be sub-standard given today's demands. As a consequence, subnational diplomacy has emerged for example, when international diplomacy has not been up to the task.<sup>78</sup> In sum, the institutional challenges that democracy faces are multi-faceted, multi-levelled and are placing increasing demands on organising infrastructures designed in a prior century and a different operating context. This in part, requires us to look at the utility of “problems” as our policy intervention “building blocks”, as a starting point to redesign fit-for-purpose governance. Hence I look at the role of governments today, as we face an array of problems indicative of a “mess”.

### **3.4 Systems: *The Systemic Mess***

This section provides (1) a complexity thinking orientation followed by (2) a considered governance treatment, focusing on systems thinking in public policy, management and governance. Third, I provide an outline of Ackoff's thinking about the nature of problems and messes through a systems lens, which I term the “systemic mess”. I end by emphasising both the implicit challenges given the necessity of a complexity viewpoint, along with the value of focussed inquiry for a new style of analysis.

#### **3.4.1. Systems and Complexity thinking**

*“To approach governance from a systems-based perspective implies a conceptual whole: that the complex, dynamic relationships among and between separate units of governance, and within multiple frameworks, can be considered in aggregate as well as in terms of the constituent parts ... the governance of entities at every level involves countless interactions that occur in a constantly changing context amid a myriad of endogenous and*

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<sup>78</sup> For example, the involvement of cities playing role in the Paris Agreement (2015) on climate change in December 2015, where at the *Paris Climate Conference* (COP21), the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal was adopted by 195 countries.

*exogenous factors. ... the principles, processes and responsibilities that determine behaviour of units from their smallest to the largest potentially have implications and consequences ...”* (Dempsey, 2013, p.31).

The consequence of a systems perspective is that there is always a number of changing moving parts to coordinate. This requires combining policies and strategies – and specific strategies into a wider “system of strategies” – to continually monitor change. This degree of interaction and the associated information available becomes problematic for human cognition, due to the limits of our ability to perceive and act (Kooiman, 2008, p.185). Therefore, the practical potential of complexity thinking and the boundaries of systems are always subject to continual reassessment. While offering intuitive ideas, much systems thinking in the context of organisations and public policy-making only arrives at a generic position, with its application to governance as a “way of seeing” or conceiving of arenas of activity requiring better coordination. Describing the properties of the system itself in this regard, provides a way of sharing a discourse imbued with this type of thought.<sup>79</sup> Complexity presents a set of analytic and applied policy challenges that remain an uptake barrier.

As systems thinking is still arriving as mainstream in public policy-making and governance, the capacity and capability to do this type of work remains nascent in most institutional arrangements. Irrespective of whether analytic requirements are short or long-term, or wide or narrow in terms of spatial boundaries, governance of complexity work demands arrangements capable of seeing that the governance function itself is “constitutive of and manifest in the internal and external functioning and relationships of connected and interdependent entities” as Dempsey puts it (2013, p.31). For governance, this opens up the holistic treatment of issues that arise from policy-framing and decision-making dysfunction. In other words, complexity thinking by its nature invites consideration of the scope of mechanisms into the consideration of the policy problems themselves. In light of this, I orient to the redesign of the mechanistic devices of democratic governance as a contribution to advancing the agenda of complexity in policy-making.

At an international level, the UN Chief Executives’ Board for Coordination described systems thinking as a “key way of working” and an essential “leadership characteristic” needed given

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<sup>79</sup> My summary of a systems or complexity-informed perspective is that it is (a) existing in *Space and Time* (system spatial and temporal boundaries), (b) within an *Environment* (system context), (c) exhibiting a *Structure* (system arrangement), (d) has a *Purpose* (system motivation), (e) with a *Function* (system operation), (f) revealing the *Form* (the “shape”), (g) exhibiting *Coherence* (the “logics”) and *Alignment* (the “order”) of non-linear components or modules of an analytic subject. The creation (or destruction) of *Value* and *Trust* in time and space within a system is a key factor that effects the system components. The degrees of certainty and ambition – expressed in the treatment of *Risk* within a system – effects the system components and overall performance.



“interconnectedness and indivisibility”.<sup>80</sup> Meanwhile the OECD’s Governance Directorship declared that “the time for piecemeal solutions in the public sector is over”, recommending systems thinking to instigate innovative solutions to cross-cutting and complex issues (OPSI, 2018). The International Council for Science (ICSU) has released a report saying that a massive shift towards systems thinking for coordinating is needed. The ICSU say they are integrating with the Social Science equivalent body, to have a more systemic approach themselves:

*“Our governance systems need to be changed to enable transformative changes and better manage complex multidimensional challenges. A shift from sectoral to integrated, systemic perspectives is necessary to account for the complexity of problems that we are facing and realizing the opportunities. ... This transition will be challenging and will require effort and reflexive learning processes.”* (ICSU, 2018, p.3).

The recognition and associated calls for integrative thinking and innovative responses to fragmented and siloed activity continues. Inevitably tied to considering governing complex networks is the issue of where control and power is located. Cairney and Geyer (2015) note that complexity in public policy literatures invite policymakers to “give up on the idea that they can control policy processes and outcomes” (Cairney and Geyer, 2015, p.11). They commented: “The language of complexity does not mix well with the language of Westminster-style accountability.” (ibid). While helping to move beyond unrealistic expectations about control and accountability in complex environments, we need feasible accountabilities. Devolution has been pursued as one strategy to decentralize power in the context of the UK, e.g. devolved administrations and metro-Mayors.<sup>81</sup> Cairney and Geyer (2017) do note that complexity theory has helped provide key elements of thought and language to describe processes and responses (2017, p.7). To take a central issue, namely the simple conception of “what is the problem?” relating to the central policy-making starting point of “what is the problem to be solved?”, I now draw on a complexity-based perspective to advance how we might continue to shift policy-making narratives. While clearly one part of a larger working whole in terms of transformation towards a complexity attuned policy architecture, I focus on it as a point for leverage for transformation.

### **3.4.2. The Systemic Mess**

Working from Ackoff’s (1974, 1979) thinking about conceptual advancement, my starting point is his conception of a “mess”, as distinct from “problems”. Second, I unpack Ackoff’s ideas around

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<sup>80</sup> The United Nations’ *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2017) Source: United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (2017) *First regular session of 2017, Summary of deliberations*, Last Updated: 02 Jul 2018.

<sup>81</sup> Along with Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs), industrial strategy developments are advancing this direction of travel, which is still perceived as slow given Whitehall’s centralized power (e.g. a common position of the *Centre for Cities*). For a comprehensive overview of regional, city and associated governance issues in the UK refer to McCann (2016), who characterizes the unique UK situation as a *top-down* failure (e.g. mobilization and engagement shortcomings) and *horizontal* (e.g. coordination and representation) governance failure (McCann, 2016).

the “Systems Age” that later converges with Bohm’s thinking about creativity (6.3). Third, I consider the implications of adaptation implicit in complexity thought, rounding-off establishing the “*systemic mess*” as a key aspect of complexity.

**Problems and Messes**

One of the most consistently faced and yet often vexing questions is simply: “What is the problem?” Sage (1992) defines a problem as “an undesirable situation or unresolved matter that is significant to some individual or group and that the individual or group is desirous of resolving” (1992, p. 232).<sup>82</sup> His four basic characteristics of problems are:

<b>Sage’s (1992) definition of “problem” characteristics</b>	
1.	There is a detectable gap between a present state and a desired state, and this creates a concern.
2.	It may be difficult to bring about concordance between these two states.
3.	This situation is important to some individual or group.
4.	The situation is regarded as resolvable by an individual or group, either directly or indirectly. Solving a problem would constitute a direct resolution. Ameliorating or dissolving a problem, by making it go away, is an indirect resolution of a problem.

Source: Hester and Adams (2014, p.29).

Ackoff’s (1981) definition of a “dilemma” is a “problem” which cannot be solved within the current worldview. Studying a series of dilemmas aid the “unfurling of a new paradigm” (Pourdehnad et al., 2011, p.1-2). As commonly used in public policy, *wicked problems* are a type of hard to solve problem (Churchman, 1967; Rittel and Webber, 1973).<sup>83</sup> They are where:

*“...choosing interventions is a matter of judgement and carries with it potential for significant consequences that cannot be undone easily, relative uniqueness or specificity, multiple causes and a complex web of stakeholders ... Wicked problems stem from multiple causes and contain a number of interdependencies. They also involve multiple stakeholders, often with competing value sets. Finally, wicked problems are often related to other wicked problems and evolve over time.”* (Jacobs and Cuganesan, 2014, p. 1252).

One strategy to attack seemingly intractable problems is to see them as multi-dimensional and therefore multi-sectoral. Problems that cross differing domains of interest are in need of networked approaches to span gaps. As Fung (2015) notes, both cross-disciplinary and cross-sector expertise is usually necessary: “Thus, either by incremental organizational evolution or by intentional design, networks of organizations that span these disciplines and sectors have

<sup>82</sup> Sage’s (1992) work focused on and defined systems engineering as the “design, production, and maintenance of trustworthy systems within cost and time constraints.” (1992, p.10).

<sup>83</sup> For further elaboration, refer to 3.4.3. (footnote).

emerged to grapple with wicked problems...” (Fung, 2015, p. 517). Another approach is to see wicked problems as “systems of problems”, attributable to Ackoff (1974, 1979). He is regarded to have coined the concept of “mess” in a technical sense while critiquing the field of Operation Research (OR). He implores for a *Systems Age* concerned with complex problems over simple systems in the *Machine Age*. Complexity necessitated in Ackoff’s view, a higher degree of attention to the operating environment so research is less “contextually naïve” and silent about value assumptions (Hester and Adams, 2014, p.25). The key distinction Ackoff (1979) made about *messes* was that they are in the realm of real issues in dynamic situations, whereas in his terms, problems are abstractions from messes by analysis that are more discrete (1979, p.99). Messes are where multiple problems interact in “real-time” over a period:

*“Because messes are systems of problems, the sum of the optimal solutions to each component problem taken separately is not an optimal solution to the mess. The behavior of the mess depends more on how the solutions to its parts interact than on how they interact independently of each other. ... Managers do not solve problems, they manage messes. .... Progress in handling messes, as well as problems, derives at least as much from creative reorganization of the way we pursue knowledge and the knowledge we already have as it does from new discoveries.” (Ackoff, 1979, p.102).*

To deal with *messes* means attending to: “...namely (1) intransparency [opaqueness], (2) polytely [multiple simultaneous goals], (3) complexity, (4) variable connectivity, (5) dynamic developments, (6) time-delayed effects, (7) significant uncertainty, and (8) humans-in-the-loop.” (Hester and Adams, 2014, p.26). Therefore, the perception of individual actors and stakeholders in a system plays a significant role to understanding and working on messes – or even “minimesses”: “Problems that cannot be decomposed to simpler problems are really messes. Ultimately simple problems... are abstract subjective concepts... even what appears to us as a simple problem is really a ‘minimess’.”(Ackoff, 1974, p.27).

### ***The Systems Age***

A distinguishing feature of the *Systems Age* as enounced by Ackoff (1979) is that design and invention are “principal modalities” for adaptive capabilities, whereas the passive adaptation to an environment via prediction and preparation held higher import in a *Machine Age* mode. As Ackoff puts it: “Design and invention involve active control of a system's environment as well as the system itself.” (Ackoff, 1979, p.101). Within this construct, there is a prevailing binary distinction between hard and soft systems, summarised in Table 3.4.2A. The hard view biases towards reducible technical elements with clearly attainable solutions, whereas the soft consideration opens to the more subjective human and governance factors (i.e. social systems and messes).

Table 3.4.2.A: *The Hard and Soft System Binary*

**Table 2.2** Attributes of hard and soft systems approaches [4, p. 167]

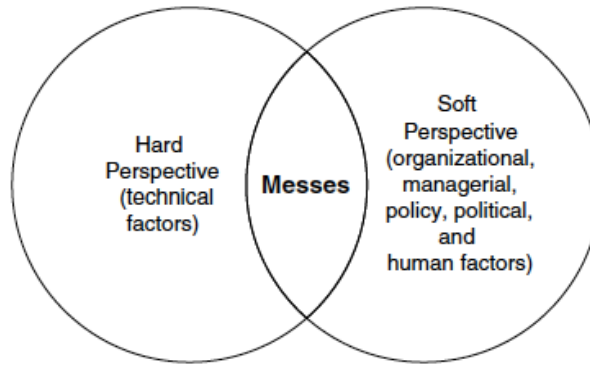
Attributes	Hard systems view	Soft systems view
World view	A real world exists external to the analyst	Perspectives of reality are dynamic & shifting
Data	Factual, truthful and unambiguous data can be gathered, observed, collected, and objectively analyzed	Data is subjective in collection and interpretation—analysis strives for transparency
System	The system in focus is unaffected by either the analysis or the analyst	The system in focus is affected by both the analysis as well as the analyst
Analysis results	The results of analysis are replicable	Results of analysis are <i>credible</i> and capable of compelling <i>reconstruction</i>
Value	The analysis can be conducted free of value judgments	The analysis and interpretation of analysis is value-laden
Boundaries	The system in focus can be bounded and the analysis can be controlled—this is both possible and desirable	Bounding of the system in focus is problematic, control of the analysis is questionable—emergence is dominant

Source: Hester and Adams, 2014, p.28.

Both viewpoints contribute to the development of understanding messes, as they occur at the intersection of these two perspectives and “require both a soft and hard perspective to be considered in order to achieve an appropriate level of understanding.” (Hester and Adams, 2014, p. 28):

Table 3.4.2.B: *The Mess Intersection*

**Fig. 2.2** Messes as the intersection between hard and soft perspectives



Source: Hester and Adams, 2014, p.29.

Having established the concept of a *mess* to “centre” governance and management challenges in an Ackoffian way, I next elaborate a typology to assist application. Ackoff (1974) advances that there are three central “challenges” that arise in the management and control of what he conceives of as *purposeful systems* – namely systems that constitute groups and organisations that are teleologically oriented to pursue purpose as part of larger systems – that are summarised accordingly as: *self control*, *humanization* and *environmentalization* (1974, p. 18). These challenges are:

Table 3.4.2.C: *Ackoff’s Management problems of the System Age recast as Governance problems for effectiveness in the “Mess”*

<b><i>Ackoff’s organising challenges of the Systems Age</i></b>	<b><i>Designing and managing systems so:</i></b>	<b><i>Central Governance problems for effectiveness in the “Mess”:</i></b>
<i>‘Self-control’</i>	- they can cope effectively with increasingly complex and rapidly emerging sets of interacting problems	<i>Coping with complexity</i> (e.g. dealing with uncertainty and adaptation)
<i>‘Humanization’</i>	- they find ways to serve the purposes of the parts of a system more effectively so as to better serve the system itself	<i>Aligned to shared human purposes</i> (e.g. handling basic rights and distributional fairness)
<i>‘Environmentalization’</i>	- they serve the purposes of environmental systems more effectively so as to better serve the system itself	<i>Aligning to shared ecosystem purposes</i> (e.g. orienting to ultimate species survival)

Table 3.4.2.D: Core Governance Challenges Matrix

<b>Three Core Governance Challenges:</b>	<b>Coping with complexity</b> (e.g. dealing with uncertainty and adaptation)	<b>Aligned to shared human purposes</b> (e.g. handling basic rights and distributional fairness)	<b>Aligning to shared ecosystem purposes</b> (e.g. orienting to ultimate species survival)
<i>Purpose effectiveness at:</i>			
<b>Level of the Self</b> (individual interaction with problems and messes)			
<b>Level of the Part</b> (problem)			
<b>Level of the System</b> (system of problems and messes)			
<b>Synthesis:</b> Integrated and interactive perspective of self, part and system levels			

**Adaptative Change**

*“Managers do not solve problems; they manage messes. Effective management of messes requires a particular type of planning, not problem solving.” – Russell Ackoff (1979, p.100).*

Working with Ackoff’s worldview, change is a dynamic and shifting phenomena where adaptation is continuous. “Optimality” is a fleeting condition, impermanent and usually of short duration. Solutions and contexts degrade, so there is a class of mess that lends itself to decision systems that can quickly adapt (Ackoff, 1979, p.98). With resonance today, Ackoff observed what he considered a “loss of sense of progress” and deterioration in the late 1970s:

*“... more and more so-called optimal solutions are still-born. With the accelerating rate of technological and social change... the expected life of optimal solutions and the problems to which they apply can be expected to become increasingly negative. For these reasons there is a greater need for decision-making systems that can learn and adapt quickly and effectively in rapidly changing situations than there is for systems that produce optimal solutions that deteriorate with change.” (Ackoff, 1979, p.98).*

Ackoff noted that it is not uncommon for purposeful systems to naturally seek stability. The latitude for corrective learning contingent on the “flexibility and changeability of the control and controlled systems” (Ackoff, 1974, p. 236) highlights the importance of governance agility and timeliness to maintain strategic alignment for positive interventions to be deployed and

monitored. This is particularly salient with respect to initiating and guiding progress through system redesign. Ackoff advocates that improvements must be directed at “what you want” rather than at a negative conception. Believing in the value of a clear-minded mission, he calls for action informed by what is ideal: "Because if you don't know what you would do if you could do whatever you wanted to, how in the world can you know what you can do under constraints?" (Ackoff, 1994). Working from this point of view, planning becomes the means to formulate the way forward. I concur with the conception of the *mess* as having higher utility in governance and management in an array of difficult and intractable public policy challenges. Ackoff’s argument is as follows:

Table 3.4.2.E: *Summary of Ackoff’s Position*

1	There is a greater need for decision-making systems that can learn and adapt effectively than there is for optimizing systems that cannot.
2	In decision making, account should be taken of aesthetic values stylistic preferences. and progress towards ideals because they are relevant to quality of life.
3	Problems are abstracted from systems of problems, messes. Messes require holistic treatment. They cannot be treated effectively by decomposing them analytically into separate problems to which optimal solutions are sought.
4	OR's [Organizational Research’s] analytic problem-solving paradigm, "predict and prepare," involves internal contradictions and should be replaced by a synthesizing planning paradigm such as "design a desirable future and invent ways of bringing it about."
5	Effective treatment of messes requires interaction of a wide variety of disciplines, a requirement that OR no longer meets.
6	All those who can be affected by the output of decision making should either be involved in it so they can bring their interests to bear on it, or their interests should be well represented by researchers who serve as their advocates.

Source: Ackoff (1979, p.103).

### 3.4.3. Systems Summary

*“Every day at home, we tell you that if you make a mess you should clear it up. ... But we have failed to apply these principles to ourselves. We walk away from the mess we have made, in the hope that you might clear it up... You have issued a challenge to which we must rise...”* – George Monbiot (February, 2019).<sup>84</sup>

While the rise of the “mess” can be observed in everyday discourse, the concept of a *mess* in systems terms has governmental salience. I conceive of the “systemic mess” as a useful concept to help clearly move beyond a focus on “wicked problems”<sup>85</sup> to the diagnosis of “systems of

<sup>84</sup> George Monbiot (British writer and journalist) addressing children (Monbiot, 2019).

<sup>85</sup> In part this is because “wicked” problems as a term in public policy has come to be used by many colloquially to infer that an issue or situation is inherently very difficult, to the point of it being insoluble or bad. Consequently, this by extension can lead to avoidance and the perspective it is best “not to touch”

problems”. This places the active decision agent or mechanism inclusive and “in scope” of any policy consideration. This is a significant shift from contemporary policy-making practice in existing civic arrangements and decision architecture. If a *systemic mess* includes being about the organisational schema of oversight, then it is about the level of resolution on its dimensions of form, the transparency of its conceptual logics, along with strategic awareness of the likelihood of attaining an understanding of the degree of alignment between existing realities and future plans. Accordingly, Senge (2014) describes complexity practice as straining existing institutional structures:

*“An underpinning systems orientation... is to focus on the design and description of processes as a means of generative productive of appropriate solutions in time and place. This rules out the design and description of outputs, results or outcomes per se. Rather, if continuing life – and even more generously, an abundance of life... is allowed to flourish, then we do not need mono-cultural prescriptions.”* – Peter Senge (2014). [~44 mins]

With the *systemic mess* generating day-to-day challenges in hierarchical systems, there will always be operating tensions as circular and decentralised issues pull at linear and hierarchical systems. Thompson (2014) discusses issues of oversight and the difficulty of dealing with “the problem of many hands”. In practice, giving clear design responsibilities for structural arrangements and ensuring accountability with designated overseers can improve results. The calibration of oversight in timespace becomes an important issue of judgement to determine system and sub-system conceptions for enabling functionality and accountability. As Thompson observes: “The failures of governments are usually the result of decisions and non[-]decisions by many different individuals, many of whose contributions may be minimal and unintended. Yet to assign responsibility and maintain accountability for an outcome fairly and effectively, citizens have to identify individuals who knowingly and freely contribute to it. This individualist approach is necessary even if the purpose is not to punish or discipline individuals but to make changes in the organization to reduce the chances of adverse outcomes in the future.” (Thompson, 2014, p. 9). With this in mind, I surmise the existing predicament requires new institutional functionality premised on a complexity basis.

### **3.5 Conundrum: *Failure to Functionality***

Failures in the dance of public policy and politics as they interact in the civic realm, are visible, real and impactful. When partial solutions in disconnected democratic institutional arrangements are

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issues labelled this way. Alternatively, for some practitioners the conceptualisation of “problem” flags a “solvable” issue, if only the right policy lever could be pulled (ANZSOG, 2019). In this vein, Peters (2017) takes a perspective that few problems are actually wicked and it has become normative that wicked problems must be solved. Rittel and Webber’s popularized conception in the planning literature was that they were policy problems that did not fit with the conventional models of analysis, with multiple possible causes and non-linear dynamics. Additionally, devising adequate solutions *ex ante* (before) therefore was problematic (Rittel and Webber, 1973).



viewed in more connected ways, shortcomings are often revealed. For example, housing is a universal pressure point that makes social conditions and societal priorities apparent.<sup>86</sup> Addressing failures to provide substantive amelioration to the housing shortage is as much a cultural failure as it is a financial, planning or technical shortfall. Despite energy going into various solutions, the ongoing overall failure to remedy negative housing affordability outcomes continues with associated persistent social problems. The solutions advanced are fragmented and constrained undertakings dealing with problems at the sub-systemic mess level (e.g. minor adjustments to planning procedures in the UK).

Without new approaches to progress public policy challenges that overcome contemporary governance failures, many social and economic issues will not be greatly advanced. Democracies are dealing with genuine *conundrums* where vexing situations puzzle those involved due to their degree of connectivity and complexity. Remedies require a convergence of willingness and “know-how” at specific solution levels, while also requiring appreciation of connectivity between sub-systems. A mess cannot be resolved by “fixing” one part of a problem or attending to an element in isolation. It requires the ability to orchestrate a synchronicity of elements working in a common direction being pursued in a sustained way. Along the pathway there will need to be ongoing adjustment from intentional feedback processes (e.g. systematically produced evaluative information). In summary, I propose the governance implications of the prevailing *predicament* surfaces four fundamental *failures* in democratic governance (refer Table 3.5.1.). I signal preliminary responses to these failures to indicate directions to develop institutional “functionality” that can be sustained in the spirit of building democratic practice in the existing environment:

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<sup>86</sup> Community and political polarisation on housing, as indicated by the *Centre for London* (2019) who are trying to lead building consensus on principles for intervention and solutions, requires new engagement strategies to building the “social case” and the “business case” for change – and thereby the saleable narrative for a “political case”: “London faces an acute housing crisis. The need for solutions is intensifying, but the debate on how to tackle this crisis is becoming increasingly polarised. Ahead of the 2020 Mayoral election, ...[we] seek to revitalise the debate on London’s housing crisis and build consensus around principles for intervention and sustainable solutions.” (*Centre for London*, 2019).

Table 3.5.1: *Failures in Governance and Responses*

<b>Four “Failures” in the provision of Governance in Civic Society:</b>	<b>Responses to develop “Institutional Functionality” to address the predicament:</b>
<p>I. <i>Centrality of Connectivity</i> – it is difficult to advance resolving issues in complex systems in a piecemeal or isolated way if solutions necessitate integrated thinking, coordination and oversight to concurrently align progress and attain more inclusive investments.</p>	<p>Connect arrangements for inclusive policy-making to supported coordinated decision-making for quality advice and decision processes.</p>
<p>II. <i>Separation from Space</i> – the places and localities (e.g. businesses, countries and cities) where wealth can rapidly accumulate in the economy do not have to be located as much in the past precisely where wealth is extracted or created. This has implications for localities and redistribution, as the value and tax capture is not necessarily in the place requiring investment for development or amelioration for negative spill-overs or consequences of development (or alternatively, ameliorating contraction).</p>	<p>Allow integrative arrangements with a wider and more inclusive view of developmental and distributional issues to inform spatial decision advice and support the framing of decision-making that accounts for the relevant boundaries of implication.</p>
<p>III. <i>Misalignment of Mechanisms</i> – set within a contextual situation and institutional arrangements, current strategies and associated policies make and reinforce alignment between issues and within issues. If there are key actors, organisations or entities behaving as “weak intermediaries” with vexed leverage on compartmentalised issues with constrained linkages, progress is inevitably compromised.</p>	<p>Sustain intermediaries, covering a range individual actors, organisations and entities (e.g. networks) with strong connections between parts of systems that enable linkages between issues for improving policy and decision alignment.</p>
<p>IV. <i>Decoupling from Distribution</i> – the inability of advanced democracies to substantially improve inequalities<sup>87</sup> alongside a concurrent progressive development strategy – as opposed to regressive politics drawing on old models and nostalgia – has become a contemporary political issue influencing Civil Service functionality. There are increasing democratic uncertainties in the civic realm with political instability around issues. How to achieve both societal stability and adaptive sustainable pathways for high returns, without destructive episodes to trigger change, is a critical governance challenge.</p>	<p>Empower political leadership and supporting institutional arrangements to actively understand and remediate issues such as inequalities, being the systemically uneven distribution of resources that hinder socio-economic functioning.</p>

<sup>87</sup> In this work I define *inequalities* broadly as a general category of “mis-allocation” or distorted arrangements where resource distribution and processes of allocation, as deemed by society’s agreed measures and reflected in the political body, prevail despite general agreement they should not.

Finding practical solution-making with and between these four “responses” is the task of the new type of governance developed. However, desirable institutional functionality can only be achieved through the convergence of better policy advice and political actions. Politics, where the making of decisions for deep systemic resolutions to “systems of problems” ultimately occurs, requires better integrated advice and more latitude to act experimentally to deal “real-time” with issues. The policy advisor and implementer in civil sector roles, requires at times greater degrees of latitude to “make good” on directions set at a higher level and more experimentally incremental decision structures. In many circumstances this points towards a melding of both more radical market engagement<sup>88</sup> and more radical collaborative learning-based activity<sup>89</sup>. Orchestrated together, this can improve the “bandwidth” for dynamic task definitions and the latitude for experimentation to oversee and “steer” progress. This capacity and capability is current “out of reach” in the construct of the present “real-politik”. The traditional “left-right” political spectrum still dominates the scope of institutional arrangements, permeating the design of oversight mechanisms.<sup>90</sup> This draws away from, rather than aids progress towards, resolving messes. I contend many dilemmas currently treated as “too hard” are resolvable.

For example, achieving (a) urban growth and (b) affordability is possible with development, if there is a will to face issues and make changes. Many objectives are not diametrically opposed, rather require a “mindset”<sup>91</sup> shift and a supporting apparatus to move from seeing and dealing with development dilemmas as intractable set of problems. If seen as a soluble set of system issues, formed of “malleable” messes, then direct and indirect interventions combine to make a difference. For example, housing affordability cannot be “fixed” by housing, infrastructure, planning or financial policies alone. Rather, success can be achieved through the mastery of the “system of messes”. The current predicament, marred by a multitude of political and policy failures to achieve stated outcomes, is influenced by the behaviour of politicians and their prevailing modus operandi. The depth to which political actors involve themselves in policy-making details comes into focus as an issue that is increasingly causing issues of accountability. When Ministers “reach down” for simple “fixes” it can disempower the Civil Service to offer policy advice. Moreover, if the policy agenda is set and manifests as political promises, this leaves

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<sup>88</sup> For example, the type of thinking advocated by Posner and Weyl (2018).

<sup>89</sup> For example, this might include but not be restricted to the type of thinking that is emergent in the design field, such as that unfolding in “speculative design” (e.g. Dunne and Raby, 2013).

<sup>90</sup> Beinhocker’s (2007) discussion of “the end of left versus right” for example, references this constraint and the need to move beyond battling over states and markets (Beinhocker, 2007, pp. 415-428).

<sup>91</sup> I use *mindset* to connote the mental model or worldview that frames the way we see and approach issues, sometimes used interchangeably with paradigm. From a systems thinking perspective one way into assessing meaning is to consider the prevailing worldview or mindset as demanding change when anomalies appear i.e. when the facts do not fit the mindset (Pourdehnad et al., 2011, p.1-2).

politicians “leaning in” to drive through changes. This issue is recognised as a contemporary problem (Morse, 2019).<sup>92</sup> What is also revealed by political over-assertion into complex issues, is that alongside ideological zeal and fear of rates of change being too slow for the political cycle (the *presentist bias*),<sup>93</sup> is the reality that failures and their associated difficulties often are urgent, requiring action. The Public Service in “business as usual” mode may be some way from dealing with, adequately addressing, or remedying significant issues without active leadership from the top.

Difficult situations require complex issue management techniques that support timely decision-making for coordinated solutions. Coordination works best when techniques allow for multiple conceptions of what is at stake to co-exist, thereby facilitating a range of distributed responses. As in most systems, there is not a single driver of stress or point of pressure that constitutes systemic weakness in and of itself. There is inevitably a series of issues interacting, i.e. a multitude of signals emanating in different directions through networks can make simplistic causalities problematic. Simple solutions are often inadequate and at times, counter-productive. My view is governance oversight is in part currently experiencing a reduced ability to direct or “control” critical issues. Producing order and maintaining it in the contemporary environment is problematic in part due to the complexity of coordination problems. In this context, ways to support adaptability become paramount. Given that it is widely recognised that traditional systems of governance at national and international levels are stretched, my primary contention is that disconnected short-termism is an overall outcome pervading existing political and public sector practice. In short, the prevailing default modality in contemporary democracies is largely:

- *Fragmentary and Siloed* – where plans with sub-optimal whole-of-system consideration and awareness uneasily co-exist, often causing a “shattering” of issue coherence and multi-dimensional failure.
- *‘Presentist’ and Horizon-restricted* – short-run mono-vision imagined futures with a tightly-bound array of “in-system” possibilities as the favoured remit (or upon failure, a breakdown and fracturing “out of control”).
- *Regressive and Misaligned* – protective retreats from current and future needs, with the correlative opening-up of misleading political orientations further hindering connectivity and emergent adaptation.

I characterize this as the “*Residual Default*” to denote the nature of the institutional landscape and issue treatment processes that dominate it. Not ending up dealing with the key issues of our era in this way is at the heart of the *New Democratic Challenge*. The Civil Service is adapted to

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<sup>92</sup> Refer to the perspective of the Auditor General (Sir Amyas Morse) discussed in 5.2 to support this position.

<sup>93</sup> Refer to definition and discussion of the *presentist bias* in 5.3 and Appendix 1.

business-as-usual requiring responsive reflexes to issues of the day (“firefighting”) with the skew to the “short” diminishing reserve capacity and capability for genuine long-run activity to chart a reasoned course. In Chapter 4 I contend that *time* is conceptually and operationally underappreciated, going on to develop new ways of engagement.

## 4. Convergence: *Functional Temporalities*

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### 4.1 Outline

*“... there is a mismatch between the change in the pace of change and our ability to develop the learning systems, training systems, management systems, social safety nets, and government regulations that would enable citizens to get the most out of these accelerations and cushion their worst impacts. This mismatch...is at the center of much of the turmoil roiling politics... It now constitutes probably the most important governance challenge across the globe.” – Thomas Friedman (2016).*

Along with integration failures, temporal mismatches are central elements of democratic dysfunction. Timing and fast-paced change is not receding in importance across our lived experiences and politics. Time is understudied and undertreated. If you take *rate of change* seriously as a core contemporary issue, it has profound implications for governance arrangements. It manifests most acutely in moments of “convergence” at the fulcrum of a system. It is a central point of leverage. While Friedman (2016) catalogues significant communications technology innovations around 2007<sup>94</sup>, painting Silicon Valley as “ground zero” for acceleration, academics have advanced broader speed theses (e.g. Scheuerman, 2004; Rosa, 2010) that I consider. As the power of online access at our fingertips has become more apparent, awareness of the temporal implications for democracy has begun to increase. While some view the pace of technological change a potential saviour, others see it as a harrowing problem, while yet others are seemingly indifferent to the cultural impact. I make a case for its critical salience for functional, democracy-based mean-making and collective navigation.

Temporal coherence can be seen to be increasingly problematic in many ways, with misalignments between the speed of issues and the speed of policy responses and decision-making. As my starting point, I posit a challenge for democratic governance as being about orienting to being spatial and temporal together. A focus on “coherent” governance for effective results means drawing attention to: (a) *space* – namely “dis-connections” evidenced at a strategic oversight and tactical operational level with issue fragmentation and problem definition splintering (“spatial siloing”), and; (b) *time* – namely “dis-junctures” evidenced at a strategic oversight and tactical operational level with the state of the temporal of issues and lack of problem synchronization (“temporal treatments”). This chapter first surveys targeted aspects of temporal literatures, laying groundwork for building a new conceptual framework to improve governance. I discuss the

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<sup>94</sup> Friedman (2016) considers that a series of groundbreaking communications technologies going mainstream at the time, with profound cultural implications, were overshadowed by the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). In his reading, we are still coming to terms with the connectivity and social impacts of this shift (Friedman, 2016, pp. 19-28).

primacy of “clock time” in society and develop a position with respect to seeing temporality in governance. Accessing theorising of time in social theory, I construct a conceptual perspective that I call the *timespace window*. This aim is for governance to benefit from a sharper and more nuanced resolution of temporality in both policy analytics and decision-making.

## **4.2 Time Expansiveness: *Design, Decision and Delivery***

Where activities are situated and decisions made is where time comes together in space for a moment that is experienced and malleable. To develop a way to see and think about time more expansively, taking a more inclusive and synchronizing civic treatment of time, addresses a number of contemporary challenges. One critical issue for democratic practice is considering how best to account for the interests of the young, the unborn and citizens in the longer-run future. That is, those who have no direct voice today in the civic realm. I argue for the need to diversify our conception of time in the present, that is to embrace and accommodate the subjectivity of temporality experienced as common-place in everyday lives. There are ways to move from the immediacies of presenting issues (e.g. crises and failures) to becoming more “time expansive” as an intentional approach to develop a “generative” system that builds capacity for ongoing change. New applications for expanded conceptions of timespace are necessary to overcome “presentist”<sup>95</sup> and short-run viewpoints that have a limited and distorting horizon on key issues.

I place an emphasis on understanding time as a social phenomenon where the “rate of change” potential in systems (comprising of subsystem “speeds” being able to synchronise or not) plays out against a backdrop of a whole-of-system “state of speed” (that is, whether the social context is in a state of acceleration or de-acceleration for example). As a starting point, fit-for-purpose perspective on time in governance requires placing “clock-time” at the centre.

### **4.2.1. *Clock-Time and Social Technologies***

Even at the level of taken-for-granted clock-time, time is contestable e.g. agreements were originally negotiated about how it would be organised.<sup>96</sup> Resistance to clock time from the late

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<sup>95</sup> I define, characterise and develop a perspective on *presentism* (what I term “disconnected presentism”) in Chapter 5 (refer 5.3).

<sup>96</sup> Against local resistance, Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) was adopted in England in the mid-1800s. Because of an unsurprising local attachment to “sun time” – with midday being when the sun is highest – having midday day at other times of the day was often locally controversial. An international political compromise was reached after an American attempt to globally standardise time in 1883 (Lash and Urry, 1994, p.228-30). Lewis Mumford, accredited with the observance that the clock was the organising key to the Industrial Revolution (Mumford, 1934), records the spread of rapid transportation “occasioned a change in the method of time-keeping itself” (Mumford, 1934, p. 198). American railways instigating conventional “time belts” (zones) in 1875, almost a decade prior to official adoption of standard time promulgated at the World Congress, something Castells (2010) interprets as “the materialization of the

Industrial Age onward arose with the unfurling of new technologies. Ellul (1964) laments the mechanical specificity and imposition of precision onto life that was once less clock-driven (Ellul, 1964, p. 328-329). However today, while natural timescapes and rhythms form our daily backdrop, in the foreground the rise of mechanical forces and the power of accelerated interaction e.g. high frequency-trading and online communications aided by exponentially growing computing power) see the dominance of clock-speed as a stark imperative. Temporality, and its subjectivity in the contemporary world, is elucidated upon in literatures including philosophical, sociological and political works, notably: Giddens (1981); Adam (2004, 2008); Caney (2016); and Rosa (2010, 2013, 2015a,b). My view is that institutional systems must recognise differing temporal conceptions, noting these are sometimes fundamental in cultural differences.<sup>97</sup>

As time is socially constructed, it is a variable experience. In cultural reproduction, time is metaphorically referenced and deployed to normalise understandings, e.g. with metaphorical concepts used in everyday experiences such as: “timing is everything”, “this is a race against time”, and “time is money” (Larkoff and Johnson, 2003, p.8-9).<sup>98</sup> With time expectations prevalent in our experience of exchange lubricated by the next level of technologies (e.g. online shopping), our sense of time bends more to instant gratification. Placing time and space at the centre of social inquiry is an act Lash and Urry (1994) see performed by Giddens that renders being oblivious of time as analytically negligent (ibid, p.230). How we handle time and space as a social construct, not least as it becomes a means to produce and exercise *power*, is a key democratic issue (Giddens, 2012). To understand this drawing on philosophical knowledge threads, Giddens (1981) recognises three timescales: the *durée of daily time* experienced, the *Dasein* of life-time of an individual or the physical body, and the *longue durée* of institutions in a historical mode of ‘supra-individual’ understanding (Giddens, 1981, p.35). Underpinning the direction of his gaze, is an orientation to the implications chronological imposition as a means for maintain socio-economic relations has:

*“My main argument concerns the significance of the creation of time with a 'double existence' in which, as in other processes of commodification associated with capitalism, the universal, abstract, quantifiable expression of time comes to predominate over the qualitative organisation of time processes characteristic of all non-capitalist forms of society.”* (Giddens, 1981, p.134).

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hegemony of the British Empire” (Castells, 2010, p.463). Time zones became the pathway to standardisation and international synchronization (Rovelli, 2018).

<sup>97</sup> For example, perceptual distinctions are often at the source of starting and overcoming conflicts e.g. indigenous concepts of time versus European impositions.

<sup>98</sup> Time-related “talk” is deeply imbued Western cultures through public, private and civic practice. “Perceived time” connecting to self-perceptions of value, traces back to Simmel’s notions of time and value in exchange (Dodd and Wajcman, 2016). Simmel (2004) advanced the significance of time because “the more we are sucked into the ceaseless flux of commodity exchange, and thus the more we experience time as always flowing away from us, the less we experience ourselves as discrete individuals” (Dodd and Wajcman, 2016, p. 8).



In a similar sociological vein, Castells (2010) more recently references what he calls “timeless time” as the dominant and emergent form of social time in the network society. This features the emerging logic of the new social structure that forms a contemporary concept of relentless temporality in a globally interdependent system (Castells, 2010, p.464-5).<sup>99</sup> In this age of high connectivity and hence temporal interconnectivity, acceleration and its implications are notable.

#### **4.2.2. Theories of Social Acceleration**

Rosa (2004, 2010, 2013, 2015a,b,c) makes the case for a critical theory of temporality and the “acceleration society”. Scheuerman (2004) considered liberal democracy and acceleration, while Hassan (2008) focussed on speed and democracy. Seeing *social acceleration* as a critical phenomenon, Rosa picks-up sociological threads where increasing social alienation (or “anomie”) and dislocation flow from social acceleration in late modernity.<sup>100</sup> In driving at understanding what would be a “non-alienated human experience” or “the good life” (Rosa, 2010, p.8-9), Rosa frames the speeding up of (a) technology, (b) social change, and (c) the pace of life, as the main elements of the interlocking feedback of a “self-propelling system” (ibid, p.16-25; 31-33): He claims that the structural and cultural aspects of institutional practice generate a “contraction of the present” (Rosa, 2013, p.76). Meanwhile combined with acceleration, time is perceived to flow faster, informing our experience of modern life. Difficulties experienced with temporal mismatches make relations difficult at a variety of levels and good stewardship problematic. In pursuing his account with respect to political modernity and its “escalatory logic” (Rosa, 2015a, p.15), he writes:

*“Democracy is by definition operating in a mode of dynamic stabilization, i.e. it is based on a repetitive cycle of elections, which stands in sharp contrast to all known forms of monarchic regimes aspiring to preserve the existing political rule. Moreover, political programs and political competition invariably follow the logic of overbidding and outpacing competitors, of promising increase and augmentation... and achieving ‘progress’ ... is a requirement for institutional and structural preservation.”* (Rosa, 2015a, p.13).

In managing perceptions of legitimacy to govern progress, embracing change is necessary for reproducing institutional life, however “the world cannot be evenly sped-up” (Rosa, 2013, 2015a,b). This leads to *de-synchronizations* at the core of societal crises (Rosa, 2015a) in the zone where faster systems pressure slower ones and risk de-synchronization at interfaces (Rosa, 2015a,

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<sup>99</sup> Castells colourfully remarks: “Timelessness sails in an ocean surrounded by time-bound shores, from where still can be heard the laments of time-chained creatures.” (Castells, 2010, p.497).

<sup>100</sup> Social theorists preceded Rosa (e.g. 2004). Making the case for Simmel (2004) as the first theorist of the “acceleration society” in 1900 with his analysis of modern time consciousness “seeking the eternal within time’s unceasing flow”, (Dodd and Wajcman, 2016, p. 1, 20), Giddens work from the 1980s is the most often referenced in the sociology of time. Giddens characterized modernization as a process of “time-space distanciation” where increasing abstraction and an “emptying out” occurs so people become more “disembedded” from the concrete world (Lash and Urry, 1994, p.13).

p.18). De-synchronized events consume more political energy as complexity increases. Democratic activity (participative or direct) can become a time-consuming limitation. As a way forward, Rosa turns to the idea of finding “resonance”<sup>101</sup> to overcome disconnected, or dysfunctional, socio-economic systems. This view dovetails with the notion of a prevailing *integrative* condition to pursue counter to a fragmentary situation.

My position is to take a nuanced treatment of time in governance seriously. I take this to mean both clock-time and wider pluralistic conceptions of time that recognise both accelerative and de-accelerative phenomena, are potentially informative considerations in decision-making. Creating systems that are sensitive to the need for “multi-speeded” lines of development – some activities rapid and some slow – are necessary. Democracy typically experiences episodes where there is a rush of rapid change, followed by periods of absorption and consolidation. Consistent with a complexity worldview of adaptive evolution and path dependencies, I concur with Chesneaux:

*“These two modes do not alternate simply and mechanically. They are organically articulated, each reciprocally paving the way for the other and deriving from the other. This flexible articulation is a direct counter-proof of the ‘acceleration’ theory; it touches the very foundations of democracy, the very essence of democratic development as complex and always uncertain process combining speeds and its opposite: slowness delay, expectation, consolidation.”* (Chesneaux, 2000, p. 418).

Scheuerman’s (2004) analysis, arguing that pace of change contains “manifold implications for liberal democracy” (2004, p. xiii), draws out a helpful insight about speed and implications for different parts of the system. In exploring the temporality of the traditional tripartite institutional structure of liberal democracy – rightly in my view – Scheuerman makes the distinction between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary and the influence social acceleration has on their respective functional utility. As Talisse (2005) condenses in review:

*“According to this [traditional] design, the legislative branch functions prospectively, the judicial primarily plays a retrospective role, and the executive acts in and for the present. Scheuerman argues –compellingly, in my view – that ‘high-speed society privileges high-speed institutions’ (p. 45). This means that the temporal acceleration of contemporary society empowers the executive agency of government, rendering the judicial and legislative relatively impotent. ... In this way, social acceleration creates an imbalance in the traditional separation of powers.”* (Talisse, 2005, p. 724).

From another perspective, Hassan’s (2008) critical work draws attention to what he describes as the “new epistemological context”, foregrounding network speed that does not bind well with

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<sup>101</sup> Rosa views seeking *resonance* as a way to disrupt and work towards corrections that align individual psychological need with collective societal need (ibid): “...*slowing things down would certainly not be enough. Moreover, to just slow things down and leave everything else as it is, is virtually impossible ... The dominant institutional mode of social reproduction requires that we have to run faster and faster each year just to stay in place. ... even if it were possible, in my view, slowness cannot be an end in itself. ... Speed is only ‘bad’ when it leads to alienation ... to argue that what we are after, positively, when criticising acceleration is not slowness, but resonance.*” (Rosa, undated).

classical liberal democracy. With the convergence of ICT<sup>102</sup> progressing in tandem with neo-liberal globalisation, Hassan argues that the recent shift makes it particularly apparent that the “profound marginalization of the institutions of democratic politics” makes democracy “no longer able to delivery upon its modernist promise” (Hassan, 2008, p. 3-4). Taking his position from Chesneaux (2000), he concurs that “speed does not favour the dialogue between present, past and future, which is fundamental for the proper exercise of democracy” (Chesneaux, 2000, p.407). Hassan accordingly emphasizes the shift from modernity to postmodernity, making the modernist promise of liberal democracy “obsolete by the qualitative and quantitative leap in social, technological, and cultural acceleration that defines the current neo-liberal, postmodern epoch.” (Hassan, 2008, p. 11). The democratic disconnect stems from a political economy of “open-ended and uncontrolled speed” in a network society driving change at a rate politics cannot practically synchronize with (ibid). With the time of the network as “the new temporal meter”, Hassan like others highlighting dysfunction from speed, argues that the difficulty from “functioning in a full and meaningful way at the increasing speed of socioeconomic and political processes means that a postmodern temporal dissonance reigns.” (Hassan, 2008, p. 14).

If the responsiveness of democracy declines, a lack of timeliness in a quicken world would see legitimacy eroded if expectations are not met. Hence, I go on to reconfigure on the basis that faster and slower processes are required. The key issue is creating systemic awareness of the importance of time that can discern the right decision points and pace of treatment. At times this can assist dealing with accelerated phenomenon, where lags in democratic response and system adaptation is behind the curve given the speed of impact from developments e.g. with new technologies and changing consumption patterns. This can assist dealing with de-accelerated phenomenon where the democratic response and system adaptation requires action given the impact of reduced pressure e.g. population decline and failing consumption. What these theories have in common is a sensitivity to the temporal social, economic and cultural effects evident on our democratic apparatus and institutional arrangements. Be it a primary gaze towards the waves of acceleration – or an appreciation of the counter-ripples of de-acceleration – the issues of “speediness” or “lagginess” in contemporary life brings time itself into sharper resolution.

#### **4.2.3. Synthesis: Social Time “Takes”**

*“The challenge for social theory as I see it is to expand the temporal gaze to depths and breadths that had so far fallen outside its field of vision, to touch the deep structure of social and institutional relations and thus to reach ‘parts’ and processes that other social theories can’t reach.” – Barbara Adam (2000, p.127).*

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<sup>102</sup> Information Communication Technologies (ICT).

Adam (2000, 2004, 2008) extends the social theory tradition on from Giddens, exploring time's influence on social phenomenon. In the quest to understand the "control of time" she arrives at a framework based on five Cs: *clock time, commodification, compression, colonization and control* (Adam 2004, p. 124-148). The underlying premise of "social time" to follow Adam (2004), is to recognise it as subjective and personal. Surveying the field of temporal theorising, Adam (2000) outlines three "takes" in the "timescape".<sup>103</sup> An advantage of this approach that I find useful is that it layers-up the central issue of temporal control, allowing for a concentric development to expose the reasoning behind divergent understandings:

<b>Take 1</b>	- adding clock time to conventional 'non-temporal' analysis, not "interfering with existing frames of meaning"
<b>Take 2</b>	- going more deeply to recognise the "mutual dependence of time and space and to understand environmental processes and events with reference to their inescapable inter-dependency"
<b>Take 3</b>	- seeing a pluralistic and multidimensional construct of time, entailing "that we make the implicit explicit and recognize time's multiplex function and expression since time is not a single dimension but affects socio-environmental life on a multitude of levels and through choreographed clusters of temporal characteristics." (Adam, 2000, p.133-4).

Drawn into the construction of and regimes of time are question of ethics and justice. For example, taking a dominant interpretation from a rational utilitarian perspective in government, Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) is deployed as a standardized methodology to find the best trade-off based on the information that can be organised.<sup>104</sup> However, as Graham (2019) identifies based on *National Infrastructure Commission* (NIC) research, a more Kantian slant to assessing matters prevails in the public consciousness. In other words, "fairness" and concern for those who might be disadvantaged "outliers" often gain sympathy for their plight, over-riding the majoritarian "best interest" guiding public policy. If in a deliberative democratic mode community buy-in is to be achieved, respecting outlier legitimacy and working towards amelioration become important in the process.

The main point I wish to flag is that assumptions about the relevant horizons of issues – and their commensurate costs and benefits – influences what is seen as important in civic decisions. A

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<sup>103</sup> Adam (2000) proposes a "timescape" as a temporal landscape: "... recognizing all the temporal features of socio-environmental events and processes, charting temporal profiles in their political and economic contexts. This in turn transforms the way clock and calendar time feature in the analysis: both lose their objectivity and neutrality and become instead an integral part of the 'social relations of definition' ... and power. Thus, a timescape analysis is not concerned to establish what time is but what we do with it and how time enters our system of values." (Adam, 2000, p.137).

<sup>104</sup> Pearce, Atkinson and Mourato (2006) provide a comprehensive OECD summary of CBA practice and issues (Pearce et al. 2006).

temporally inclusive governance must consider the balances and choices made in appropriate timeframes, as the contestation of timeframes is an important issue in terms of who is considered (e.g. are longer-run interests?). With both standardised clock-time and perception-based viewpoints at stake, reflecting a range of human experiences of time is a fundamental aspect of the governance challenge. A structural framework and a culturally-enabling practice become important to “reset” decision-making and build trust. Reframing also supports the idea that a “decision architecture” shift to mediate better “timespace” handling in decision is desirable to underpin durable progress.

### 4.3 Democratic Time: *Politics and Governance*

*“If we say money is time, we have to say speed is power.” – Paul Virilio (2009).*

With speed as a driving notion in market “disruption” for progress, the importance of timing is often construed similarly with short-run tactics for maintaining political power. Virioli’s (1991) observation makes explicit what is often politically unspoken<sup>105</sup>. Electoral cycles are the foundation of “responsive political time” and establish that power is for a limited time (Goetz, 2014, p. 386), while short-run political impacts are well known. With devolution in the UK for example, Heseltine (2014) classically highlights change impacting momentum:

*“The danger of so many these big changes in this country is that one Government does it, the next comes in and undoes it, worse still, comes in, undoes it, but then actually recreates it by putting different names to the people trying to do it, with the inevitable two or three year gap in the momentum.” (Heseltine, 2014).*

With the analysis of the politics of “short-termism” (or *presentism*)<sup>106</sup> not a central feature of political studies, Scheuerman (2004) observes scholars are reluctant to “give proper conceptual attention to the timing and spacing of human activities, let alone grapple with the implications of speed.” (Scheuerman, 2004, p. xiii). Typically, the cost of lost opportunities is not extensively explored, calculated and considered in light of future decisions. Even the cost of delays and consideration of who bears the costs in the present is often not systematically understood. Temporally aware academic exceptions in politics, public policy and public administration include Caney (2018), Pierson (2004), and Jacobs (2011); along with Boston (2016a,b). Pierson’s (2004) view, akin to my own position, brings a systems sensibility and temporality together. He makes the point that a “preoccupation with moments of policy choice” can “direction our attention towards the dramatic and away from the important” (Pierson, 2004, p. 166). Following Pierson in many respects, Jacobs (2011) position, as Caney (2018) also notes, is to argue the variability of

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<sup>105</sup> The French philosopher Paul Virilio is credited with the term *dromocratie* (i.e. speed through power) in his wider indictment of speed in society, arguing speed is used as a process of violence that reduces our presence and increases disassociation (Virilio, 1991).

<sup>106</sup> Refer 5.3.

long-term governance interacts with the margin of (a) “electoral safety” to hand, (b) whether long-run social benefits can be substantiated, and (c) whether the “institutional capacity” exists to implement reform (Caney, 2018, p. 489). Jacobs optimistically notes, that with political will, democracies may be effective in their treatment of long-term issues.<sup>107</sup> While this may be possible, I do not consider it currently so. I concur more strongly with Rosa’s early work, offering an emphasis on time and democracy (Rosa, 2005), where his basic conception is that changes in society’s temporal structures impact on the possibilities within democratic politics (ibid, p. 446).

Rosa (2005) concluded that: “The accelerated speed of social development and change and the rates of instability have outgrown the upper threshold of the speed-frame of democracy.” (Rosa, 2005, p. 454). With regard to “speed-frame”, Rosa states: “...it is my claim that democracy only works properly within a certain time- or “speed-frame” of social change. Below a critical threshold, democracy is implausible; above it, it might well be impossible.” (Rosa, 2005, p. 446).<sup>108</sup> I find Rosa’s (2013) conception of layered “frames” pragmatically useful, to which I return later. I now continue to develop a way to think about time and “look ahead”.

#### **4.3.1. Working with “the past that lies before us”**

The past does not often provide replicable answers; instead traces of learning and clues for new applications in the present. Schultz and Hernes (2013) describe how the past is evoked in present-day “identity reconstruction” while influencing future identity claims (Schultz and Hernes, 2013). When discontinuities in the present produce “recall” dislocation from what we already have learnt or the identity we have constructed, not understanding the past is a genuine barrier.<sup>109</sup> Nostalgia for “slow time” as an antidote can kick-in. Not all problems and messes require slow treatments. Where we think we have been and where we think we are going, influence our perceived experience of the present and future. Lederach (2005) working in indigenous peacebuilding, develops a way to see the past.<sup>110</sup> Commonly establishing their collective identity and meaning-

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<sup>107</sup> Jacobs and Matthews (2012) claim based on American research that although there is evidence that older people tend to discount the future more than those who are middle age, older individuals are not uniformly opposed to paying near-term costs for longer-term benefits. They contend that people of different generations appear to have similar policy preferences on a range of issues (Jacobs and Matthews, 2012).

<sup>108</sup> Evidencing the German context in the late 1990s, Rosa remarks that politics appears to becoming incapable as being the “pace-maker of social change” where it relies on “situationalist attempts at ‘muddling through’” (Rosa, 2005, p. 453).

<sup>109</sup> The Chief Executive of the *British Academy* (Evans, 2019) has called for a more systematic approach to historical advice in government, with “History Advisors” similar to the role of Chief Scientific Adviser in Whitehall, in part to help address the turnover of civil servants dissipating institutional memory. On face value, this proposal can be view as both a pragmatic response to continuity issues in a managerial state on one hand, and as a nostalgically tinged wish on the other.

<sup>110</sup> Lederach co-produced a representation of how communities experiencing “recent events” in conflictual situations, nest these within a “lived history” typically running from one to nine decades,

making in the present through recognition and narrations connected themselves to a place in the past, they typically work with a “long view of living history” (Lederach, 2005, p.140).

To have a full understanding of the present and views of the future, it is inevitable that the past is brought to bear when activating beliefs and trust about what is possible. The process of understanding the present and exploring the future is bound in the the immediate experience of recent events through shared “remembered histories” and formative narratives. Lederach posits: “If we take a long view of identity and group formation seriously, we shall come to recognize that the formation of group identity arising from the past construction of its future, and its very survival is about finding place, voice and story.” (Lederach, 2005, p.143). Placing “now” identity formation and sense-making into a wider notion of timespace, is a key feature of Lederach’s “moral imagination”. Reflecting that the *moral imagination* requires developing “the art of living in multiple time and space spheres” he notes:

*“Even in the moments of greatest crisis, when the urgency of the situation seems to hinge on quick short-term decisions, multidimensionality is present. ...we need the imagination of the past that lies before us. This kind of imagination does not see the past as something to be laid aside, overcome, or forgotten in order to move to a better future. It does not engage the past by relentless revisiting bygone events... nor does it see the past as a magical formula... ‘Restorying’ as imaginative narrative looks for the deeper social story and meaning, not just of what happened, but how stories are connected to a far more profound journey of discovering what these events mean for who we are...” (ibid, p. 148, 147).*

#### **4.3.2. To the future that lies in front of us**

The “future-present” as a way to think implies bringing what is ahead back to the “now” so as to “draw us forward”. Dealing with the different interpretations for forward-facing timeframes presents options. There are advocates for large horizons e.g. Christian’s “big history” timescales (Christian, 2018) or Boulding’s (1981) “200-year present”.<sup>111</sup> Shoham’s (2010) articulation of the treatment of the present includes highlighting the “courage to forget” fears from the past and to “look inward” (Shoham, 2010, p.27):<sup>112</sup>

*“At any point, we can only see segments from the past and present, but we cannot see the future. The proper way to act when making decisions is to listen to the hear and to follow*

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nested within the “remembered history” as the social or “context of memory” kept alive by a group to maintain a collective identity. He sees the deepest history conceptualised as the “narrative”, operating as the level of the anchor or formative story. A “pre-present blind spot” about the past in his integrated framework focussed on moving communities forward from crisis with a transformational vision, was consistently flagged as missing by, in particular, indigenous peoples (Lederach, 2005, pp. 138-149). Refer diagram (Lederach, 2005, p. 141).

<sup>111</sup> Boulding explains: “The 200-year present began 100 years ago with the year of birth of the people who have reach their hundredth birthday today. The other boundary ... is the hundredth birthday of the babies born today.” (Boulding in Saffo, 2010).

<sup>112</sup> Shoham was a judge in Israel’s judiciary and headed the Israeli *Commission for Future Generations* while it existed.

*the intuition that combines our emotional and intellectual abilities with life experience and our immediate senses. A look inward helps us to leave behind a conventional understanding of our present reality and to lead us onward, even when the logical reasons for our acts are unconscious and have not yet entered our awareness...*" (Shoham, 2010, p.27-8).

As Shoham (2010, p.60) notes, one of history's tragedies is the moment of division, when simplistic positions involve their being one "right" way vanquishing others as "wrong", opening the door for rebuke and and escalation. Consequently, where the emphasis on the "view forward" is constrained or muted, the conceivable horizon is devoid of depth, lacking detail. With dominance of a technological worldview, emanating from Silicon Valley culture, and amplified globally, there is an unusual mix of generalized "sci-fi" imagining at the creative edge, polarized from local participative neighbourhood protection often taking the role of resistance against progress.<sup>113</sup> Driving to explore "what if...", Dunne and Raby's (2013) "speculative design" exemplifies the artistic exploration of relationships between the reality of here-and-now and the fictional.

In philosophical writing, the future is often represented in terms of omnipresent political power. In the site of the city, Virilio (1991) paints a temporally strained future. Reminiscent of Bentham's *panopticon*,<sup>114</sup> or in Foucault's terms, "panopticism",<sup>115</sup> writing of the "immanent city" and the impact of technology's ubiquity, Virilio contends that "... devoid of horizon... continuity no longer breaks down in space, not in the physical space of urban lots nor in the juridical space of their property tax records. From here, continuity is ruptured in time, in a time that advanced technologies and industrial redeployment incessantly arrange through a series of interruptions..." (ibid, p. 11). Against a cultural backdrop of "liquid modernity" (Bauman, 2007) is in systems terminology; uncertainty, nonlinearity and indeterminacy of public governance. This translates into the "State" seeking to oversee and manage continuity – working against temporal disjunctures.

There are many forms of futures activity, prediction and anticipation. Some radical thinkers are increasingly disposed towards a more constructive consideration of the value of imagining in ways that can assist inclusive progress, e.g. Wright (2010). Wright's thinking explored the idea of "real utopias", made real by working with the tension between "dreams and practice" (ibid, p. 6).

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<sup>113</sup> That is, classic locally organised NIMBY ("Not in My Backyard") resistance to local planning that seeks to enable increased densities or new development in an area. It has come to be seen as a key socio-economic fault-line between existing property owners and those entering the market. Ryan Collins (2019) and Ryan-Collins, Lloyd and Macfarlane (2017) explore these issues and housing market barriers in the UK context.

<sup>114</sup> Jeremy Bentham (1843) designed a circular high surveillance prison known as a panopticon and proclaimed as "new mode of obtaining power" in the late 18th century (Bentham, 1843).

<sup>115</sup> Michel Foucault (1975) extended to the idea as a generalized mechanism for social control as omnipresent beyond the prison in hierarchical social structures.



Openness to temporal alternatives can mean in a broad sense, being more expansive, inclusive and synchronization-seeking with notions of time. It is inevitably about working against standardised narrow conceptions. A genuinely creative process has its own sense of time and it may not conform to standard chronologies. The decision-making sensibility has to be sensitive to the clock's that are in operation that are as varied as the people involved. Contradictory views of *timespace* are part of the experiential journey to develop and advance meaning.

### **4.3.3. The Search for Order**

In contrast to the limitless timescapes of "imaging", I now focus on the governance consequences of exercising power to circumscribe societal oversight. Recognising a Weberian perspective of bureaucracy's stabilising role, Sennett (2016) points to Schumpeter's early work showing that in a "militarized, social capitalism" businesses profited as investors sought both longer-term yields alongside a "quick buck" (Sennett, 2016, p. 21-2). Counteracting disorder, the planning capabilities of the State assumed a consequential role to advance projects despite short-term instabilities. This "spilled-over" enabling individual agency and power (ibid, p. 23), helping stabilise post-War economies in combination with public investments (e.g. housing, health and welfare). Much of the advancement today is premised on this Nation-State "platform".<sup>116</sup> At the heart of this quest for systemic stability, Sennett, like Virilio, affirms the significance of *time* in forming social understanding: "Time lay at the center of this military, social capitalism: long-term and incremental and above all predictable time." (ibid, p. 23). Given "predictable time" experiences disruptions and interventions that make it non-continuous and non-linear – for example natural disasters or financial failures – the quest for order ultimately remains elusive and a mirage in civic oversight.

In advanced economies with the "Silicon Valley effect" permeating social practices and culture, Sennett proffers we are seeing the militarisation of time "coming apart" as we descend into a more short-term, erratic and transactional organising reality (Sennett, 2016, p. 24-5). With models of change premised on industry disruption to the existing order (e.g. *Uber* with mobility), the drivers of change in the last decade have been strongly in the mode of "speed as power" aided by the rise of mobile phone-based computing applications. In this "platform" capitalism,<sup>117</sup> short-term, rapid and unpredictable temporality takes primacy. Building from this backdrop, I next develop a way to think about and embody time for functional decision-making that brings a

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<sup>116</sup> A key part of the mix was the capacity to borrow money in a relatively stable environment over the medium to long-run e.g. packaged as a mortgage where the bank had the security of the asset. While this has evolved into a more destabilized financial regime, it has worked for a majority while the capital gains achievable have offset the risk (Ryan-Collins, 2019).

<sup>117</sup> Refer to Alstyn et al. (2016) who make a distinction between the nature and dynamics of "old" physical-based economic activity and "new" pipeline virtual-oriented technologies.

more temporally aware and “time-infused” analysis to assist governance. I aim to accommodate the democratic stresses engendered by new logics with platform capitalism’s flexibilities and haste, alongside the “traditional” logics of “pipeline” capitalism.

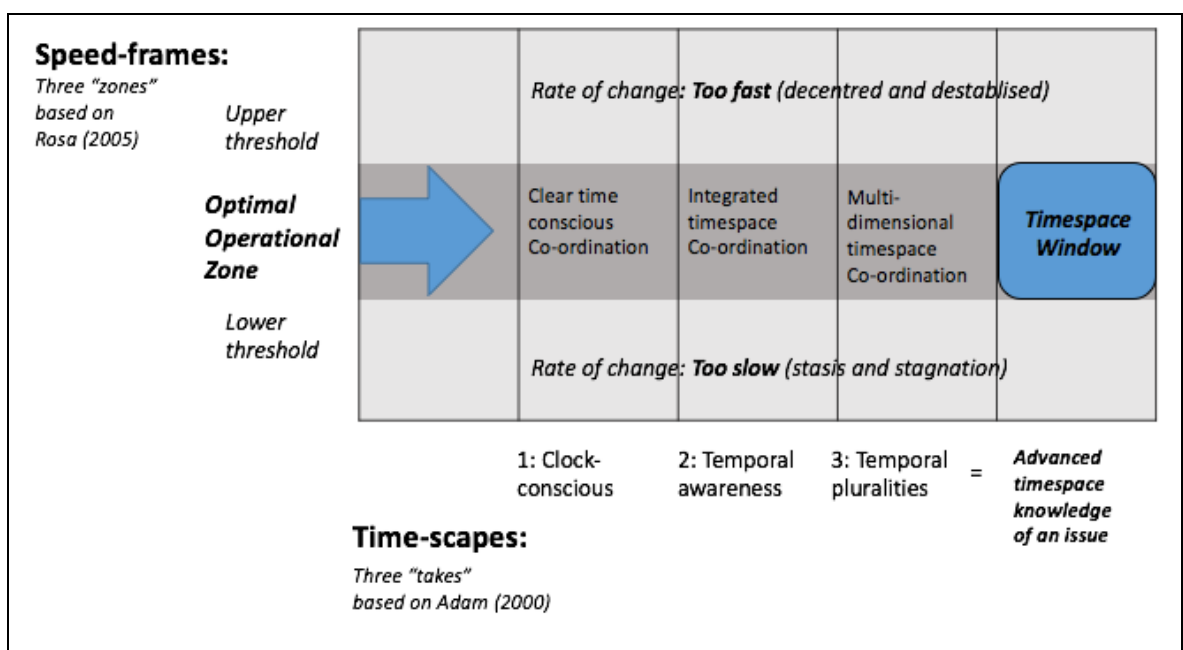
#### 4.4 Timespace Governance: *Design and Activation*

With the three “takes” from Adam (2000) and the zones of “speed-frame” articulated by Rosa (2005) explained next, I advance an approach to assist timespace classification and analysis. I conceive of the as a *Timespace Window* to guide the adaptation of inclusive temporal sensibilities in governance. I call it a “window” as a framing device to orient attention to a wider and deeper context for a more coherent framework to help guide complex transformation.

##### 4.4.1. *Speed-frames and Time-scapes*

Rosa (2005) conceives of a “speed-frame” of social change as the zone in which democracy “works properly”: “Below a critical threshold, democracy is implausible; above it, it might well be impossible.” (2005, p.446). He concludes that the forces of acceleration have “outgrown the very institutions which set them in motion”, leading him to conclude that due to speed: “...the rates of instability have outgrown the upper threshold of the speed-frame of democracy” (ibid, p.454). Working from this idea, I suggest three zones of speed, recognising an “optimal” operational zone for effective system governance. In this zone, adaption occurs within manageable parameters. With time-scape’s “three takes” (refer 4.2.4) for an increasingly deeper consideration of time, I combining the *frames* and *scapes* accordingly:

Diagram 4.4.1: *Timespace Window*



Taken as a whole, the *Timespace Window* provides a target typology for greater analytic understanding. This can assist with advance astute governance navigation.

#### **4.4.2. Timespace Window Application**

Additionally, I see three “acts” taking place in the *Timespace Window* when conducting processes of governance to find a “harmony” of decisions:

##### **Act 1: Orchestrating Time**

- Issues as both problems and messes – and their parts – move in temporally unique and different ways.
- Understanding disconnected decision-making in fragmented systems and the extent of operational synchronicity that can be produced (and how that might be done) are important variables for achieving progress.
- Different issues require different speeds or ‘rates of change’ for optimal treatment and effective democratic change.
- Therefore, understanding and delivering temporal orchestration is a key condition for successful management and governance.

##### **Act 2: Composing Space**

- Issues as both problems and messes – and their parts – aggregate and dissipate in spatially unique and different ways.
- Understanding the divided catchment of inter-related issues geographically (e.g. city-region, national, international), institutionally (e.g. market, state, civic spheres) and organizationally (e.g. public or private sector teams, divisions, entities and organisations) as important variables in progress
- Different issues require different “working enclosure” parameters for optimal treatment, therefore spatial composition is a key condition for successful governance.
- Therefore, understanding and handling spatial boundaries and their permeability for composition is a key condition for successful management and governance.

##### **Act 3: Synthesizing Timespace**

- Issues as both problems and messes – and their parts – aggregate and dissipate in time and space interactively together in unique and different ways.
- Understanding the practice of composing space and orchestrating time in unison is a key attribute of successful governance – the goal, as in the orchestra analogy, is to get to a synergistic state where the key parts and problems are moving in a mess that is “together”.
- This requires spatial awareness as reflexivity and reflection for optimising issue-based “working enclosure”.
- It also requires temporal awareness as reflexivity and reflection for optimising issue-based “speed of change”.

To assist lines of enquiry with the *three acts* outlined, questions and analytic orientation include (Table 4.4.2):

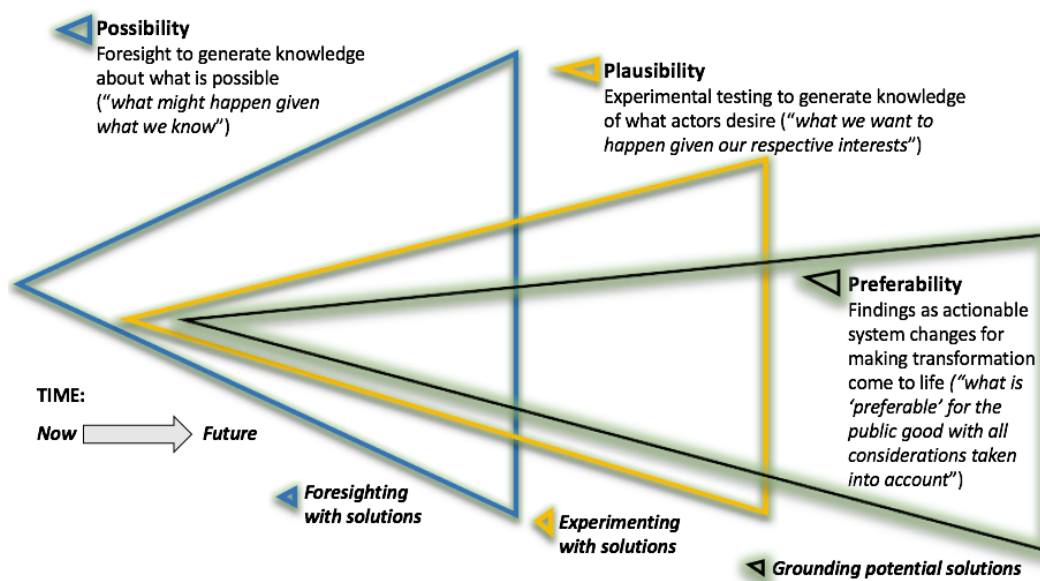
Table 4.4.2: *Timespace Analytic Orientations*

Analytic orientations	Driving Question	Example
<b>Timespace Actors</b> – handling the multiple horizon of interests	<i>Who is represented?</i>	e.g. What stakeholders horizons and spheres are represented?
<b>Timespace Formats</b> – shaping the structural and institutional	<i>What is the process?</i>	e.g. What arrangements determine the organisational ‘depth of field’ and shape interests?
<b>Timespace Functions</b> – influencing the normative and cultural	<i>What is the necessary language and attitude?</i>	e.g. What are the modes and methods of temporal and spatial treatment required?
<b>Timespace Powers</b> – identifying and exercising control	<i>How is leveraging achieved?</i>	e.g. What are the ways to legitimately effect time and space frames, forms and functions – and who can do it?

#### 4.4.3. Applied Futures in Governance

With regard to scoping future opportunities, I develop two support “tools” to assist applied analysis. I offer three “viewpoints” about the future through a “viewfinder” lens. This draws on the “futures cone” (Voros, 2009) and simplifies the set of potential conceivable pathways, recognising critique of foresighting’s limits (Tully, 2015). An understanding of current emphases in a system under investigation can be sought via this “lens” through the “window”.

Diagram 4.4.3: *Future Opportunities Viewfinder*



To recap, the *Timespace Window* provides a way to think and analyse timespace dynamics to assist conceptualisation in applied public policy and governance. I then produce (a) *three acts* to enquiry

for issue “harmony”, (b) the *analytic orientation* and “driving questions” to advance analysis; (c) a *Future Opportunities Viewfinder* to focus looking ahead to assess the distinctions between *possible*, *plausible* and *preferable* pathways. I now draw this chapter together, synthesising the systems (Chapter 3) and temporal lines of enquiry established to date.

#### **4.5 Convergence: *Functioning in the Timespace Mess***

*“Public Administration is often pretending to be disconnected from time and space; however, it should take actively and positively take context and culture into account.”*  
(Bertels, Bouckaert and Jann, 2016, p. 6).

Having identified that producing order and maintaining it in the contemporary governance is problematic, a rigid conception of order is clearly an outmoded approach in dynamic public policy systems. “Pretending” in Bertels et al. terms (2016), is not working. What is at stake today is the capacity and capability to conduct integrative, adaptive and temporally sensitive analysis, management and oversight. As ways to support inclusive and flexible modes of oversight become paramount, ways of thinking about and seeing governance, with the benefit of a complexity worldview, have been advanced. This offers frames to interpret dynamic situations, finding both solutions to problems and resolutions to messes. To bring the *Systemic Mess* and the *Timespace Window* as developed together, provides a fresh way to analyse activity. The systemic and temporal framing and re-framing of development decision-making governs the rate, pace or speed of change possible. As such, this is about awareness to manage the “metabolic rate” of complex systems. Who has power to oversee, manage and adjust rates of change, comes into focus to do governance effectively.

##### **4.5.1 *Synthesis: Timespace Mess***

Current governance activity faces the difficulty of frameworks that provide relatively unchecked latitude and can encourage systematic mis-thinking. For example, “public value”<sup>118</sup> thinking and the associated common public policy mindsets and practices, tend to emphasize an orientation to the discovery of what is possible given existing stakeholder interests. Present state diagnostics and strategic alignment concerns dominant. The emphasis is usually on triangulating between commercial, political and civic interests for agreed operational terrain to make policy adjustments (e.g. Hartley et al. 2017). The reach and penetrative utility of intellectual insight in this mode is typical constrained to: (a) the democratic health and “license to operate” type of issues, (b) the ability of operational networks to deploy policies, and (c) evaluative activities insofar as

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<sup>118</sup> Mark Moore’s (1995) commonly cited conceptualisation is where public value determination is a process of triangulating between the authorising environment (gaining formal and informal legitimacy and support), productive capabilities (operational resources e.g. staff and infrastructure) and the agreed performance direction (the identification of public and private value as stated in a mission or objectives) (Moore, 1995, 2013).

understanding results, impacts and outcomes. As a result, a premium is often placed on “presentist” compromises, conceived of as tangible responses to a particular situation rather than a wider predicament.

Further, mis-matched rates of change are a difficulty encountered when governing. The focus is often on the level of a specific project and its management, then aggregated to the level of programme continuity and coherence within an entity or organisation. Often high-level coordination functions in the context of Government writ large, is left to “top table” oversight of a vast terrain with uneven activity and lines of advice. This in practice means Cabinet “running the country” with poor information streams and substandard concepts resulting in limited connectable knowledge. Often the nature of the decisions being made is driven by existing protocols and procedures, that require certain issues to be approved and “signed-off” due to project or programme controls put in place based on singular priorities or past practices. It is not uncommon that these decision issues may have become of lesser importance correlative to contemporary issues when arriving at the top table, or are simply related to outdated procedures.

Having established that messes exist in timespace, it follows that the *Systemic Mess* and the *Timespace Window* as conceptual mechanisms together can help to provide analytic insights for practical guidance in policy-making. By conceiving the significance of the issue of integration at the level of abstraction of the systemic mess, while in tandem conceiving the significance of the issues of timing at the level of abstraction of the timespace window, I produce complimentary framings. In combination, they provide a strong intellectual framework for generating advice for and doing decision-making. The need to understand and tease-out integrality and temporality in tandem, introduces the “Timespace Mess” as a central conceptual mechanism to effectively guide whole-of-system oversight. That is, we can aim to focus on the functional connectivity of an issue and modulate the speed of change *together*, in the same “decision-making moment”. It is a choice to do so or not. To achieve this, “switches” in mental models are required to support informed-practice.

#### **4.5.2 Switching to a Functional Systems Temporality (FST)**

Working from the theoretical foundations above, informed and tempered by public policy experience, I sketch a position that reveals the basis of an emergent temporal theory of governance. I position three “switches” for “Functional Systems Temporality”:

##### **1) From Time Management to Temporal Governance**

Shifting from a personally individualistic or organisational programme management foci, with a micro-time management orientation to control on detailed outputs, to a collective “time

governance” foci with a macro-view of temporal pluralities, suggests needing multiple lenses to view time-related phenomena. Time governance embraces a systems-level temporal intermediation function to orchestrate integration. In governance, travelling from the “*small right now*” to a “*big what then*” brings into view the range of considerations that can inform quality decision-making. Rather than rendering time management as less significant, the issue is that time governance requires a significant level of focus and supporting information to enrich decisions *both* in a similar way to discrete programme management (with critical pathways and key decision points to track rates of progress) and additionally at the level of interaction between different perceptions of time and therefore priorities in the “big picture”. This suggests an important role doing “*temporal intermediation*” where decision-makers, as guardians of decision architecture and subsequent activities, guide the framing and resolution processes to maximise ambitiously attainable objectives.

## **2) From Time Fragmentation to Inclusive Temporalities**

To move beyond the limitations of discord from fragmentation and disorder due to mis-conceptualised and operationalised objectives, a more inclusive approach to handling temporalities is required. Shifting from a conceptually disconnected and chronologically de-synchronized operating state in the present, to a more integral mode of “*chronosopic time*”<sup>119</sup> (i.e. time that is subjectively “*anticipatory*” and entertaining futures) can assist the integration of complex issues. In part, this means puzzling together differing timeframes for inter-related issues (e.g. focusing on horizontal connectivity) and in part, this means integrating long-term with short-term understandings and interests (i.e. focussing on the “*depth of field*”). A requirement of inclusive governance is moving beyond temporal fragmentation as a barrier to issue comprehension and good decision-making, to ensure there are operating zones of temporal integration designed into organisational activities and operating procedures.

## **3) From Dysfunctional Timing to Interacting Temporalities**

Governance systems that cannot handle interfaces between subsystems, for a functional “*whole*” where timing is coordinated, result in disconnections and suboptimal oversight. With a wider range of temporal conceptions and “*timescapes*” in scope for integrated governance, the way to deal with and treat these different temporal conceptions needs to be worked through to support

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<sup>119</sup> In theorising temporalities in the field of education, Alhadeff-Jones (2017) follows the French historian Pomain (1984) who distinguished four related ways of perceiving time: (1) *Chronometrical* – a standard view of time, conceived of as repeatedly cyclical and standardly symmetric, (2) *Chronographical* – a recording of events e.g. a day-to-day narration of what happens as qualitative and discrete account, (3) *Chronological* – an emphasis on historical sequencing, encompassing a quantitative and qualitative dimension, and (4) *Chronosophies* – a questioning of the future and an array of temporal means to “*unfold*” it, including ideas pertaining to planning and anticipation. (Pomain, K. (1984) *L'ordre du temps*, Gallimard, Paris, cited in Alhadeff-Jones, 2017, pp. 33-40).

specific decision requirements. Doing “temporal governance” can take on a variety of roles. For example, this may involve using automated support tools and the application of machine learning techniques for decision enhancement. This could see an improved treatment of uncertainties associated with multiple perspectives and positions, supported by a range of “smart tools” or processes drawing primarily on “face-to-face” knowledge building. The key issue is that decisions are explicitly considered in a manner whereby processes and procedures are clearly stated, transparent with a traceable record, and fit-for-purpose given the policy engagement, issue framing or decision task.

#### **4.5.3 Practice Implications**

*“There is opportunity on a grand scale. Huge infrastructure demands and hungry institutional funds – link them. Excellence in industry, commerce, academia – extend it. England’s cities pulsing with energy – unleash it. Every one of us needs to rise to the challenge.” – Lord Michael Heseltine, No Stone Unturned report (Heseltine, 2012).*

Bringing together ways of seeing functional governance at national and local level interfaces continues to be critically pertinent. To get to leading the opportunities that exist on a “grand scale” in Heseltine’s terms, requires new practices. *Functional Systems Temporality* (FST) invites the following assumptions for good governance:

- *An initial bi-focal view* – being intentionally short *and* long in tandem is necessary to facilitate establishing a relevant “focal length” to analyse the *long-range ideas* (the “anticipatory”) and *short-range interests* (the “actual”).
- *An appropriate systems temporality* – can be calibrated in this dualising process of analysis to establish the scope – the “temporal depths of field” as such – and associated suppositions for *anticipated ideas* and *actual interests*.
- *Driving for the resolution of the medium-term* – determining the scope of the ensuing *medium-range* view and its functionality is contingent on building the former bi-focal understanding (short/long), off which the third perspective can be developed. This necessitates a “tri-focal” design and supporting architecture.

Key questions to focus FST include (Table 4.5.3):



Table 4.5.3: Key Questions to Focus Functional Systems Temporality (FST)

<b>(A) Breadth focusing</b>	Is the focus on system temporality both “narrow” and “wide” enough to allow time-informed understandings of the context? i.e. inclusive of clock-time and perceptions of non-linear temporalities? Do we allow for differing definitions of temporality to be accommodated in analysis to involve a plurality of viewpoints in policy analysis and decision-framing?
<b>(B) Depth focusing</b>	Does the analysis help surface and arrange the short, medium and long-range temporal “depths of field”? Does it do so with sufficient clarity to assist devising the key policy options and decision-making choices?
<b>(C) Calibration settings</b>	How do arrangements and organising mechanisms (e.g. strategic planning, particular policies and specific reviews) synchronize with the different periods of temporal conception to help tailor useful governance temporalities? e.g. the three proposed modes of <i>now</i> , <i>next</i> and <i>nexus</i> (refer 7.0) and their associated horizon breadth and depth calibrations?

In summary, the *Timespace Mess* serves to underscore the key distinction in decision-making support analytics pertinent to the public sector. The respective treatment of spatial and temporal considerations in public policy – and of the two and their interdependent relationship – is an important and “under-thought” consideration. Prior to further development building this trajectory, I move to diagnose more explicitly the existing operation environment. In working to postulating new ways of thinking about contemporary governance, I start with a characterisation of the dominant paradigm today, offering an explanatory rendering of why practice is what it currently is.

## 5. Compromise: *Characterising Disconnections*

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### 5.1 Outline

*"At first glance the outlook for the public finances in the medium term looks much the same as it did in March. But this masks a significant improvement in the underlying pace of deficit reduction... this underlying improvement had already been swallowed up by the Prime Minister's promise of higher spending on the NHS made in June. ... The rest of the package has the familiar Augustinian pattern of a near-term giveaway followed by a longer-term takeaway, increasing borrowing by £5.3 billion in 2019-20 but reducing it by £0.2 billion by 2023-24."* – OBR Budget Day Statement (OBR, 2018).

This short chapter provides a stylised temporal characterisation of the contemporary governance predicament. Democratic dynamics inevitably lead to forms of compromise, as key actors work to “muddle through” when faced with less than ideal conditions. Pre-election “promises” continue to be made at a manifesto level, that often prove highly problematic to deliver in practice when in receipt of the necessary facts and realities to hand. Pragmatic compromises – either within parties holding a political majority, or between parties sharing power – go with the territory of getting made. Timing is often problematic. The annual Budget for example, reveals the repeating difficulty of short-run demands to retain power. Labelled by one commentator in 2019 as an “Elastoplast Budget” to “patched up some of the problems in Britain’s economy but failed to provide a coherent strategy for long-term growth” (Kitson, 2018), the annual procedure continues unabated. While arguably the stance taken by the OBR is conservative in nature by virtue of its mandate,<sup>120</sup> the commentary illustrates the pattern. Once in power, political operatives find themselves trying to tune the direction of a nation by working with the levers to hand – e.g. revenue generation from tax settings, spending on areas of public provision and improving regulatory frameworks so as to improve overall outcomes; or the outcomes of targeting groups whose interests they are keen to protect or advance. Walking the line between demand to address contemporary issues requiring expenditure on the one hand, while staying within fiscal parameters given the “baked-in” financial assumptions and system design on the other, presents a challenge for all governments.

The tactic of increasing the public spend (or debt) in the short-run and levelling out projections through longer-term reductions, is not novel. Leaving aside whether circumstances in particular jurisdictions warrant fiscal stimulus or prudence, government’s find their choice-set framed by

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<sup>120</sup> The OBR (Office for Budget Responsibility) was formed in 2010 by then Chancellor George Osborne. While the OBR took this view, members of its Advisory Panel point out different perspectives about the macro-economic options and impact of the fiscal conditions and pathway e.g. Wren-Lewis considered that the Budget simply represents continuing fiscal tightening (Wren-Lewis, 2018).

dominant theories and fiscal parameters that set the spend envelope. Undergirding these embedded institutional arrangements is a prevailing mindset that reproduces the practice norms of management and the heuristics of governance. I now characterize the mainstream dominant mindset that guides contemporary public sector practice. The intention is to make explicit the context within which public governance can currently be understood.

I divide the situation into four modes of operation, namely what I call (1) *Ploughing*, as “pushing forward” complying with preconceived agendas, (2) *Presentism*, that is where coping with what is presenting at the time prevails, (3) *Projectionism*, where visioning idealised future states prevails and (4) *Practability*, being where “compromises” are made so practical actions can be taken and decisions made. My view is that these modes play out within a dominant worldview and the way the system is construed means a pragmatism of sorts prevails. Given the existing decision architecture practiced, there are constrained latitudes for choice. As “reality” strongly sets and contains the operating space and actor expectations of the contemporary public governance and management realm, I initially consider what some call the “political realism” and the characteristics/attributes that permeate existing practice. The primary objective is to postulate a way of thinking about contemporary governance and the embedded patterns permeating today’s governing style.

## **5.2 Comply: *Ploughing***

Politicians find themselves managing difficult issues when they hold Office, with challenging and controversial responsibilities. Often they are “ploughing away” to drive results based on preconceived ideas within tightly defined parameters, that may be constructed or actual factors. A constraining conformity is often encountered that may run against personal or political preferences. “The way things have to be done” is a constraining issue that drives a host of compliances. At the same time, it can be the case that “defaulting” into *ploughing* can be driven by information overload. In an increasingly data-rich environment with a multitude of perspectives and competing advice coming to the fore, it can be overwhelming and disorienting for decision-makers to work out what to do. This can accentuate falling back into simple preconceived ideas and default heuristics to make quick judgements to keep processes moving. How to stop this default behaviour with institutional mechanisms and cultural adaption is problematic given current system settings.

While having power and the ability to implement an agenda is the principal objective of a political party, once in Office the issues and associated processes require different knowledge, skills and conduct. Similarly, there is a gap between backbencher Member of Parliament (MP) latitudes and

Cabinet-seated accountabilities. When performing as Ministers of the Crown, many take the view that the job is to steer a pathway between vested interests to find the middle-ground on contentious issues, against a guiding ideological backdrop. In navigating to compromise, they pick a pathway whereby they listen to all concerns, and look for the central position, offending as few stakeholders as possible. Recognising they will “not make all the people happy all the time”, the job is construed as having the nous to survive displeasure from both sides – or the hostility from one in particular if they go more clearly with one set of interests. David Davis, MP and former Brexit Minister, makes the point:

*"'Being attacked from all sides is part and parcel of the job', Davis says. 'Frankly, if you let that get to you then you're better off not doing the job at all... It is a permanent process of being assaulted. You mustn't worry about that. There are people who have nervous breakdowns – not in this job, but in politics – and it's because they worry about those things, they let them get to them and that's very bad for your own mental health but also bad for the job. The job is about ploughing a straight line through very stormy waters.'"* (Whale interview, 2018).

As Diamond sceptically conveys with a Keynes quote: “There is nothing a politician likes so little as to be well informed; it makes decision-making so complex and difficult’.” (Keynes in Diamond, 2019a, p.vi). With increasing politicisation a notable Whitehall concern, reflecting on the growth of Political Advisors to Ministers<sup>121</sup> and increasing Ministerial influence on appointments, Sir Amyas Morse<sup>122</sup> laments that Ministers have incrementally gained more power. He recalls when new Ministers in the Cameron Government came to office from the Opposition “wilderness”, concern about the Civil Service’s responsiveness to a change drove “reaching down”:

*“The Ministerial system is conceived on the basis that Ministers would determine policy and the civil servants would implement. And I would say we have increasingly got away from that. ... In pursuing that ability to drive change, I think the balance between the Civil Service and Ministers has changed – and it has changed quite radically... We see some Ministers see themselves as more or less, Chief Executives, but without the qualifications to go with it. Unfortunately, that means that they get involved in taking decisions for which they really should be held to account... On occasion it appears the intervention by Ministers has led to the abandonment of good practice or the expectation of achievement of unrealistic timescales. Given that civil servants generally see it as their role to defend their Ministers and take the blame as necessary, how does that work for accountability?”* (Morse, 2019).

I frame *ploughing* as a political style of “complying” or “holding fast” to a course of action – often based on being consistent with pre-conceived theories and ideologies. This may be exacerbated by “information overload” where too higher volume of contestable information drowns-out a capacity to analytically sort and synthesize genuine meaning from sources. It is where the

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<sup>121</sup> Special Advisors to Ministers (known as SPADs), are political appointments who assist Ministers, acting on their behalf to “oversee” portfolios.

<sup>122</sup> Sir Amyas Morse, Comptroller and Auditor General of the National Audit Office, UK Government at March 2019. Refer: Morse, 2019 (~13:30-16:30 mins).

pressurized drives what is popular or considered “right”, playing to perceived or actual opinion-based short-run expectations with a “quick fix” culture on occasions or being “true” to an agenda. In a fluid environment with high political instability, taking place-holding moves for “temporary power” or alternatively rapidly driving agendas that override good practice and “selling” the upside of the story, while down-playing the negative, is the dominant modus operandi.

### 5.3 Cope: *Presentism*

*“...the pace of policy change in Britain, especially that driven by ‘the centre’ is quite frenetic. ...Halpern<sup>123</sup>...describes life behind the shiny black door of Number 10 as akin to a hospital Accident & Emergency Department. He comments that ‘in such a world, there’s often not the time, nor the patience, for the answer to be ‘more research needed’. There is more than a hint here of a ‘pop-up’ style of policymaking where chaps (mostly!) with seemingly clever policy ideas get to implement them without the need to consider the views of, or seek the support of, the affected interests.” – Jeremy Richardson (2018).*

There is an immediacy that is real, palpable and ever-looming over day-to-day politics. The “gravitational pull” to the “now” is recognized as a longstanding challenge from early democratic experimentation, captured in Cicero’s “tyranny of the present” onwards.<sup>124</sup> The saying “a week is a long time in politics” reflects the timeframe in which conditions can shift, circumstances can change, and individuals can rise and fall from positions of authority. The media is often a shallow purveyor of fuel to add heat into the immediate personal dramatics of governing, interspersed with “set-piece” media statement drip-feeding about policies. The public sector, as the keeper of policy-making processes and outputs, is also importantly as a key node of institutional knowledge. It documents the formal record and key people carry the “backstory” about the nuances and “off-the-record” activities that surrounded changes.

Tapping into “institutional memory” is at times hampered key actor churn or network disjunctures, particularly as political leadership changes. Even if following Corbett et al’s (2017) “pragmatic conception” of institutional memory as a relatively open and dynamic people-centric “composite of intersubjective memories” (Corbett et al., 2017), the nature of progress can be hampered by an inability to fully appreciate what has gone before. A presentist condition is accentuated by a lack of time, where the construction of deadlines and the nature of the advice processes clash. It is widely accepted that the capacity for research and learning is often highly constrained in a pressurized presentist reality. Reflecting on the impact of short Ministerial tenures that have become a recent norm, Morse suggests:

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<sup>123</sup> David Halpern, Former Head of Number 10’s Behavioural Insights Team, UK. Refer Halpern (2015).

<sup>124</sup> The notion of the “tyranny of the present” dates from the Roman period when Marcus Cicero wrote: “The purpose of education is to free the student from the tyranny of the present.” (Cicero~63BC).

*"I genuinely think better decisions were made under the Coalition government because Ministers knew that the deal was they were in for five years and therefore they had a programme, they had a job to do and they tended to get on and do it... You think about things differently when you have a long hold. If you know you might be there for a year... you think about quite differently than if you have five years.... you will get credit for what you have initiated...it's a reasonable amount of time to be deliberate and thoughtful..." (Morse, 2019, ~22:30-25:30 mins).*

Short tenure and rapid cycles, combined with the volume of issues at play at any given point, provides political cover for the dysfunctional treatment of policy issues. *Presentism*<sup>125</sup> is a mindset wholly located in the "now". In *presentism*, "coping" is where the immediate past is imprinting the present and overrides understanding the interconnectivity of issues and longer views. Existing path dependencies shape and constrain what is workable to maintain legitimacy. I use presentism as a concept to underscore the "uncritical" aspect of immediate practice. That is the automatic acceptance, or the active defense of status quo arrangements as "this is how things are" and "this is therefore how things have to be done". I also use it to centrally denote the short-term nature of the concerns considered "live" and relevant in decision-making.

Scheffler (2016) takes the perspective that we exist in a condition of "temporal parochialism". This is where we have a "presentist bias" devaluing the past and the future, despite increases in connectivity and "geographical cosmopolitanism", giving little consideration to both the past and the future (Scheffler, 2016). Unger and Smolin (2015) posit presentism in relation to seeing only the present as being "real". Hence, the subsequent limitations in understanding are that: "... what is real does not fit within the confines of the present moment. To that extent, presentism is untenable. Reality fails to remain within the now... (Unger in Unger and Smolin, 2015, p. 247). O'Donoghue and Rabin (1999, 2015) and Clarke and Dercon (2016) examine the presentist bias in economics (i.e. the tendency to over-value immediate rewards at the expense of long-term intentions), noting this "time inconsistent" behaviour can be overcome by using "commitment devices" to increase self-control to save for the future for example (e.g. nudge" methods popularized by Thaler and Bernatzi (2004) (Clarke and Dercon, 2016, p. 70). Ngaire Woods (2018) comments, reflecting on the impact post-GFC:

*"I think there's a huge correction going on ... even the world's great capitalist institutions are now rallying to say: 'Hey, capitalism's become too short-term. It does matter who owns and who takes long-term decisions.' Because if you've got CEOs with very short tenure, less than four years, shares which are being traded several times a day, boards which are playing a sort of token function, then actually the governance of some of the world's largest companies does not look strategic or long-term..." (Woods, 2018).*

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<sup>125</sup> *Presentism* is the "uncritical adherence to present-day attitudes, especially the tendency to interpret past events in terms of modern values and concepts" (Oxford Dictionary). Sourced at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/presentism>

The dual-effect of short-termism in business and government can self-reinforce, with public and private sector temporal convergences resulting in shared metabolisms and practice. The consequence of this alignment is a manifestation of, on the one hand, systemic attunement to a coordinated understanding and shared sequencing that can improve functionality. On the other hand, the fusing of a market sensitive mechanism into the civil sphere can erode or simply hijack the ability to perform. The consequential state of having high “affective intensity”<sup>126</sup> is a force undermining the foundations of democracy. As Papacharissi puts it: “democracy as a form of governance is at stake, as it is founded upon the right and ability of people to make informed decisions about their own governance and well-being.” (Papacharissi, 2014, p.7). Presentist mindsets undermine what is possible and countering “presentist logics” becomes important for progress (see Appendix 1).<sup>127</sup>

#### 5.4 Conjure: *Projectionism*

Most public policy issues are difficult and inherently contentious. Without disciplined practices of systematic anticipation, projection and strategic analysis, often “looking ahead” falls into the category of the purely speculative or contemplative. From a definitional standpoint, projectionism implies that “some apparent properties of objective reality in fact belong to the mind of the person perceiving it”.<sup>128</sup> While visioning and imaging a better future is an important part of anticipating, it is not the only dimension.

Typically, the practice is not invested or in fully matured. Consequently, I claim the operative mode tends to default into “conjuring”. This is where the envisioning of outcomes at an abstract level is done, but the analytics to interpret possibilities and a direction of pursuit is rarely translated into concrete adjustments. Often *conjuring* is contingent on a “guru” (e.g. the futurist) and sometimes on the crowd (participative visioning exercises). While stimulating ideation for shared visions and alternative states, often these expressions are left hanging – or get rendered into high level statements with promotional value.

As such, the expression of the future, often as an ideal state or utopian aspiration, becomes an ends in and of itself, left to “sit there” while the day-to-day world goes on. In an outcomes based

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<sup>126</sup> The “present affect” in Papacharissi’s (2014) study of “affective intensity” where *Twitter*, for example, is interpreted as a platform “supporting networked structures of feeling” (Papacharissi, 2014, pp. 1-3), enables affective processes where facts, opinions and emotions are blended to stimulate reactions and “mediated feelings of connectedness”, texturing everyday life and calling into being “publics of support” (ibid). “Affect” is opposed to “reason” (thought) in our search for finding the coexistence between emotions and thoughts for an integrated view.

<sup>127</sup> Appendix 1 provides a short piece on countering presentist logics as represented by Beckerman (1999), formulating key logic structures in decision-making.

<sup>128</sup> The definition of *projectionism* at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/projectionism>

public policy-making context, this type of work has utility for illuminating the ultimate “end-game” that is considered socially desirable based on the present. Usually existing stakeholders with vested interests can be guided to create a sense of “togetherness” with shared challenges. Infuse motivational zest to commit to certain post-visioning tasks is often the outcome. Various methods can be employed to build a shared view via listening, recruiting, socialising and influencing through bottom-up processes of engagement. The key aspect I emphasise in this mode of operation is that the “anticipation-lite” visioning, with limited analytic grounding (e.g. back-casting and analysis) that is prevalent today, is typical a “high-level” or “straight-line” forward projection practice with limited sophistication.

### **5.5 Compromise: *Practicability***

The meaning of practicability is “the quality of being practicable or viable”.<sup>129</sup> A “practicable position” is one that is able to be done given a particular situation. Importantly, it is achievable without undue risk, so retaining power to deliver in the future is likely. Working politically to survive in the wake of the presentist “turbulence of the immediate”, and facing the “big stretch” to the desirable but seemingly unreachable future-hold, *compromise* is what occurs in the processes of confronting the best way to settle the question “what can be done?” *Practicability* often results in a reduced “shared-purpose space” and extinguishes a range of possibilities to a narrow band of policy options. Usually, where inaction would look like a poor choice due to it revealing impotence, there is a requirement for something “doable”. Practability as the *modus operandi* brings into frame the art of communicating positions with the capacity to impose them is inherent, or the art of compromise to bring about advancement that carries the majority forward.

A government is engaged in a continuous process of reviewing and revising what can be acceptably achieved in the context of present realities. This is while accounting for the known explicit, or culturally implicit, aspirational goals that have been elicited or lie unspoken. The primary quest is for viability within the limits of what can be done in the current institutional arrangements. Reading the political climate, understanding existing structural, operating and legal precedents, becomes the practical work to be done. Viability maps back onto and is set within an operating sphere where a level of “business as usual” is necessary for continuity. Identification of where change can occur, without high levels of disruption to minimise crises and unintended consequences of change, is the art of leading progress. Finding the “saleable” trade-offs for key stakeholders and communities of interest becomes the work of the political leadership, supported

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<sup>129</sup> The definition of *practicability* at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/practicability>



by and co-produced with the bureaucracy. The capacity to and success in communicating or “selling” these positions, becomes the currency to skilfully trade to retain moral authority and power.

There are different forms of compromise that can take place in the reach for practical action. Gutmann and Thompson (2012) take the position that compromise is typically some form of sacrifice to improve on the status quo, requiring some goodwill from the other party or parties: “The sacrifice involves not merely getting less than you want, but also, thanks to your opponents, getting less than you think you deserve. The sacrifice typically involves trimming your principles. We call these defining characteristics of compromise *mutual sacrifice* and *wilful opposition*.” (Gutmann and Thompson, 2012, p 10). They emphasize the need for compromise so governing a democracy is possible: “Systematic rejection of compromise is a problem for any democracy because it biases the political process in favour of the status quo and stands in the way of desirable change. Privileging the status quo does not mean that nothing changes. ... A status quo bias in politics can result in stasis, but it can also produce unintended and undesirable change.” (ibid, p.2).

To conclude this chapter, I have developed a typology of the prevailing key operational modes of contemporary political practice. I have done so to provide a characterising of the dominant culture of practice, grounded in personal learning operating within a Westminster based system, informed by observing the flow of issues occurring in the UK. The key out-take is that the dominant treatment intuitively tends to favour a bias towards governance conservatism. There is an overriding tendency to be cautious about large-scale change and to adapt cautious incrementalism as the “safest way forward”. This strategy, on the surface of it, allows for more stable trajectories of change that do not actively displace current arrangements. It de-powers the rate at which current “winners” are susceptible to becoming “losers”, risking outrage and resistance. Accordingly, a domesticated, constrained and pragmatic politics is the form that largely pervades the United Kingdom, as in many other democracies. In summary, the contours of practice identified are: (see Table 5.5.1 over)

Table 5.5.1: *Interpreting the prevalent modes of Contemporary Political Practice*

	<b>1. PLOUGHING</b>	<b>2. PRESENTISM</b>	<b>3. PROJECTIONISM</b>
<b>CONTOURS OF PRACTICE</b>	<p><b><i>Complying: the pressurised driving the popular</i></b></p> <p>Holding fast to preconceptions, driving pre-formulated theories, ideologies and popular positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Playing to perceived or actual opinion-based short-run expectations with a “quick fix” culture</li> <li>- In a fluid environment with high political instability, taking place-holding moves for “temporary power”</li> <li>- Engaging in “frenzied” activity, believing in solving problems quickly if the right beliefs or actions are taken</li> <li>- Tactical communication management to repetitively amplify positives and downplay or slip through less appealing policies.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Coping: the past imprinting the present</i></b></p> <p>The practice of dealing with the spectrum of stasis and turbulence that is immediate and presenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Getting a grip” on what is happening in the moment as it is politically prescribed</li> <li>- Understanding views of what has happened in the past and interpreting relevance to current conditions</li> <li>- Recognising existing patterns having path dependency implications and shaping near-term issues</li> <li>- Dealing with constraining and enabling realities as they exist, are perceived and forging a workable perspective given current constraints to ‘cope’ and maintain legitimacy.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Conjuring: the envisioning of outcomes</i></b></p> <p>The expression of the future, often as an ideal state or utopic aspiration, for illuminating the ultimate “end-game” that is considered socially desirable based on the present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Projecting forward to extrapolate from the present, based on present (and past) trajectories and trends</li> <li>- ‘Back-casting’ from an imagined ideal state to work out the pathway to the desired end-state.</li> <li>- Building a shared view via listening, recruiting, socialising and influencing through bottom-up processes of engagement.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>4. PRACTICABILITY</b></p> <p><b><i>Compromising: the confrontation about “what can be done?” in light of complying, coping and conjuring political modes</i></b></p> <p>The process of reviewing and revising what can be acceptably achieved in the context of present realities, while accounting for the aspirational goals elicited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Viability within the limits of what can be done in the current institutional arrangements (e.g. the political climate and legal precedents)</li> <li>- While ‘business as usual’ can evolve without high levels of disruption to minimise crises and unintended consequences of change</li> <li>- Finding the ‘saleable’ trade-offs for key stakeholders and communities of interest</li> <li>- Communicating or ‘selling’ these positions to retain moral authority and power.</li> </ul>		

## 6. Circumstance: *Handling Governance*

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### 6.1 Outline

*"We are at an inflection point. Many future trends are familiar; environmental stress and changing demography, accelerating technological change, ... and international transitions in both economic, political and military power. Much less familiar is the unprecedented acceleration in the speed of change, driving ever more complex interactions between these trends. The cumulative effect represents a strategic challenge... we need to change the way we do things fundamentally."* – General Sir Nick Carter and Stephen Lovegrove (2018) *Global Strategic Trends*, Ministry of Defence, UK.<sup>130</sup>

Governance is about “handling” difficult issues to find a shared way forward. We need to be aware of and “see” systemic failures, with the hallmarks of fragmentation and temporal disjuncture, as issues requiring attention. The circumstance of endemic short-termism is a systemic failure of both (a) *leadership* with a lack of clarity and courage, and (b) *arrangements* with institutional design and the supporting civic apparatus. Fragmented leadership and arrangements are a failure of institutions, ideas and ideologies. The case for a systemic strategic response and substantial change to improve governance is necessary. This perspective is supported by the comprehensive view of the future taken by the UK’s Ministry of Defence (2018). I contend we can benefit from taking refreshed governance stances, accepting the nature of presenting messes embroiled in systemic messes. Implications of the presenting dynamics, with both fixed and flexing elements interacting, maps onto needing expanded temporal and spatial consideration so the consequent facets of knowledge are generated or renewed.

In this chapter I consolidate a position to work from in Part 2, distilling the perspective developed on complexity governance. Given the inherent systemic indeterminacy in democratic systems, first I explore the underpinnings of the *mindset* and architecture to “design” better strategies. Second, I consider the inevitable need for “creativity” in governance activities to achieve change. The innovation that is necessitated when embracing complexity and the nature of today’s challenges, requires different thinking to approach seemingly intractable issues with fresh policy treatments. Third, I begin to bring into focus the institutional dimension. As governing is organising, the “architectures” (structures) and “amalgams” for handling interactions require attention to achieve improving outcomes. This supports the case for integrated systemic designs to guide working at institutional and decision architectural levels of realignment to achieve

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<sup>130</sup> Quote from General Sir Nick Carter KCB, CBE, DSO, ADC Gen (Chief of Defence Staff) and Stephen Lovegrove CB, (Permanent Secretary) (2018) *Global Strategic Trends*, Ministry of Defence, UK Ministry of Defence (MoD, 2018).

functional governance improvements. I then summarise my key assumptions upon which a case for change is developed – what I characterise as an intentionally designed “pivot”.

## 6.2 Acting in Messes: *Indeterminacy and Integrated Design*

*“We have seen that society is in a mess, which is the result of the conflict of arbitrary and fragmentary mechanical orders of relatively independently determined actions. Any efforts to impose an overall order in this ‘mess’ will only serve to make it worse. What, then, is to be done?”* – David Bohm (1996, p. 23).

I explore the idea that design strategies are a way to help overcome contemporary issue binaries, embrace complexity and face indeterminacies to chart and monitor progress. By “design” I simply reference the creative process of formulating strategies, plans and programmes of action. The intention is to make a situation better. By “strategies” I mean the product of design, being some form of proposed action, intention or plan. By extension, *design strategies* are processes for generating and producing a guide for intentional action. Adapting a systems sensibility, this will mean that the design process will include inputs from feedback loops from existing action i.e. evaluative assessment of the current predicament will inform the development of a particular pathway or approach. This may see active change or be non-determinist in orientation (i.e. a “watching brief”), or a decision not to act. The decision architecture for working on *messes and resolutions* in an “Ackoffian” sense – and *systemic messes and systemic resolutions* as identified – raises operational considerations in light of uncertainties in complex systems. The question of how to best proceed, is discussed.

As complexity-aware practice demands more of decision systems – in terms of framing and delivering governance – Bohm’s question “*what is to be done?*” when applied to governing at all levels requires thoughtful consideration when working on the design of strategy. To get purchase on an issue may mean for example, a direct or indirect approach, with a heavy or a light intervention. It may mean a desire to “impose order” or a conscious decision to move away from seeking means of direct control. Bohm suggests in his version of first principles, that the first order issue is building-up from the individual “state of mind” (Bohm, 1996, p. 22). For him, the “micro” resides in human psychology, not at the level of collective resolution. However, often issues are both relevant at the individual and collective level together, in a state of unstable flux and unsuited to being “controlled”. Core to Bohm’s argument is that we are usually trying to break-down problems in “mechanical” terms to exert control, when problems (and messes) do not respond well to mechanistic approaches. Bohm (1996) recognises that there is “a right place for the mechanical orders of action”, but argues that we can over-extend when we apply this order to the “mind as a whole” at even an individual level, as the brain is not mechanical (ibid). Similarly, for complex systems, mechanical ideas can be well deployed if restricted to limited domains that

can be abstracted as mechanical in nature. When dealing with broader dynamics in systems where there are obvious conflicts between fragmentary orders, or intuitive unease about contradictory orders – we find ourselves in what Bohm terms at the personal level as a “painful state” leading to types of “confusion” because our understandings are mixed-up (Bohm, 1996, p. 10-11, 25-26). To break out of our conditioning, he proposes the necessity of “discovering” with the “fresh clarity of mind” the insights from “wholeness”, allowing for a “new structure of things” (ibid, p. 124).

To govern usually means to either lead the motivation of strategy or the operationalisation of tactics. The process of doing either level of activity can mean working on inherited or devised *structures*. These structures (or entities) will be comprised of mechanical elements situated in cultural contexts. Elements can include pre-determined logics influenced by (a) conceivable ideas within our psychology, or they may be (b) existing forms such as the “machinery of government” (e.g. legal procedures), or the (c) multitude of entities that coexist today. Part of leading entities is to also strategically and tactically *lead people*, narrating a direction and demonstrate the values and behaviours that “make real” the theories and concepts in practice.

These leadership activities are in the terrain of culture-making, shaping social norms and influencing organisational beliefs. Often issues are not clear-cut. There can be a quandary of “indeterminacy”, meaning that the outcomes are not clear for an individual or more broadly (e.g. a community). This is often almost certainly the case with a significant proportion of policy frameworks and settings, where causalities are hard to tease out and prove, or are obscured in a tangle. The implication of “pulling levers” is hard to work out from a multiplicity of interacting variables. Hence *indeterminacy*, as the condition of being indefinite or unclear, pervades many civic issues. It is symptomatic of complex systems with a diverse range of individual viewpoints, motivations, and structural mechanisms.

From a bureaucratic perspective, this makes the provision of sound, clear and concise advice problematic if simple answers are sought to difficult questions. Often advice is hedged, or framed within the ideological parameters of “point-in-time” acceptability as a short-cut to delivery attainable actions, with the appearance at least of intent to remedy adverse circumstances. From a political perspective, handling both winners and losers as constituents in tandem becomes an operational challenge, from the point of view where attaining or retaining power necessitates at least the appearance of taking seriously the implication of the wins or losses. Contradictions work against coherent possibilities. Assuming certainties can “lock-in” solutions that rapidly become outdated. Moving on from a blatant failure in a complex situation is often difficult. Moving on from the apparent success of the dominant view or the majority as expressed in contemporary

culture and reflected in politics of the time, can be just as hard. Contemporary large-scale change is both more difficult than ever and more possible than ever. The treatment of unclear or vague circumstances and issues with deftness is part of the political “art” – in particular to be seen to define issues and treatments as fair when contradictory interests are in play.

From the challenge of seeking to both impose order and flexibility with changes in the quest for better governance, I by extension create a case for “integrative design” as the strategic orientation to operate in “conundrums”.<sup>131</sup> The contingent nature of governance and the associated difficulties for addressing problems and successfully activating solutions from a systems-informed perspective, makes for perplexing choices with limited guiding information a regular occurrence. The essence of the contemporary nature of failure in the ambit of political and Civil Service interaction requires design strategies that are, consistent with and supportable by, the integrative and temporal mindset advocated. At times, counteracting failure can be a valid strategy to block collapses or avoid crises. On other occasions, so can accentuating what works to “pull” change forward towards a new “pole of attraction”.

Transition through both incremental changes and substantive shifts to produce long-run enduring systemic change where required is necessary for strategic governance. Furthermore, being able to guide multiple streams of response (e.g. failure blocking moves in existing systems and new system creation; and phased slower organic change with rapid step-shifts) in concert becomes important in any design criteria. Governing a family of strategies simultaneously in a systemic mess – and doing so in concert with a series of concurrent mess resolution seeking pathways – places a demanding onus on the act of governing well. Current systems of policy advice and decision-making are not designed for the demands at the level I conceive of as desirable given the nature of contemporary issues. This highlights the need that for strategies to produce progress, a different type of governance, with new or retrofitted design methods and processes of resolution, is required.

An important element of democratic governing becomes working together, in an appropriate fashion given the nature of the issue and the composition of stakeholders, to design what is agreed best done. This brings to the fore the need for engaged strategies of co-production working with existing stakeholders. It also brings into frame the need to actively involve, consider and act upon the considerations of future stakeholders. In other words, as I contend elsewhere, we need

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<sup>131</sup> In Chapter 3 I define *conundrums* in a policy-making sense as difficult and vexing situations that “puzzle”. They therefore can demand political and public policy attention as much because they do not lend themselves to being solvable in existing institutional arrangements, as they do for their inherent difficulty, “wickedness”, or complexity.

to do substantially better at taking the account into future, recognising that not all existing stakeholders are incentivised to act for their own or others future interests, while also recognising some may be. To produce genuine change in this regard, introduces a requirement for a serious design and cultural shift in public governance, noting that government systems are difficult to reform by design. Constructive change and improvement when contemporary performance is evidenced as sub-optimal and widely acknowledged as “obviously so” by many key agents in the system and within the wider citizenry, can remain problematic. Often the procedures of making decisions to synchronize the series of changes necessary is hard to orchestrate given current arrangements. Further, today’s challenges require change signals and structural realignment without breakdowns, collapses and crises. We do not always need to default to significant failure as the spur for change as the prospect of non-violent transformation is both possible and necessary on many issues. However, a better designed governance system is a prerequisite. As argued, government systems are typically fragmented by design, resulting in piecemeal policy treatments and intervention design, with deployment and testing that is often too disjointed given the nature of the issues.

As a result, often partial *compromises* are made that fail to gain systemic traction for the desired change, or continuance of positive current conditions to maintain stability where useful. Understanding the results of policy activities, so as to make the case for investments in changing particular issues – or even more widely, “pivoting” the system – demands a new level of integrative analysis and treatment of public policy issues. Tentative and timid transitions will fall short of what is necessary. A lack of commitment for long enough to bear tangible results, can produce self-fulfilling prophecies if changes are undertaken in a semi-committed approach. Likewise, change marred by a negative spirit irrespective of the timespace window sought for genuine change, can erode achieving outcomes that have an impact. This equates to the cardinal reality that *Integrated Design* is the desirable operational aim of governance systems. Getting integrating mess “scopes” and time-relevant horizons to set the “depth of field” will need to be done in consultation, hearing and acting on differing points of view and landing on an agreed way forward. Collaborative policy design methodologies are a key plank in the approach required, making new demands on governing mechanisms and decision architecture in ways the current system was not designed for.

### **6.3 Seeing in Messes: *Creativity and Innovation***

*“Progress in handling messes... derives at least as much from creative reorganization of the way we pursue knowledge and the knowledge we have as it does from new discoveries.” – Russell Ackoff (1979, p.102).*

The mess oversight challenge is organisational in function, integrative in nature and calling on creativity for resolution. Defaulting to previous contours of thought and supporting arrangements will be insufficient if new pathways are required. To Bohm (1996), actions can be “worse than useless” and unable to give rise to “genuine solutions” if we “tend to be mechanical when what is called for is creativity.” (Bohm, 1996, p. 24). Governance can enable *creativity* with originality as a by-product from seeing things deeply at both a structural and a human level (ibid, p.32). To do systemic resolution that is integrative and temporally enlarged requires new governance approaches. Creative innovation within and between design processes for knowledge (policy) and architectural (structural) development have implications for roles and responsibilities in political, advisory and civic terms. The need for active creativity rather than obfuscating at the interface between political leadership and the governmental advisory realm is paramount. Moving beyond *mechanistic* analogies and processes suggests the analogous value of *systemic* conceptions and discourses in design. Complexity thinking demands a degree of expanded creativity with a layered conception of governance that supports working on meaning-making of messes and resolutions.

To effectively “see in a mess” places demands on our imagination. In the context of the knowledge economy, the power of humans to imagine takes on a sharper salience. Unger’s conception of *imagination* as a “deep characteristic” of progress, requires us to be less machine-like as: “... the growth of knowledge becomes the centrepiece of economic activity. ...Rather than formulaic thinking, it demands foresight, vision and the ability to imagine what is not already there.” (Unger et al., 2019, p.8). Placing the power of human individual and collective imagination at the heart of an agenda to “see beyond the limits that appear natural and ordained in the world around us, and to push forward in to the realm of the adjacent possible” (ibid, p.55), Unger, like Bohm places an individual’s “mindset” and openness to imaging what is not currently possible, as a critical psychological attribute in transformation. Creativity for change in these terms, results in a line of reasoning about the possibilities to “humanise” and make meaningful transformative actions that go beyond timid suggestions for narrow change.<sup>132</sup>

Building from Bohm and Unger’s theoretical perspectives, creativity is required to (a) map and manage indeterminate issues that are obscured by multi-dimensionality and divisiveness (e.g. intentional and unintentional fragmentation), and (b), to expand the possible where a lack of trust constrains imagination and the ensuing sense of individual or organisational “agency”. This brings to the fore the need for structural arrangements to support integration and the capacity to imagine substantive improvements. It also brings equally to the fore – and in close concert – the

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<sup>132</sup> Or as Unger more colourfully puts it, change that is more than progressive “social sugar” adding a “humanising discount” to dysfunctional arrangements, as is a feature of current politics (Unger, 2013).



need for cultural conditions to be such that both civic leadership and popular understandings of the nature of contemporary challenges align in ways that illuminate difficulties and their resolutions. Creativity is important in communication to convey the necessary “direction of travel” and “type of work” required to meaningfully improve conditions in timely ways. In part this means a disciplined and “clear-eyed” set of processes and procedures in public policy-making to empower constructive and progress-oriented politics. If done in engaging and compelling ways, it can readily become the viable preference for doing practical work, outweighing populist nostalgia and reactionary fear in civic concerns.

Design for policy innovation and governance credibility to drive purposeful progress rests on better knowledge (ideas and ideologies) and functional architectures (institutions and interactions). In arguing for integrative and temporal innovation as I have, the importance of “anticipation” for design innovation is a primary key to turn our predicament. As an example of an anticipative driver, the situation of climate change proves illustrative. Anticipative policy drivers are increasingly possible and necessary to orient towards clear and decisive democratic leadership. Analytic methods and tools with more accessible and improving data and computational power opens up new horizons of knowledge and understanding. As Dugger (2018) puts it in the US context: “...the direction of history is clear. The tide is turning against permitting living citizens to exploit their children and grandchildren.” (Dugger, 2018). He reads the current inflection in civic discourse as bending towards the inevitability of a stronger emphasis on accounting more explicitly for the future. The leeway to adopt a position of ignorance of the future consequences of present actions, or ignoring the apparent and widely revealed consequences of extant arrangements in the present, is reducing with better information and communications across the full array of arenas in contemporary life. Legislative means to legitimate, advance and refine a systemic “pivot” in direction play a role, as does civic action, with public pressure through protest and resistance on specific issues inevitable. Translating this into clear and considered action requires both incisive and realistic advice combined with bolder leadership taking firm steps.

If integration failures and time disjunctures are central problems in democratic dysfunctionality, they require strategies be designed to support sympathetic course corrections through intelligent oversight. Understanding the primacy of “clock time” and “social time” in shaping interpretations and actions becomes paramount. In this regard, innovating at the *fulcrum* – being the central issue and/or a key point of leverage – is necessary for governance improvement. We have to deal with both fast and slow issues, and treat them with reference to the short and long-run implications of decision-making. My position is first that presenting “realities” are that the need to face and deal

with immediacies is not a receding feature of democratic governance. Immediacies warrant quality, specialised and focussed attention. Our ability to deal with them need to be enhanced as urgent issues are necessary and important signals that stimulate a range of action from lightly tuning policy settings, through to staving-off or terminating developments that are “live” messes. Having “real-time” acumen and political sensitivities to work adeptly within the constraints of democratic representation, necessitates both the reactive and responsive. *Reflexive*<sup>133</sup> and continuous improvements in decision-making are central to maximising societal progress.

Second, I consider that the longer-term focus and foresight of governments will remain imperfect but only become increasingly salient, therefore requiring augmentation for inclusive decision-making. Anticipatory activity in government, be it anywhere across the spectrum from participative engagement in values-based visioning to high-complexity technical projection simulations, remains an under-developed field of activity requiring greater innovation as well as stronger practice standards. This is in part driven by better public sector practice and in part demanded by more astute and attuned political operators guiding expectations. Our capacity and capability to attune to and draw in the “big picture” with an eye on the horizon needs to be enhanced. This can help achieve strategically sharper position-taking, as well as more ambitious mission-seeking investment and behaviour to attain and expand public goods. In this sense, *reflective*<sup>134</sup> improvements in decision-making are central to maximising societal progress.

Thirdly, I take the view that the resolution of shorter and longer-run concerns and interests in government policy-making is always relatively difficult to achieve. With increasing pressures and political turbulence, this will only become increasingly so. The natural tension between the long and short requires system design and operational principles commensurate with the scope and scale of challenge faced. So we can make the best decisions available given what we know and

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<sup>133</sup> By “reflexive”, I simply mean to indicate “automatic” action requiring minimal thought, consistent with Ellul’s (1964) usage. The general meaning implies automatic and automated reactions and decisions (without thought or with little attention to conscious thought), versus contemplated and non-automated responses and decisions (intentional with conscious thought, sometimes attentive to deep thought). This is distinguished from *reflective* practice (refer definition in next footnote). More particular usages have evolved in the social sciences e.g. reflexivity refers to circular relationships between cause and effect, especially as embedded in human belief structures, where assigning causality is difficult or not possible. In economics, reflexivity refers to the self-reinforcing effect in markets where a positive feedback loop of rising prices attracts more buyers and continuing price elevation until the process becomes unsustainable. Behaving reflexivity in practice signals staying with “personal uncertainty, critically informed curiosity, and flexibility to find ways of challenging deeply held ways of being: a complex, highly responsible social and political activity” (Bolton, 2010).

<sup>134</sup> By *reflective* I mean in a standard way, thoughtfulness and deep consideration. This aligns with Bolton’s (2010) interpretation of *reflective practice* as “paying critical attention to the practical values and theories which inform everyday actions”, leading to “developmental insight” (Bolton, 2010). Therefore, to be reflective implies “in-depth consideration” of events or situations, that may involve reviewing and retrospectively bringing into focus particular details (ibid).

think we can be expected to realistically foresee, means an intentional design to handle this interface between interests where there is a creative tension between the present and the future. This creative tension needs to be *multi-temporal* in its dimensions, commensurate with the *Timespace Window* developed.

We cannot afford to try and dull the inevitable set of high priority immediacies where we are “in the red”, or blur our ever enlarging capacity for longer-run “blue-sky” anticipatory knowledge. Similarly, we cannot continue to ignore the inadequacy of system design and the deep challenges trying to bring complex and contradictory perspectives and knowledge constructs into some state of temporary harmony so as to achieve public good improvements without negative feedback as a detrimental consequence. We need a strong and intentional integrated design solution for our decision architecture, institutional arrangements and culture to realise our human potential. Handing the interface of reflexive and reflective improvement-seeking decision-making is central to maximising societal progress. Therefore, I propose that “innovating at the fulcrum” is in large part the act of doing integrated design with creativity for innovative and governance impacts on policy messes and systemic messes. I have advanced a lens through which to do this, namely the *timespace window* and the *viewfinder*. I develop the basis for, and a position with respect to, seeing temporality in governance, with the aim being to benefit from a sharper and more nuanced resolution of temporality in both policy analytics and decision-making.

#### **6.4 Interacting in Messes: *Organising for Resolution***

The interplay between the formal advisory functions of government that constitute the Civil Service and the correlative political spheres, set within the wider civic context, become the necessary zones of making choices about framing, making and resolving policies. In performing these functions, governance activity oversees strategies, plans and policy details getting made and unmade. In driving towards change that can enable a more inclusive and deeper quality of enhanced representation in the present while accounting for the future, what capacity actors have to “move” and innovate “to get things done” has implications for civic “design”. There are different design *roles* for politicians and officials in governance. This is revealed by the language to mark the distinction between the governor and the governor’s advisor. Sometimes the task of policy framing and making is clearly delegated to the Civil Service. At other times, the policy agenda is driven top-down and about the implementation of pre-determined manifestos. The former can take longer, but allow resolutions to emerge and be acting on in a distributed manner to embed procedures for change and comparatively enduring results. The latter drive downward through the hierarchy can expedite delays and force changes when key stakeholders may be unlikely or unwilling to adapt. Therefore, both practices have merit depending on the issues and

the nature of the predicament. Organising for resolutions in complexity – all be they temporary moments of resolution – suggests that the line between respective political and bureaucratic roles needs to be both clearly defined, yet permeable to permit operational agility to practically “get things done”.

There are differing design *responsibilities* for politicians and officials in governance. This is revealed by the impermanent nature of political governorships on the one hand, and the relative permanence of public sector employment. The former falls under uniquely temporary arrangements in the relevant democratic format, while the latter is a standard employment relationship, managed under normal employer/employee relationship between the Crown and the individual. Arguably, this distinction has become less strongly polarised as the fluid nature of all roles and relations could be claimed as having become more unstable, more uncertain and less enduring in the neoliberal culture of late modernity. Indeed, the turnover of both politicians and public sector staff has increased in the UK.<sup>135</sup> Politics is ever shifting due in large part to relatively short electoral cycles that are “the foundation of responsive political time” and establish that power is for a limited time only at the largesse of the electorate (Goetz, 2014, p. 386). As well as impacting on the horizon of governance, including the “depth of field” in politics and policy work, leadership uncertainty can make continuity of reform difficult if responsibilities as not stable.

Dealing with reform is a challenge in favourable conditions and even harder when not. Any *institutional change*, be it specific decision architecture or wide-sweeping democratic reforms implementing constitutional changes, brings into focus the structure, form and culture of governments. This is highly difficult given current arrangements in the UK, where Ministerial turnover has been very high.<sup>136</sup> What issues are prioritised and eat-up governance “bandwidth” effects the nature of the change agenda and the associated social discourse. Without change to current arrangements, the “right” policy debates and resolution framing and making exercises will not occur. Political changes can see new space open for overcoming historical political inertia. Yet these will need to be supported by a different mode of advice to assist enduring transformations to get results on key issues. It will also require the adoption of a new mindset to further develop a systemic response to organising in an intermeshed reality.

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<sup>135</sup> The rate of Ministerial turnover with resignations and reshuffles has been unprecedentedly high, with summary details provided by the Institute for Government’s *Whitehall Monitor 2019* (IfG, 2019).

<sup>136</sup> For example, since the 2017 general election, outside of reshuffles, 21 ministers had resigned from government as of 1 January 2019 (IfG, 2019).

The dominant sensibility in governance demands organising *compromises* so headway is possible. Often compromises are made that are knowingly sub-optimal, but political achievable, so decisions are made. The way the democratic system is construed, a pragmatism of sorts has to prevail. I argue for a new focus on resolution-making given the nature of messes. Resolution-making in the predicament at the level of a mess – as opposed to problem-solving (down a level) or “systemic resolutions” of systemic messes (up a level) – requires a mix of “design layers” to improve performance:

Table 6.4.1: *Design layers for Mess Resolution*

<b><i>The 4 I's and Mess Resolution:</i></b>	<b><i>Description:</i></b>
<b>1. Concretely-grounded Interventions</b> - <i>“micro-action” to design the arrangement of interests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Particular deployment of designed policies and strategies to enable change and find windows of timespace and integral mess resolution</li> </ul>
<b>2. Conceptually-engaged Ideas</b> - <i>“meta-innovation” for approaching and working on the design of ideological constructs and idea patterns</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wider-ranging alignments for multi-levelled of design strategies in windows of timespace and integral mess resolution</li> </ul>
<b>3. Coordination-oriented Institutions</b> - <i>“meso-functionality” for designing systemic architectures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intermediating functional design processes for producing connected stakeholder networks for windows of timespace and integral mess resolution</li> </ul>
<b>4. Collaboration-seeking Interactions</b> - <i>“macro-mediation” for designing organisations that can develop amalgamating capabilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-operative and adaptive design processes that can embed and codified, as well as dislodge and re-programme, key issue connectivity for windows of timespace and integral mess resolution</li> </ul>

Given the decision architecture and dominant cultural conditions in democracy, there is little latitude for the degree of modular flexibility and integration, temporal innovation and anticipative advice, and amalgamative activity and programmes of action that can drive substantial improvements. To make improvements when “handling” difficult public policy issues in democratic contexts, requires new ways to deal with change. The essential claim is that as governing is organising for timely synchronizations in the systemic mess, the work of *amalgamative organisation* – be it for structural architectural changes at an institutional or decision design level for handling interactions better – requires fresh attention to achieve better policy results to improve democratic functionality and societal outcomes. What integrated systemic design specifics look like will vary from context to context. To guide working at an

institutional and decision architectural levels of abstraction and realignment to achieve functional improvements in public governance requires a new approach.

## 6.5 Circumstance: *Pivoting the Predicament*

Having established that messes are a “system of problems” and that we experience the condition of a systemic mess where we have a series of messes that are attempting to be “controlled” or governed by a range of means (i.e. organisations in government), I pursued an angle on “*what to do?*” given the governance challenge. The context was painted as the convergence of democratic failures, where the ongoing working resolution of a series of overlapping messes are sub-optimal given general understanding of the presenting issues in the predicament (e.g. development delays and stasis from fragmentary arrangements and political conditions). A period of faltering in the late post-War long boom period, sees democratic backsliding and populist dysfunction rising. Therefore, a perspective of how to “act” in making arrangements, “see” or approach messes, and “interact” with organising, has to be better bought into focus. I propose that to have coordinating “purchase” in complex systems requires the adoption of three central questions:

Table 6.5.1: *Inquiry Approach to Public Policy and Governance Oversight*

Level of Issue Abstraction	Guiding Question
<p><b>Problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “wicked problem” or “mini-messes”</li> </ul>	<p><i>What is the problem to be “solved”?</i></p>
<p><b>Messes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- or “system of problems”</li> </ul>	<p><i>What is the mess to be “resolved”?</i></p>
<p><b>Systemic Messes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- or “system of sub-systems”</li> </ul>	<p><i>What is the systemic mess to be “undertaken”?</i></p>

I conclude next by outlining my position as a basis for undertaking a fundamental system re-design, working with and from what currently exists in terms of structure and culture in contemporary governance practice. Second, I explore the proposed *systemic pivot* as a conceptual device, highlighting the magnitude of the situation. Finally, I summarise the case for revising governance systems, opening the way for the Part 2. The *proposition* is premised on a fundamental re-design, responding to five assumptions or “realities” as contemporary considerations to form a baseline starting position:

Table 6.5.2: *Five Summary Assumptions underpinning Governance Change*

<p><i>(a) The short-term focus and responsiveness of governments to react to present day concerns, where there may also be higher levels of uncertainty, should not to be diminished.</i></p> <p>Immediacies warrant high quality and specialised attention. Our ability to deal with them needs to be enhanced. They are the inevitable, necessary and important signals that are central to stimulating responses to lightly tune, adjust, or stave-off developments that are “real-time”. Having “present day” acumen and political sensitivities to work adeptly within the constraints of democratic representation necessitates a reactive and responsive mode that should not be dissipated or dulled when dealing with a myriad of issues. <i>Reflexive</i> improvements in decision-making are central to maximising progress.</p>
<p><i>(b) The longer-term focus and foresight of governments will remain imperfect but only become increasingly salient, therefore requiring augmentation for fuller inclusion in decision-making.</i></p> <p>Anticipatory activity in government, be it anywhere across the spectrum from participative engagement in values-based visioning to high-complexity technical projection simulations, remains an under-developed field of activity requiring greater innovation. Stronger practice standards, in part driven by better public sector practice and in part by more astute political operators guiding expectations, are likely to increase. Our capacity and capability to attune to the “big picture” with an eye on the horizon, needs to be enhanced for sharper position-taking and more ambitious mission-seeking investment to attain and expand public value. <i>Reflective</i> improvements in decision-making are central to maximising societal progress.</p>
<p><i>(c) The resolution of shorter and longer-run concerns and interests in government policy-making is always relatively difficult and will increasingly become so.</i></p> <p>This natural tension requires a system design and operational principles commensurate with the scope and scale of challenge faced, so as we can make the best decisions available given what we know and think we can be expected to realistically foresee. Rather than try and dull the inevitable set of high priority immediacies where we are “in the red”, or blur our ever enlarging capacity for longer-run “blue-sky” anticipatory knowledge – or ignore the inadequacy of system design and the deep challenges trying to bring complex and contradictory perspectives and knowledge constructs into some state of temporary harmony to achieve public improvements – we need a strong and intentional design solution to realise our potential. Handing the interface of <i>reflexive</i> and <i>reflective</i> improvement-seeking decision-making is critical to maximise progress.</p>
<p><i>(d) Government systems are difficult to reform, change and improve, even when contemporary performance is evidenced as sub-optimal and widely acknowledged as “obviously so” by key agents and wider interests.</i></p> <p>Inherent inflexibilities (constitutional and legal arrangements) and key operator conservatism (e.g. ‘elite’ embedded experts and/or political interests) are inbuilt “features” in governmental systems. The upside is a soundly anchored system able to weather shorter-horizon “storms” (e.g. populist uprisings), but a static culture and monolithic architecture becomes a telling liability when transformation is necessary without arriving at crisis.</p>
<p><i>(e) Piecemeal testing that is too disjointed where partial compromises are made will fail to gain systemic traction and results warranting the investment in pivoting the system.</i></p>

Tentative and timid transitions will fall short of what is necessary, whereby change initiatives become victims of a lack of ambition, a lack of commitment for long enough to tangible bear results, and a self-fulfilling failure prophecy if undertaken in a semi-committed approach, potentially marred by a negative spirit or destructive intent.

To change orientation requires a “pivot”.<sup>137</sup> A pivot towards a complexity sensibility is underway and gaining increasing traction in public policy and governance thought. Likewise, expectations of inclusive engagement and methods of participative democracy utilising old concepts and new technologies are seeing increasing traction for more connectivity in civic life. At the same time, counteracting forces are at play in contemporary democratic practice, whereby short-termism, fragmentation and exclusivity are at times reasserted in the face of eroding faith in political performance and public sector dysfunction. I conceive of a system-wide pivot as being in an early stage of building new motion, but yet to fully manifest at a level where a discernibly different practice is occurring. Public discourse is underway and prevalent in the climate change narrative and in politics writ large (e.g. Owen and Smith, 2015; Roberts, 2016; Flinders, 2017a), with the common thematic direction of the need for systemic reform, adaptation and renewal that moderates radical short-termism as a normalized modus operandi for contemporary politics and public governance, embroiled in dealing with a cocktail of “messes”, patchy and inadequately sophisticated advice, mixed with oversight mechanism shortfalls.

There is a requirement to reframe and scale-up a new set of system reform solutions for the UK. The same holds with global implications for democratic societies and those heading in the general direction of greater citizenry involvement, engagement and respect in direction setting and decision-making. The magnitude is substantial and the first-movers will possess an exportable expertise potential as we occupy a significant juncture to attend to the democratic dilemmas we have created and to extend beyond our own immediate interests, with unprecedented cause (OMS, 2013, p. 9-10). The magnification of new implicit moral challenges plays into a governance environment shown to be lacking the methods of receptivity, the ensuing politics to hear and channel civic concerns and central to my proposition, an inadequate government policy-making format to nurture, support and elevate discourse and action to address the challenges of the day.

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<sup>137</sup> A *pivot* implies a movement, changing direction. I use word pivot to distinguish from the “ontological turn” in anthropology (in anthropology the “ontological turn” describes the trend to a more relativist perspective advocated for by some where it is proposed that “worlds, as well as world views, may vary”. Sourced: <http://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/ontological-turn>) or “reflexive turn” in organisational theory (For example, in organisational research, a subset of social science in the management field focusing on social theory and post-modernism, a “reflexive turn” indicates the awareness of the impact of the researcher on their construction of reality and influence on subjects (Chia, 1996, p.42).



We are grappling with last century organisational models on one hand dealing with unrefined policy renderings for relevant decisions, and on the other, reacting to modes of resistance that are activating as a last resort given failure.<sup>138</sup>

Systems and processes must have an inbuilt ability to be corrected, improved and adapted. An integrative and temporally nuanced set of lenses, or ways of acting, seeing and interacting for better results, are overdue to advance governance practice. This requires an evolving design for a new decision architecture to produce a new democratic engagement and a political enlivenment that moves us away from reactive and regressive responses to immediacies. Seen in Gardiner's (2014) terms, the "tyranny of the contemporary" is where the full effects of current behavior are spread over a long period, often beyond the tenure or life of those making decisions. Therefore, a serious temptation is faced: take the benefits now and defer costs, even when it is ethically indefensible, where small current benefits result in more knowingly disproportionately future costs. Further, and referencing his primary focus on climate change, Gardiner notes the temptation to "pass the buck" can have cumulative impacts, potentially compounding into an "intergenerational arms race" where negative future costs are accelerated. He sees one way to facilitate this "tyranny" is to encourage the perpetuation of inadequate institutions arrangements (Gardiner, 2014, p. 300-1, 314). He also sees the problem of moral corruption as a barrier to action:

*"While the current generation, and especially the more affluent, face strong temptations to pass serious costs to the future, admitting this may be morally uncomfortable, especially in the public sphere. Far better, then, to cover up what is really going on with ways of thinking that disguise or distort what is happening. In a setting in which most of the victims of one's behavior (including future generations) are voiceless, this may be relatively easy to do. ... Most notably, we might expect nonmoral framings to dominate, and especially those that obscure the intergenerational challenge and focus on the concerns of the present."* (Gardiner, 2014, p. 301).

Gardiner proposes two projects take priority: (1) working out a "revised institutional system", and (2) developing an achievable pathway to a "reasonable acceptable approximation", noting: "These are large tasks. They pose substantial, indeed daunting, challenges to the current generation as a whole, to the global community, to politicians, and to scholars in political philosophy, international relations theory, international law, and so on. However, none of this implies that they cannot be completed, still less that they ought not be attempted." (ibid, p. 305). Taking this challenge seriously, the next part formulates a "proposition" or design theory for a refreshed approach to governance. My aim is to produce a conceptual framework supported by analysis to look at (a) compositional strategy and system design architecture or "hardware", and (b) the

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<sup>138</sup> For example, protesting school students about climate change on one side of the Channel, and "yellow vests" (Mouvement des gilets jaunes) expressing anger at eroding quality of life and elitism, on the other.

motivating ideas and “software” systems of practice. I emphasis working from and with current constitutional, institutional and organisational arrangements to advance civic transformation in a sustainable way given the magnitude of unprecedented societal challenges.

## Summary of Part 1: A Residual Default

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### 1:i) Synthesis

Democracy is under duress and we face new governance challenges. I have claimed the current pressured predicament is highly problematic for good governance. The existing framing, management and oversight of complex issues for progress is not being served by high quality responsive governance given existing arrangements. My focus has been to provide a theoretical grounding that knits together *complexity theorising* (where the *systemic mess* is a conceptual response to interpreting conditions) and *integrated design*, which offers a functional focus for policy resolution-making. In addition, time and space dimensions converge as *timespace* to provide a second key angle of inquiry. Together, these zones are woven into the *timespace mess* as a synthesizing concept to reconceive the governance challenge.

I take the central challenges of analytic and applied resolution as (1) the integration of complexity, and (2) temporal awareness as key factors; establishing an approach to these key concepts. Bringing systems thinking and temporal thought into the foreground, I work with and from the lineage in these fields and develop ways of bringing this to life given contemporary conditions. Consequently, I argue it is problematic to the extent of requiring a different governance approach to adequately “touch” – or even more ambitiously “get a handle on” and influence – the shape of the future. I frame my analysis to highlight that we need to change the way we (a) “act” (organise and do activities in practice), (b) “see” (conceptualise and think about key activities), and (c) “interact” to produce insights and resolutions.

The essence of the predicament is that (1) governing coherently is difficult given functional *arrangements* (it is an organisational problem of coordination within and between public entities and private markets in specific localities); (2) governing coherently is difficult given respective entity’s awareness of and *(mis)treatment of time* in fragmented systems; and (3) governing coherently is difficult given the analytic and operational processes of *framing, informing and making decisions* in organisational contexts. It is evident that “getting around” a mess or “across” a systemic mess is hard given its shifting and contestable nature. The right schema of oversight for many issues is consistently highly problematic given the current nature of prevalent thinking and organisational arrangements.

### 1:ii) The “Residual Default”

The contemporary governance condition illustrates a closed, resistant and tumultuous form of interaction in civic culture. The primary modality is:

- *Fragmentary and Siloed* – where plans with sub-optimal whole-of-system consideration and awareness uneasily co-exist, often causing a “shattering” of issue coherence and multi-dimensional failure.
- *Presentist and Horizon-restricted* – short-run mono-vision imagined futures with a tightly-bound array of “in-system” possibilities as the favoured remit (or upon failure, a breakdown and fracturing “out of control”).
- *Regressive and Misaligned* – protective retreats from current and future needs, with the correlative opening-up of misleading political orientations, further hindering connectivity and emergent adaptation.

This means the need to move past the dominant debates of spatial concern, participative engagement and the dominant narrative of problems:

Summary Table 1(i): *Extending beyond the dominant academic Governance focus*

<p><b><i>Moving past Spatial Concern</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be they a focus on organisational boundaries and power centralization or distribution, or the distribution of wealth and equity, spatial parameters drive a lot of thinking about politics, government and the location of “agency”.</li> <li>- Temporality, while implicitly connected, is treated with less fervour and rigour.</li> <li>- A temporal consideration in concert with spatial concerns offers a richer conceptual and applied pathway.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Moving past Participative Engagement</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More participative engagement in policy, decision-making and politics is a popular democratic agenda for achieving authentic progress.</li> <li>- Getting deeper involvement and the wisdom of the local perspective may improve outcomes, but does not always guarantee actions for the greater good over time.</li> <li>- Instead, integrating and temporally situated resolutions for consideration in both representative and participative domains of engagement can help improve democracy in action.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Moving past the Narrative of Problems</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A singular focus and corresponding orientation to neoliberal-shaped narrative of problems, crises and events as situations or dilemmas to solve with solutions and changes.</li> <li>- Seeing messes to be resolved, recognising the host of institutional and organisation implications taking this seriously presents, rather than treating problems as isolated dilemmas to be solved where causality is indeterminable.</li> <li>- Instead, connected systems requiring amelioration via connected and thoughtful experimental implementation, where integrative and temporally-aware narratives are about governing the rate of change are a critical variable to influence progress.</li> </ul>

### ***1.iii) The Challenge given the Predicament***

Overcoming the negative path dependencies of the “*Residual Default*” and moving past dominant concerns and narratives that restrict analysis and decision-making constitutes the *New Democratic Challenge*. The challenge becomes one of how can we move beyond the debates that

fixate and constrain democratic responsiveness and intelligent decision-making, where the present outweighs regard for the future and land on actionable decisions that will at times require deep participation and at times require stronger direction and leadership from the centre. It may be that many issues are better served by decentralisation or devolution, by greater local engagement and empowerment, and by framing and making interventions at the level of particular solutions. However, without a means by which to better frame and inform such considerations, the capacity to work on these issues and arrive at good judgement about what to do, is constrained in the current operating environment. We can fix the governance problematic – but it requires a shift. Shifts can now happen faster given communications technologies and knowledge accrual. My answer to what are the significant variables to pay attention to is the lack of:

- *Structures and mechanisms* – an institutional design issue of dominant arrangements
- *Vision, mission and purpose* – the commitment and urgency necessary to drive change
- *Strategy* – namely incentives alignment for coherent leadership plans of action; and
- *Political courage* – namely the “mindset”, the ideas, the leadership and originality in the culture.

#### **1.iv) Strategic Position**

An unambiguous “pivot” of both the Westminster system and its “decision architecture”, encompassing the culture of the Civil Service interacting with politics, is proposed as being necessary. A re-orientation encapsulating an intentional multi-levelled institutional and cultural pivot to reset is necessary to address a multitude of issues. A new decision architecture leaves open the detailed arrangements that could unfold. Existing institutions could be re-purposed, or new ones brought into existence due to unprecedented issues. With this in mind, the proposition in Part 2 engages with and responds to the theorising established. This formulation will devise a conceptual framework to provide a high-level schematic design that can re-align the democratic operating system. The aim is to do so in a logical fashion over a relatively short timespan as the political motivation to “act and fix” a dysfunctional system facing highly challenging issues “presses in”. What worked before might not work now. I argue for a structural “fillip” to counteract institutional dysfunction with a new decision architecture, supported by practices to overcome cultural inertia.

# PART 2: PROPOSITION

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## Outline of Part 2: *Proposition*

### 7. Redesigning Governance: *Now, Next and Nexus*

- 7.1 Outline
- 7.2 Positional Logic: *Achievable Compositions*
- 7.3 Beyond Permanence: *Design Analogies*
- 7.4 Conceptual Framework: *Attainable Governance*
- 7.5 Redesigning: *Governing with a New Repertoire*

### 8. Reformulating Governance: *Purpose, Knowing and Fusion*

- 8.1 Outline
- 8.2 Purpose: *Directional, Aspirational and Agile Plan-making*
- 8.3 Knowing: *Observation, Outlook and Orientation*
- 8.4 Fusion: *Sense-making Synthesis*
- 8.5 Reformulating: *Recasting Functions and facing Dysfunctions*

### 9. Reconstituting Governance: *Experiments, Considerations and Review*

- 9.1 Outline
- 9.2 Experiments: *Commissions, Acts and Offices*
- 9.3 Considerations: *Caney's UK Parliamentary Design Package*
- 9.4 Reviewing: *Initiatives, Mitigations and Synopsis*
- 9.5 Reconstituting: *Ensemble Schema for the Attainable*

## Summary of Part 2: *Imagining the Attainable*

## Outline of Part 2: *Proposition*

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*“Democracies are systematically biased in favor of the present. In giving greater weight to the present, they neglect the future. ... their neglect appears as the dead hand of the past. The claims of future popular sovereigns are thus systematically undervalued because future citizens do not have a voice in the present...”* – Dennis F. Thompson, (2005, p. 246).

- How to forge integrated connectedness into practice with inter-temporally sensitive designs is the work of institutional design. Adaptation requires a degree of foresight and openness to change, whereby weight is not wholly placed on the importance of the present so we can navigate contemporary issues and prepare for a more functional future.
- I argue that we have reached a critical juncture in governance arrangements where decision architecture design and practice in contemporary Western systems require a shift away from placing primacy on spatial structures, towards more effectively aligning purposes and functions to actual challenges.
- Dual governance of the short-run (the immediate and delivery in the present) and of the long-run (the anticipated and the foresighted) require distinct government arrangements across the board to deal with complex issues. Intentional design for handling and resolving the tensions are necessary as many contemporary governance failures are rooted in an inability to separate complex issues to deal with with the “short” and the “long”.
- The proposition’s “logic building” is infused with temporality theorising, of which *timespace* can be conceived of as the core conceptual device and the socially constructed and contextually contingent “nature of time” as the underpinning perspective. To guide arriving at optimal decision-points for inclusive socio-economic progress, I propose a new framework for *Attainable Governance* to “temporally frame” and “conceptually layer” governance activities.
- In total, this is a conceptual pivot to a “system-of-systems” public policy-making framework that is a next-generation change programme to recover trust in public sector, reform institutional arrangements and pivot the political towards actively addressing the key cleavages of division that will dominate coming decades. The *task* set is therefore to:

**TASK: *Develop and test a new conceptual framework of public governance that aligns “form” and “context” for improved democratic functionality.***

PART	OBJECTIVE	GOAL
<p><b>Part 2: Proposition</b></p> <p>The proposal, comprising a conceptual framework of governance</p>	<p><i>Objective: (Part 2)</i></p> <p>Elucidating a system for improved policy framing (formulation of advice) and decision making (acts of direction setting)</p>	<p>Development: <i>Conceptual Production</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A conceptual platform (or design theory) for attaining better results given Part 1’s theorising</li> </ul>



## 7. Redesigning Governance: *Now, Next and Nexus*

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### 7.1 Outline

*“My main task has been to show that there is a deep and important underlying structural correspondence between the pattern of a problem and the process of designing a physical form which answers that problem. ... The same pattern is implicit in the action of the unselfconscious form-producing system, and responsible for its success. But before we can ourselves turn a problem into form... we need ... first to invent a conceptual framework for such maps.”* – Christopher Alexander (1964, p. 132).

Talking in design terms with an architectural background, Alexander (1964) encapsulates the notion that a conceptual framework is necessary to understand the patterned similarity of “problems” (issues), structures and processes. To refresh the design of a system requires inventing a new way of thinking and “structuring” a response. This is analogous for proceeding at the level of abstraction I pursue. My perspective is that without doing system design work at a conceptual framework level, the most tangible and concrete challenges of our time will remain elusive. This chapter, supported by those that follow, crafts a new way of thinking about and arranging how things are done in the arena of public governance. The objective is to elucidate a system for improved policy solution formation to enable better governance performance.

A key challenge when theorising about advice and decision architecture at a conceptual level is that it is just that – a conceptual proposition. My design is nonetheless shaped by the current context we are in, the knowledge available about public policy and governance systems, and both my personal practitioner experience and the insights from others working in the field (e.g. the reported perspectives of key people in the UK Civil Service). I propose a systemic shift or “pivot” that is posited as functional and positioned to be achievable. The “ultimate test” is actual uptake of the framework or design, rather than theoretical exposition per se, fully accepting applied development and adaptation will be necessary on the way to building-out new architectures in specific contexts.

For the purposes of this work, the scope is restrained to producing the overarching “form” of a design intervention. In seeking to establish the parameters of a new *decision architecture* for functional mechanisms that support adaptive creativity, initially to build-up foundations before outlining the proposal, I:

- précis the “positional logic” I work in five key steps, establishing the scope of the temporal construct employed in the design (7.2)

- foreshadow the high-level design challenges where there is a tension between certainty and change, plus propose key mechanistic and non-mechanistic design analogies for updating governance discourse (7.3); and
- outline the *conceptual framework* of “Attainable Governance” in 7.4, before summarising the key aspects of the proposition to reframe public governance for what I conceive of as a new “repertoire” (7.5).

## 7.2 Positional Logic: *Achievable Compositions*

First, I state my position, setting out the underlying assumptions upon which this chapter builds. Second, I discuss the nature of the challenge undertaken, the temporal definitions worked from and time periods for decision-making devised in service of a new approach.

### 7.2.1. A Positional Logic

(i) Governance is a principal challenge across a range of civic issues and development dilemmas:

- The ability to understand and orchestrate the deemed sphere of influence in a governance role is a critical determinant of system oversight success.
- It is not so much who has power in a traditional diametrically opposed zero-sum sense, but how to operate collaboratively given the range of actors in changing contexts. It remains who is occupying the terrain and why they do so, matters. Also, where there are gaps or “vacuums” (issue or actor voids) matters for progress.
- *Consequent focus for progress* – the “ensemble”<sup>139</sup> and “technique”<sup>140</sup> employed should enable “orchestration”<sup>141</sup> of the deemed sphere of influence and suggests a different form of oversight mechanism than what current governments are able to deploy. What fills the analytic and operational voids to reduce “negative-space” and exercise intelligent orchestration requires development in most jurisdictions.

(ii) How Governments are orchestrating to “see” and “decide” matters:

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<sup>139</sup> By *ensemble*, as developed more fully in 7.3.2, I follow Alexander (1964) to mean both *form* and *context* together.

<sup>140</sup> I employ *technique* as a defined and skilful way of carrying out a task or procedure, following Ellul (1964).

<sup>141</sup> In *orchestration* I use a musical metaphor to encapsulate the properties of oversight to initiate and guide collaborative behaviours, recognising the value of harmony can outweigh unrelated or uncoordinated individual effort. Therefore, I imply “harmonizing” in a wider sense than a more “rigid” reading of the phrase, that could be used connote a more structured or directive style of planning. I also infer coordination that is open and visible, rather than concealed or surreptitious in motivation. Source conferred with: <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/orchestration>

- The scale and scope of the issue treatment “module” in relation to the scale and scope of the “presenting problem” (or mess) is a critical variable.
- The scale and connectivity of the issues and the way they interface with decision architecture and analytic mechanisms is an important determinant of decision quality.
- *Consequent focus for progress* – the oversight *ensemble* and *technique* employed should provide guidance clarity and working assumptions to “right-fit” the framing of the best scope and scale of policy treatment.

(iii) The timing of inter-issue orchestration matters:

- The timing issues for rapid cumulative learning and decision-making in complex systems render traditional methods short-changing the nature of contemporary governance challenges. It is not the policy cycle that is conceptually wrong per se, rather it is an analytic and decision challenge that is profoundly implicated by often resolvable issues of integration, coordination and synchronicity for better results.
- As a key systemic pivot challenge, we require for improving the alignment of policy analytics, an understanding of the functional synchronicity tolerances in cycles of analysis and delivery.
- *Consequent focus for progress* – the oversight *ensemble* and *technique* employed should enable operationalising more quality expert policy and decision-making capabilities to provide modular advice for “cleaner” solutions requiring less political micro-level involvement and empower greater decision alignment.

(iv) Developing *system of systems* orchestration activity matters:

- The challenge is to bring together in a manageable and orderly fashion the concepts of complexity, temporality and integrality for connected issue orchestration and synchronised oversight.
- The location of oversight needs to be fit-for-purpose to facilitate intelligent decision-making and ensures sharp, swift and sensitive adjustment-making accounting for “whole of system” performance.
- *Consequent focus for progress* – Elements of these processes will need to be conducted transparently and beyond the reach of “day-to-day politics”, while other elements will need to be firmly placed in the “day-to-day” mode of “managing our way forward” with short feedback loops. Working both hierarchically upwards for a general “omniscient

horizon” view, as well as hierarchically downwards for “salient specific” view with expertise, is necessary for functional oversight performance.

(v) Therefore, a new framework (or theory) to guide design and practice is required:

- The consequent focus for progress is on a “first-principles”<sup>142</sup> design framework for a “system-of-systems” public policy-making schema to drive deep system change.
- Introducing temporality in tandem with a spatiality (timespace) in issue development becomes important for issue composition.
- Attaining a “fit-for-purpose” *systemic pivot* to open-up responsive and agile action concurrently with long-run deeper investment and mission-oriented commitments to enhance future prospects – in a constructive manner whereby solution formulation and decision-making is viable and improved, is a central to the New Governance Challenge.

### **7.2.2. An Achievable Composition**

A core governance challenge is how to achieve better oversight of the short, the long – and the short and long-terms – together. This requires an intentional institutional design (a shaping of structure) and a supporting ethos (a shaping of culture). A solution and resolution-focussed frame for developing a new *ensemble* is developed and detailed. If public governing is done by bringing issue-related *timespace* into a window of “oversight” as such, it (governance) is a social construct that can be updated. Governance is done in the tension between the *actual* (what I summarise as the “now”), the *anticipated* (the “next”), and the *attainable* (the “nexus” or what can be resolved). In constructing these distinctions, I unequivocally apply a clear structure along these lines to re-orient practices.

Central to my proposal is the elevation of strategic decision framing and making, benefiting from high quality knowledge (information and targeted engagement inputting pertinent advice) that accounts for “broader” and “deeper” horizons through an “enlarged” practice. This is to systemically ensure a pre-disposal towards thinking and acting beyond an affective psychological state that is emotionally charged, where immediate self-preservation is the primary driver. It is to also ensure that “state of the art” and “best guess” anticipatory projections and reflections are adequately considered. At times they may be included, or alternatively discharged as unhelpful. This again helps to lift the frame of reference beyond the self and presenting immediacies, to

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<sup>142</sup> Dating back to Aristotle, *first-principles* thinking, sometimes called “reasoning from first principles,” is the idea of breaking down complicated issues into basic elements and then reassembling them “from the ground up”. It is commonly considered one of the best ways to “reverse-engineer” complication, unleash creativity and move from linear to non-linear results. Source: <https://fs.blog/2018/04/first-principles/>

enlarge the sphere of dynamic possibilities, expand the sphere of inclusion, and enliven the sphere of civic responsibility and engagement. In developing an intentional repertoire for reframing governance, the intention is to be able to solidify some areas of commitment where certainty is the desirable state, and to dissolve others where uncertainty best prevails for retaining (or regaining) agility for attaining human betterment. Furthermore, the frame provides for the creative resolution of the position between the “known” and the “unknown” so as to drive for and achieve workable clarities of position for functional, productive and supportive governance to generate societal improvement.

My case is that the contemporary condition requires a trifurcated decision-making design to adequately structure a pattern of analysis and process of consideration that can produce decision results that can blend a range of novel integrative, differentiated and synchronised forms. This helps to affect a whole-of-system “pivot” and sub-system “tuning” for the greater good. It institutes *intermediation* mechanisms to bring about the possibility of intra and inter-generational responsive oversight and guidance for intelligent progress. At the centre of this *systemic pivot* lies a threefold objective to avert:

- (1) *Delays* and reducing stalling of activity at the critical system change interfaces for reflexive functional and transformative momentum, while;
- (2) *Inaction* amplification where the inconclusive and uncertain, along with selective passivity, mute measured headway; and
- (3) *Interoperability* breakdowns in collective intelligence (e.g. to accelerate and de-accelerate issues concurrently) while monitoring “whole of system” feedback and associated effects (i.e. including positive and negative impacts and spill-over effects).

To compose the “achievable”, I take a position on the best temporal horizons for framing public governance. Different social theorists present periods of chronology in varying ways. For example, Giddens (1981) conceives of three timescales: the ‘*durée of daily time*’ experienced, the ‘*Dasein*’<sup>143</sup> of life-time of an individual or the physical body, and the ‘*longue durée*’ of institutions in a historical mode of ‘supra-individual’ understanding (Giddens, 1981, p.35). While recognising day-to-day immediacies and the “big history” at either ends of a spectrum, and the in-between reality of lived experiences represented by human lives, I treat timeframes in a way similar to standard

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<sup>143</sup> ‘Dasein’ as a German word literally translating to “being there” or with “existence” used as a proxy in English, generally refers to the temporality of life in its human cycles, or “being in the world” as such. The academic usage traces to the philosopher Heidegger (1927) in *Being and Time*. Mulhall discusses the subtleties of usage (Mulhall, 1996, p.12-18).

approach that prevails in the futures literature. My constructs are broadly in keeping with Joseph's (1974) foundational work usually referenced in the futures body of literature (Passig, 2004)<sup>144</sup>.

I take *now* temporalities as reflecting an emphasis on the immediate-range, with a key constraining horizon being the election cycle and the associated timeframes as subsets of this tenure (e.g. a primacy on day-to-day politics in the context of annual, quarterly or 100 day plans). I take the *next* as thinking "long", but in Joseph's terms I am indicating an alignment to a composition of the short-range (5-10 years), the median range (10-30 years) and the long and very long ranges (30 to 50 years, 50 plus respectively). Therefore, *next* is a flexible and inclusive category best "right-sized" contingent on the nature of the issues being considered. The intent is to go appropriately beyond the immediate so as to recast possibilities in substantive, bold and challenging way adjacent to the *now*.

Thirdly, the temporal treatment relevant to the *nexus* mode proposed lies in the consideration, calculation and composition of activity that encapsulates and seriously embodies the implications of the *now* and the *next* "simultaneously". This suggests the plurality of hybrid temporal forms are engaged depending on the issue and its salience at given "points-in-time". Hence the proposed temporal horizons for excellent governance are multi-faceted, dynamic, and adaptive in nature. Greater fluidity in the immediate range may be required for some issues, while greater "grounded" agreement on very-long run strategies may be required for others. Furthermore, consistent with the approach, solutions to some issues will imply concurrently harmonising both the *now* and the *next* to attain improvements. To substantiate the conceptual framework, I discuss the three proposed modes of decision-making in public governance as follows:

- With regard to the *now*, *next* and *nexus*, I sketch resetting the "orientation" in each mode – by *orientation* I mean the general approach implied and the key meanings employed to set the tone and tenor of the modality.
- I also discuss the "practice scope" of each mode – by *practice scope* I mean the specifics of direction, horizon and mindset that are the defining hallmarks of each mode.
- I complete the section by summarising what is developed as a "meta-method" and conceptual framework for an *Attainable Governance Framework (AGF)*, including summary tables to present and collate for AGF.

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<sup>144</sup> Joseph (1974) identifies five ranges of future time awareness, being (1) a so-called immediate-range of up to five years, (2) the short-range as five to ten years, (3) a median-range of ten to thirty years, (4) the long-range as thirty to fifty years; and (5) a very long-range of fifty to one hundred years." (Passig, 2004, p.42).

My claim is that we need new concepts and discursive constructs to adequately describe and conceive of what is required for effective public governance. As per my *positional logic* outlined, due to not adequately attending to the issues impacting and rates of change faced today, a systemic pivot and new theory of public governance is necessary because current decision architectures and practice fall short of good civic governance that accounts for the future. Prior to detailing the framework, I proceed by continuing to build-up the foundation for the proposal at a meta-level, focusing on the nature of designing for change.

### **7.3 Beyond Permanence: *Design Analogies***

First, I reflect on the high-level design challenges that go with the territory when there is a tension between the cultural desire for expressions of certainty amid changing realities. I propose that structural flexibility is required for governance transformation, so as to leverage against the inertia from existing “precedence” at a constitutional and legal level. Second, I establish the key design analogies and metaphors I carry from the realms of design (architecture and engineering) and music to update governance discourse, before establishing the transition to describing the conceptual framework (7.3.3).

#### **7.3.1. *Beyond Permanence***

While it is commonly understood that all social phenomenon is relative, making it contingent and evolving in the human condition, the quest for stability and certainty has appeal to both the change fearful and the change weary. Even seemingly entrenched and persistent institutional arrangements are far from static. To call something such as democracy “timeless”, universal and enduring, as opposed to fragile and transient, is traditionally a complimentary expression. In architecture Franck (2016) notes: “This could mean the work does not follow the style of a particular period, or that the physical structure is eternal, everlasting, permanent or that it will not be affected by the passage of time.” (Franck, 2016, p. 9). Accepting these conditions are impossible to meet, particular when constructs are socially construed, similarly it is so with government. The illogic of the compliment inferring being “outside of time” is in practical terms, impossible. All governmental designs are far from immutable, following the style of a period subject to change through the passage of clock-time. Rather than designing to resist or ignore time and privilege permanence, it is commonplace in many design professions to embrace “mutability”, widening the scope to recognise decay, the ephemeral and impermanence (ibid, p.10-12). Design acknowledging the significance of “change in time” (temporality) demonstrates squarely facing processes of societal adaptation. However, much of what could be called the “mindset” towards the Westminster system, aptly parallels the condition afflicting architectural attitudes:

*“What is built and revered for being long lasting, if not everlasting, nonetheless requires maintenance, repair and often restoration in order to continue to remain the ‘same’. Indeed, in the West the desire for permanence and unbroken continuity is so strong (and blind) that the necessity for maintenance or intervention is overlooked in order to sustain the myth of permanence.”* (Franck, 2016, p. 9).

Hence overcoming the psychological barriers that cause us to cling to unrealistic senses of permanence, necessitates in my view, something structural to assert the inherent mutability of governmental form. It must do so without rendering it formless and impotent, yet do so in the spirit of abandoning institutional permanence as sacrosanct. Without intervention, the natural forces to “fossilize” existing arrangements may further embed the status quo, to the point of arriving at a more profound “democratic crises” i.e. systemic breakdown beyond current governing dysfunction and populist sentiment. A degree of continuity in the basic structure of government for stability is necessary. There must also be the potential for considerable change built into the system, should retaining functional alignment with the environment demand it. For example, the question of whose ideas should hold sway generationally, requires a balance between “locking-in” some benefits from the past and “freeing-up” other initiatives to derive future value (Thompson, 2005, p. 251-2). As Thompson elaborates, the conditions under which current citizens decide the best balance on an issue is not necessarily conducive to finding a fair balance in the long-run:

*“Popular sovereignty does not answer the question of whether earlier or later majorities should have precedence. Some deference to past majorities is necessary to sustain a democracy, especially the constitutional kind. It is also necessary to confirm that the expression of a majority will at any particular time is genuine, not the product of temporary impulses or manipulated desires. But too much influence by past majorities prevents desirable change. Present sovereigns need to be able to deliberate in light of new circumstances and new information, and act on the conclusions of their deliberations. Granting past majorities excessive power undermines popular sovereignty itself as new majorities find themselves increasingly constrained by the dead hand of past majorities.”* (Thompson, 2005, p. 246).

The key point about the draw-back of institutionalising permanence in systems of arrangement is two-fold: (1) it introduces a systemic bias towards both the *past* and *present* as requiring direct interventions to “correct” for the interests of the future. Furthermore, (2) there is a systemic bias to quantified knowledge. As is the case with commercial situations (Barton, 2017), the long-term is always hard to quantify than qualify, requiring an “especially critical corrective given the inevitably asymmetric nature of information flows” (Barton, 2017, p.196). He talks in business terms of the need for an explicit investment strategy or philosophy to guide trust-building behaviour. Likewise, for governments without clear long-term convictions, the interests of the future can drift out of sight. How then to achieve a re-balancing so as to bring the future into focus, without necessarily engaging in large-scale constitutional and governmental organisational re-design, is a central design challenge. How can we achievably reframe public governance so it



is viable in a relatively short-term governmental timeframe (i.e. within a decade)? In understanding decision timescales, it is important to recognise some decisions have small temporal legacies, while others impose enduring consequences.

I advocate the premise that if on the surface a decision is highly likely to leave a lasting legacy (e.g. infrastructure investment or a climate change), then a higher “duty of care” is required in decision-making. Therefore, understanding the lifespan of a decision shapes what you need to know and subsequently do. However, in circumstances and conditions conducive to complex messes, there is often a series of disconnected decisions that have cumulative effects. This can in total outweigh the significance of one large decision. Therefore, this contemporary condition requires *intermediation mechanisms* and a working framework within which to locate and operation them. Such a framework needs to be accommodating enough to (a) ameliorate or “dissolve problems” (Sage, 1992, p. 232), by redesigning the system so the problems or messes no longer exist in some cases, or (b) actively help to address “resolving messes” through trialing a range of adaptation strategies, and/or (c), work with and on the intermediation of both (a) and (b).

### **7.3.2. Design Analogies and Positioning Language**

In governance design, analogies and metaphors can help to shift and “carry” new understanding. I establish supporting mechanistic and non-mechanistic analogies,<sup>145</sup> as both are required. Physical design concepts, of architectural and engineering origin, can be used to convey structural forms. Musical metaphors and language can help to signify less concrete forms. I see merit in working with a range of discursive analogies, in particular design-oriented language to assist handling the narration of complexity in ways supportive of discernable oversight arrangements. A wide range of activities need descriptive assistance, from big plans to small acts. As Lowndes and Roberts (2013) specify, given the ongoing contestable nature of governance change, meaningful actions can range from “foundational moments” such as (i) new constitutions, to (ii) fundamental reform programmes, as well as down to (iii) many small acts of adjustment undertaken on the ground by strategic actors (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013, p.17). In conceptualising a governance framework to undergird a new design capable of supporting innovative practice, I aim to provide a reformulated schema to help refresh the “science and art” of democratic decision-making. Consequently, it must be able to include and describe changes as Lowndes and Roberts characterize. To support the proposed direction of travel, given that wholesale governance reorganization and constitutional change would add further destabilization and lags into a system already under acute stress, I drive at a “reset” that is not contingent on organisational boundary

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<sup>145</sup> Refer to earlier discussions of the mechanistic and non-mechanistic, along with conceptions of the *Machine Age* and *Systems Age* (3.4.2 and 6.2 – 6.3).

moving in the existing system. That is, reorganization of boundaries of accountability and reform in the traditional sense of shifting power into an arrangement of spatial and network nodes that favour the incumbent governing agents' worldview (e.g. folding functions together or separating them, or decentralising or re-centralising control) is not going to deliver the type of change required. Nor would results be timely enough given the predicament. This leaves taking a more temporally-oriented "reset", recognising the centrality of the timespace relationship as a principal route to premise a systemic reset upon.

For the application of the framework it becomes necessary to design a new repertoire of guiding ideas and the schematic arrangements, so they may be translated into workable plans to update the acceptable "way of doing things" and the supporting machinery of government. This poses bridging challenges to transformation, as in any change process. On the one hand, the new ideas must be substantive enough in principle and practice to make systemic change worthwhile and desirable. Second, they must be practical and accessible enough so as to make them explainable in relatively straightforward terms – and deemed practically viable to facilitate an informed contestable politics. Therefore, the theory or framework must not be overly abstract, and comprehensively solid enough to be taken forward. This is not to say that the theoretical underpinnings are unimportant. They are explored as far as possible so as to provide adequate "soundings" of the conceptual foundations upon which to build.<sup>146</sup> Third, they must embody the attributes that open the way for operational translation into blueprints, prototype systems, and potentially constitutional reform.

The implication of this functional and applied orientation places an important and necessary authentic burden on conceptual production. It marks a departure from, for example Unger's position as a political philosopher (e.g. Unger, 2013). For him, to develop a "blueprint" of public governance architecture suggests a likely undermining of what he refers to as being in a state of "permanent institutional innovation" (Unger, 1987). Unger elevates solid plans to the status of imposed structural dogma or rigidity, counterproductive to institutional flexibility and the larger objective of a "shared bigness" (ibid). With reference to over or under imagining the "what next", he postulates:

*"This false dilemma [either fantastical 'utopian' futurism or mundane and 'trivial' instrumentalism in political thinking] results from a misunderstanding of the nature of programmatic arguments. They are not about blueprints; they are about successions. They are not architecture; they are music."* (Unger, 2013).

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<sup>146</sup> This does not preclude further work to substantiate logics in a deeper philosophical sense. However, given my aim and the scope of work, there are limits in this project, whereby I have had to exercise judgement about the breadth and depth of philosophical consideration.

I agree with the general thrust of not committing to overly rigid, and therefore fragile, programmes of government activity. Enabling change is critical, as considered in Part 3. I endeavour to employ the analogies of both music and architecture. Acknowledging musical roots, I conceive of understanding the supporting democratic “ensemble” as a conceptual devise (refer 7.5.3). By *ensemble* I mean placing attention on the whole as the alignment of “form” and “context”. In other words, taking the presenting structure and the background situation together, as a total effect.<sup>147</sup> However, in the domain of applied governance change, referencing architecture, design and engineering help to describe practical necessities. For example, it is necessary to develop tangible plans, be they construed as “blueprints” of machinery or operational “prototypes” for the purposes of stress-testing.

Developing a conceptual framework requires considered language choices. It is not a detailed implementation plan, nor is it politically or ideologically “programmatically” in Unger’s conception. There is room for various interpretations of “what do to” across the political spectrum. Like finding rhythms in music for pleasing harmony, the way into composing a conceptual framework and theory of public governance is via conceiving to position the “language of democracy” in a similar way to the “language of music”. I am not producing a specific “score”, rather I am devising the parameters of making “soundscapes” to work within. This imposes functional constraints, but leaves open the formulation of a vast array of styles of music (or governing ideologies or governmental practices) and does not impose a “sound”, “style” or specific rules about timing. I focus on the “how to” rather than the contextual specifics of “what to do”, with the hope that “players” (Civil Service and political actors in particular) can find their own harmonies for their uniquely sensitized responses to real-time mix of background circumstances, foreground contingencies and human character.

### **7.3.3. Underscoring Timing**

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<sup>147</sup> I refer to *ensemble* as the object of both *form and context* together e.g. the fitness or rightness of a form such “institutional architecture” in its operating environment, being its context. Alexander (1964) situates the concept in physically-oriented architectural design, stating: “...every design problem begins with an effort to achieve fitness between two entities: the form in question and its context. The form is the solution to the problem; the context defines the problem. In other words, when we speak of design, the real object of discussion is not the form alone, but the ensemble comprising the form and its context. ... The context is that part of the world which puts demands on this form; anything in the world that makes demands of the form is context. Fitness is a relation of mutual acceptability between these two. In a problem of design we want to satisfy the mutual demands which the two make on one another. We want to put the context and the form into effortless contact or frictionless coexistence.” (Alexander, 1964, p. 15-19).

Whatever construct is developed, the key test will be whether it can enlarge our sense of time and responsibility. With temporality as key to the proposition, short-sightedness about the future has been established as a preeminent contemporary challenge. Commenting on Rawls's position which underscored the importance of accounting for the future, Caney (2018) reflects:

*"...any discussion of what contemporaries owe to each other is 'incomplete' until we also consider what they owe to future people... Addressing responsibilities to the future must therefore take center stage along with debates about what distributive principles apply among contemporaries; and to omit the claims of the future is to give a truncated and provisional account of the rights and duties of current generations."* (Caney, 2018, p. 490).

Promoting the expansion of our "shared-purpose" for better public governance, I argue that actively exercising the dimension of time is both necessary and highly desirable so we include and factor in the "claims" of those who will follow us. The difficulty of finding how to strike a balance between the present and future is an issue that is at the heart of any schematic design. Reframing governance to generate more salient engagement and meritorious decision-making practices capable of guiding conceptual thought and operational activity, is an acute requirement for democratic development to realize societal potentials, avert "backsliding" and lift the quality of contemporary oversight to be in-sync with today's issues. I now detail the conceptual framework.

#### **7.4 Conceptual Framework: Attainable Governance**

The conceptual framework for *Attainable Governance* or "Attainable Governance Framework" (AGF), is composed of a decision architecture with three primary modalities that interact to arrive at decision points in civic complex adaptive systems. I describe in-turn the *now* as "governing the actual", the *next* as "governing the anticipated", and the *nexus* as "governing the attainable"; before putting them together and discussing the proposed dynamics.

##### **7.4.1. The Now: Governing the Actual**

Governing in the *now*, conceived of as an "actual" live situation, fully evokes the present. A hallmark of governance for the *actual* is a relentless current situation focus on: (i) maintaining operational stabilities (e.g. managing shocks) and relevant contingencies, (ii) averting negative crises and disruptions, and (iii) upgrade and renew systems so they are "fit-for-adaptation".

"Now" can be interpreted in different ways. As foreshadowed, I take *now* temporalities as reflecting as emphasis on the immediate-range in socio-political life. A key constraining horizon is the election cycle and the associated timeframes as subsets of this tenure e.g. a primacy on day-to-day politics in the context of annual, quarterly or 100-day plans. In this design *now* signifies the present or immediate period of time, ranging from today to the current span of operationally "present" months. Barry (1999) makes the case for "now" as being in a general sense the present

rather than a condition specifically defined. I concur with his stance that rigid designations, as in debates about intergenerational justice, are futile in practical terms given the “arrow of time” (Barry, 1999, p.106-7).

I conceive of the *now* as the “admissive present” which we are in at the point in time. This is the timespace where proposals for changes to policies and systems are under consideration. Conversely, it may be where no action is currently being taken on a prevailing issue. “Admissive” signals there is potential to take the course of action within current “arrangements”.<sup>148</sup> In other words, it is achievable progress with the “guardrails” of current system arrangements i.e. the answer is a clear yes to the question, “can this be done?”

Undertaking the practice of optimising and aligning the *admissive present* includes:

- *Getting clarity of the short view* – an intentional focus on a short-run perspective for objective plans and viable delivery
- *Getting integrative practices occurring* – i.e. activating prevailing issue lifecycle practices for navigating progress
- *Getting exploratory action occurring* – i.e. obtaining permissible gains through applied decisions e.g. advancing system experimentation and “learning by doing”
- *Getting progress “in the bank”* – realising relatively high certainties where they are within scope of achievement given current knowledge or arrangements.

The prevailing mindset in the *admissive present* is one that is a relatively “concrete” or grounded state of consideration and thought. Existing evidence is brought to bear to inform option framing and decision making. There is a primacy on disciplined *materiality* (establishing relevance of evidence) and *objectivity* (fairness and neutrality) in governance decision practice. This open mindedness to getting things done within current arrangements can be seen as taking an “admissible gaze” towards the “*reflexive now*”<sup>149</sup> in policy and plan-making.

Analytic activity is likely to feature an approach with a selective invitation to *sceptical diagnostics*, placing operational value on the primacy of *deductive* neutral observation and embedded

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<sup>148</sup> By *arrangements* I mean both (a) social “structures” in a traditional institutional theoretical sense and inclusive of all organisational entities; as well as (b) “networks” and nodes, from a social network theoretical standpoint.

<sup>149</sup> By *reflexive*, I mean to indicate “automatic” action, as detail in 6.3. The general meaning implies automatic and automated reactions and decisions (without thought or with little attention to conscious thought), versus contemplated and non-automated responses and decisions (intentional with conscious thought, sometimes attentive to deep thought). This is distinguished from *reflective* practice, also discussed and defined more detail in 6.3.

evaluation for “fact-finding” to validate current actions and “next steps”. In seeking to better understand the current state focal questions are likely to include: (1) what is happening?, (2) what is the mess to be resolved?, and (3) what would be a reflexive resolution?

#### **7.4.2. The Next: Governing the Anticipated**

Governing for the *next*, conceived of as an “anticipated” reality, seeks to fully evoke the future. A hallmark of governance for the *anticipated* is a relentless “generative” focus for: (i) projecting operational shifts (e.g. forecasting junctures) and relevant contingencies, (ii) sustaining positive continuities and stabilities, and (iii) generating and designing systems so they are “ready-for-absorption”. This is underscored by a commitment to learning and the value of continuous accumulation of knowledge and subsequent updating.

“Next” can be interpreted in different ways. I take this to mean multiple election cycles (e.g. 10 years plus), decade to decade clock-time more attuned to human lifecycles and ecosystem epochs. In practice for analytic purposes, they are often likely to be sub-century periods. In respect to the democratic challenge faced today, an unprecedented investment and emphasis on understanding the future through a range of scientific and analytics means is paramount to inform functional high-quality decision framing and making in civic life.

In Shoham’s (2010) terms it is exercising “future intelligence”. He defines this as human capacity to establish and achieving a goal, recognising that there are oppositional forces against change no matter “how exalted it might be” (Shoham, 2010, p. 43). The generates questions of our ability “to create a transformative space in which we can usher in a reality beyond the personal, social and political power trips we know” (ibid). In Unger’s language and conception, this is the “colouring in” of what he terms “programmatically vision” (Unger, 1987, p. 159). Others would call this in mainstream terms, strategy. In strategic planning the “anticipated” is often the result of some form “visioning” type work, connected back into a plan of action to achieve it, aiming at high level outcomes that may be broken-down into objectives in space and time.

I conceive of the *next* as the “adjacent possible”<sup>150</sup> that we are not in, but a state which we can quest for being in. Because of the discordance with the present, it may well be uncomfortable and

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<sup>150</sup> I take this phrase from Unger and interpret it as a parallel possibility, implying it could be achieved. Hence it is a desirable future condition “beside” our current reality. The *adjacent possible* is a term coined by the theoretical biologist Stuart Kauffman studying the origin of life and popularized by Steven Johnson writing on human creativity and innovation. It helps to describe that: “Generating new ideas is a process of looking for ideas that are adjacent to ideas that are already out there.” (Khuon, 2013).

not universally aspired to or agreed upon. It is “possible” to signify that it is a serious and achievable set of outcomes, goals or objectives; as opposed to what could be deemed as unachievable or pure fantasy. It should be far enough out to be considered in many quarters as highly challenging – be that exciting or daunting – yet not so far out as to be motivationally irrelevant in the present. Implicit in this modality is a quest for new content to flesh-out a desired vision for societal improvement. This will connect to and encompass individual desires and improvements, however it does not seek to cower away from a macro-level conception and its potential consequences. Thus, anticipation has little choice but to pass through the gates into the fields of politics of power and institutional arrangement, aware that disruption to the status quo will introduce risk. As this will happen, some vested interests may defensively move to discredit work, undermine legitimacy, seeking to diffuse interest or distract attention.

Working on the *anticipated* is the search for the predictable and aspirational that can lead progress towards a better future or the *adjacent possible*. This includes:

- *Getting a clearer forward perspective* – i.e. envisioning future issue lifecycle options for navigating progress
- *Getting a longer view on systems* – the intentional focus on a long-run perspective for subjective plans that can account for dynamic systems
- *Getting a stronger analytic and technical rendering of future issues* – working where there are relatively high uncertainties to reduce them, and where understanding is marginal given current knowledge or arrangements.

The driving “mindset” sought in the *adjacent possible* is one that is a relatively “conceptual” state of mind, where the primacy is on disciplined *abstraction* (levels of ideas) and *subjectivity* (conscious of pluralities) for an “*adjacent gaze*” towards the “*reflective next*”<sup>151</sup> in strategy making. This functions as an open invitation to “ambitious innovating”, placing operational value on the primacy of *inductive* activity and exploratory practices of foresight, prediction and visioning. The necessitates broadening horizons and work to see the larger and longer system in complex, temporal and integral terms. This places a focus on questioning along the lines of: (1) what do we

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<sup>151</sup> By *reflective* I mean I in a standard way, thoughtfulness and deep consideration. This aligns with Bolton’s (2010) interpretation of *reflective practice* as “paying critical attention to the practical values and theories which inform everyday actions”, leading to “developmental insight” (Bolton, 2010). Therefore, to be reflective implies “in-depth consideration” of events or situations, that may involve reviewing and retrospectively bringing into focus particular details (ibid). Reference: Bolton, G. (2010) *Reflective Practice, Writing and Professional Development* (Third Edition), Sage, London.

really want to generate?, (2) how far can we stretch given what is plausible before we over-reach?, and (3) what is the reflective solution?

### **7.4.3. The Nexus: Governing the Attainable**

*“To live between memory and potentiality is to live permanently in a creative space, pregnant with the unexpected. But it is also to live in the permanency of risk, for the journey between what lies behind and what lies ahead is never fully comprehended nor ever controlled. Such a space, however, is the womb of constructive change, the continuous birthplace of the past that lies before us.”* (Lederach, 2005, p. 149).

Governing for the *nexus*, conceived of as the interface for resolution for attainable decision making between the *now* (the “actual”) and the *next* (the “anticipated”), evokes the necessary interaction in “working out what is best to be done”. As Lederach’s sentiment elicits, the “state” is about coming to “decision moments” or temporary resolutions in messes. This requires the full realisation that decision moments are temporary; that is, they are not permanent precedents and should not be treated so.<sup>152</sup> This temporariness necessitates a mode of vigilance, continuous learning and governance agility, as the relevance of decisions will diminish with time (i.e. significance “decays”).

A hallmark of governance for the *attainable* is a relentless focus on the “transformative situation” for (i) resolving (and not resolving) operational stabilities and shifts, along with the associated contingencies, (ii) resolving (and not resolving) “contradictions” between the crises and continuities, and (iii) resolving (and not resolving) the “fitness of” and “readiness for” adaptation and absorption of systems change. This introduces the reality of being decisive in some respects, while in others, being prepared to be perceived as indecisive. However, consciously not acting or intervening can be an active choice. It may be the most appropriate response in a number of circumstances, for example, where patience is required to yield results without incremental meddling to see if an action works, or where continuity of investment is paramount for a large-scale development (e.g. “patient capital” in infrastructure projects).

The “nexus” can be interpreted in different ways in timespace. I take this to temporally mean relevant analytic and decision scales commensurate with the nature of the problems, messes and systemic messes under consideration. This will in practical terms mean periods ranging from

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<sup>152</sup> The durability of decisions (or the level of appropriate “temporariness” given an issue) and the cultural atmosphere (the prevailing views and attitudes towards rates of change) are topics I do not develop in a detail. I clearly view it as important to establish understanding about the timeframes of decisions and to be explicit about these on a case-by-base basis. I also see advancing the cultural context as necessary to enable decision-maker “freeboard” to operate effectively without critical path adjustments and relevant “updating” being portrayed unhelpfully. This also flags the need to think about the type of political manifesto “promises” made prior to being furnished with relevant information and advice at a particular point in time.



election cycles to multi-election periods, from up to years and up to to decades, whereby only readily identifiable short-run “immediacies” and long-term focal-length “indeterminacies” are clearly out of scope.

I conceive of the *attainable* as the process of resolving an agreed “acceptable purpose”. This is the resolution-finding activity working with and between both the *admissible present* state and the *adjacent possible* state. The *acceptable purpose* includes:

- *Getting a strong analytic dialogue* – with the best evidence brought to bear, exploring the dissonance “in-between” the permissible and the forecast
- *Getting higher quality coordination* – with synchronising navigation for both prevailing and future issue lifecycles
- *Getting the best composition “orchestrated”* – the transitional production of a workable yet ambitious short and long-run resolution “composition”
- *Getting actionable decisions* – or agreed sequences of actions and decisions (critical paths), resulting in time-bound directionality
- *Getting the right level of work done* – maintaining an appropriate level of resolution commensurate with the role, including protecting the nexus timespace by clearly assigning the handling of short-run certainties (i.e. the *now* into the mode of the *actual*) and the postulation of alternative visions (i.e. the *next* into the mode of *anticipation*) to the best places, while retaining oversight of and monitoring decision processes and the ensuing systemic risks, knowledge gaps and uncertainties.

Operating with a “nexus mindset” is to strive for and ultimately work in an integral “connected” state. This state of thought features being able to hold the *now* and *next* lens both side-by-side and together, to compare and contrast, and to ultimately discern a position. This mindset features a primacy of orientation to toggling from (a) the concrete and reflexive, to (b) the conceptual and reflective; while discerning in-between how to continue success, contain failure and classify contradictions so as to make sense of the predicament and chart a course forward. This necessitates the ability to concurrently hold dissonant perspectives and deal with the ensuing ambiguities and inherent uncertainties associated with multiple options. As such, a nexus mind takes an “actionable amalgamating gaze” to combine the admissible and adjacent for attaining a resulting agreement. A fully transparent but operationally “closed” governing conversation that is an invitation to “*moderated resolution*”, which places operational value on the primacy of timely *judicious* practice and decision-making is sought.

The focus is therefore on creating an understanding of the relevant *timespace window* for change given the issues. This may involve solving, resolving, or at times dissolving different perspectives between the “reflexive now” and the “reflective next” to arrive at actionable decision moments. Guiding questions in this mode will include: (1) what activity needs to start or stop, speed up or slow down? (2) what could help to open-up the abundant latent potential we share?, and (3) does this hold open enough scope for future unknown possibilities?

This is not simple and should not be simple. While the outcome of the decision process might well be simple, the way of arriving at an optimised “smart” decision is contingent on doing the work to have the appropriate level of input for the nature of the decision-making situation. Figuring out what is needed for a baseline choice, or what is desirable for quality well-informed decision given a particular context, can often require extending beyond simplistic assumptions that may have become ingrained, or taken-for-granted heuristics given past experiences. It also does not bypass a quest for precision when deciding what to do. For focus decisions, using for example “SMART goals”<sup>153</sup> is an important element when determining what is to be done. A nexus mind is driving for the smart solution, or resolution, aiming for an elegant choice that is easily executed. It requires seeing this choice as a “modular” decision point or “moment” in a wider context. It is playing it in the *ensemble*,<sup>154</sup> recognising that the environment is never static and embodies indeterminacy.

Underpinning this mindset is the fundamental idea that we have an acute need to path-find between what is happen *now* and what can happen *next*. We are conflicted by the trajectory of change that requires two distinct types of responsiveness, with a decisive mediation between the two. We are called to be at once more “expansive and considered” with *reflective solutions* to slow-moving complex problems, and at the same time, more “contained and quick” for *reflexive solutions*<sup>155</sup> to attend to fast-moving phenomena. At the same time, we are obligated to find answers and courses of action to avoid, mitigate or remedy future problems or messes, without the luxury of fully considering present pressing needs. Meanwhile we are also obligated to find more suitable answers and courses of action for problems now without the fully informed luxury of considering tomorrow. Despite information asymmetries in this regard, we must act. It might be that the action on some occasions is intentional inaction, but typically it will involve taking on

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<sup>153</sup> SMART goals are targets which are *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic* and *Time-bound*. For a discussion of the origin of SMART goals and its organic emergence, refer to Lawlor and Hornyak (2012).

<sup>154</sup> As previously defined, I refer to *ensemble* as the object of both ‘form’ and ‘context’ together e.g. the fitness or rightness of such “institutional architecture” in its operating environment (context).

<sup>155</sup> By *reflexive* I mean actions that have a “reflexive” quality, whereby they are performed relatively automatically, not requiring deep conscious thought and reflection (refer to 6.3).

varying degrees of change. Even with a shift to bring a stronger and more detailed *next* into focus, the ability to handle judgement for astute decisions that are intuitively future-focussed but do not over-reach, is the work of doing *nexus* resolution framing and making for “decision moments”. Bought together, the *actual*, *anticipated* and *attainable* provide the signature form and the structural design as a proposition for improving democratic governance thought and decision architecture.

Tables 7.4A (Resetting Orientation) and 7.4B (Practice Scope, Horizon and Mindset) provide a summary:

Table 7.4A: *Resetting Orientation – Now, Next and Nexus for Attainable Governance*

	<b>A. THE ACTUAL – “Now” governing</b>	<b>B. THE ANTICIPATED – “Next” governing</b>	<b>C. THE ATTAINABLE – “Nexus” governing</b>
<b>ORIENTATION:</b>	<p><b>Now: <i>the Admissive Present</i></b></p> <p>The practice of optimising and aligning the <i>admissive present</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- activating prevailing issue lifecycle practices for navigating progress</li> <li>- the intentional focus on a short-run perspective for objective plans</li> <li>- obtaining permissible gains through applied system experimentation</li> <li>- realising relatively high certainties where they are within scope of achievement given current knowledge or arrangements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Next: <i>the Adjacent Possible</i></b></p> <p>The search for the predictable and aspirational as the <i>adjacent possible</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- envisioning future issue lifecycle options for navigating progress</li> <li>- the intentional focus on a long-run perspective for subjective plans</li> <li>- forecasting pertinent gains through simulated system experimentation</li> <li>- accepting relatively high uncertainties where they are marginal given current knowledge or arrangements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Nexus: <i>the Acceptable Purpose</i></b></p> <p>The process of resolving the <i>admissive present</i> state with the <i>adjacent possible</i> state, for an agreed <i>acceptable purpose</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- synchronising navigation for both prevailing and future issue lifecycles</li> <li>- the transitional production of a short and long-run “composition”</li> <li>- exploring the dissonance “in-between” the permissible and the forecast, resulting in time-bound decisions on sovereign directionality</li> <li>- delegating the handling of short-run certainties, while retaining oversight of and monitoring uncertainties</li> </ul>

Table 7.4B: *Practice Scope, Horizon and Mindset for Attainable Governance*

	<b>A. THE ACTUAL – “Now” governing</b>	<b>B. THE ANTICIPATED – “Next” governing</b>	<b>C. THE ATTAINABLE – “Nexus” governing</b>
<b>PRACTICE SCOPE:</b>	<p><b>Governance for the Actual</b></p> <p>A relentless focus on the current situation for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- maintaining operational stabilities (e.g. managing shocks) and relevant contingencies</li> <li>- averting negative crises and disruptions</li> <li>- upgrade and renew systems so they are “fit-for-adaptation”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Governance for the Anticipated</b></p> <p>A relentless focus on the generative situation for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- projecting operational shifts (e.g. forecasting junctures) and relevant contingencies</li> <li>- sustaining positive continuities and stabilities</li> <li>- generating and designing systems so they are “ready-for-absorption”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Governance for the Attainable</b></p> <p>A relentless focus on the transformative situation for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- resolving (and not resolving) operational stabilities and shifts, along with the associated contingencies</li> <li>- resolving (and not resolving) contradictions between the crises and continuities</li> <li>- resolving (and not resolving) the “fitness of” and “readiness for” adaptation and absorption</li> </ul>
<b>HORIZON:</b>	<p><i>Key timeframe horizons are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- election cycle to election cycle (e.g. 5 years)</li> <li>- year to year, bi-annual and quarterly</li> <li>- daily, hourly and unfolding live</li> </ul>	<p><i>Key timeframe horizons are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- multiple election cycle (e.g. 10 years plus)</li> <li>- decade to decade, sub-century periods</li> <li>- human lifecycles and ecosystem epochs</li> </ul>	<p><i>Key timeframe synchronicities are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- election cycle to multi-election periods</li> <li>- up to years and up to to decades</li> <li>- identifying short (immediacies) and long (indeterminacies) focal-length issues as out of scope</li> </ul>
<b>MINDSET:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relatively “concrete” state – primacy on disciplined materiality and objectivity</li> <li>- An “admissible gaze” in plan-making, with a selective invitation to <i>sceptical diagnostics</i> (placing operational value on the primacy of <i>deductive</i> neutral observation and embedded evaluation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relatively “conceptual” state – primacy on disciplined abstraction and subjectivity</li> <li>- An “adjacent gaze” in strategy making, with an open invitation to the <i>ambitious innovating</i> (placing operational value on the primacy of <i>inductive</i> activity and exploratory practices of foresight, prediction and visioning)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Absolutely “connected” state – primacy on toggling from the <i>concrete</i> to the <i>conceptual</i>, discerning how to contain failure, classify contradictions and continue success</li> <li>- An <i>actionable amalgamating gaze</i> to combine the admissible and adjacent perspectives for agreement formulation of resolutions and decisions</li> <li>- A fully transparent but operationally “closed” governing conversation that is an invitation to “<i>moderated resolution</i>” (placing operational value</li> </ul>

			on the primacy of timely <i>judicious</i> practice and decision-making)
<b>FOCUS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding the current state</li> <li>- Questioning of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <i>What is happening?</i></li> <li>(2) <i>What is the mess to be resolved?</i></li> <li>(3) <i>What would be a reflexive resolution?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seeing the larger and longer system</li> <li>- Questioning of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <i>What do we really want to generate?</i></li> <li>(2) <i>How far can we stretch given what is plausible before we over-reach?</i></li> <li>(3) <i>What is the reflective solution?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Co-creating a <i>timespace window</i> for change and resolving/dissolving different perspectives between the “reflexive now” and the “reflective next”</li> <li>- Questions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <i>What activity needs to start or stop, speed up or slow down?</i></li> <li>(2) <i>What could help to open-up the abundant latent potential we share?</i></li> <li>(3) <i>Does this hold open enough scope for future unknown possibilities?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 7.5 Redesigning: *Governing with a New Repertoire*

Challenges today create the opportunity to govern with a new “repertoire”, orchestrate progress that build functional performance and democratic legitimacy with “fit-for-purpose” oversight. In this section I summarise and discuss developments. As the *Attainable Governance* quest is to reveal simultaneously at the *nexus* problems and messes, their solutions and resolutions for “wayfinding”<sup>156</sup> strategies that can guide progress, the democratic challenge becomes how to “cut through the noise” in the system to get to our “deepest and truest interest” (Shoham, 2010, p.36) for shaping critical “decision moments” in timespace. In the face of difficulties and high complexity, Lederach references a haiku master’s advice is to “seek the elegant essence that holds it together” (Lederach, 2005, p. 149). I have positioned governing oversight as reshaping a series of related dimensions to reconstitute our way to think and act to find our insightful truths to act in humanity’s best interests. Taking the essence of what we already do well, I am advancing a conceptual framework of governing to support crafting designs that can work in different settings across a range of applications. I reflect on some of the democratic implications to introduce, consider and open the way for further discussion of the conceptual framework in following chapters.

### 7.5.1. *Doing Systemic Bridging*

To summarise, I make the case for a decision architecture that I have conceptualised as an “intermediation mechanism” (the three-part conceptual framework) to function as a “systemic bridging” arrangement. This offers a way to work between what “has been” and currently “is”, what “could be”, to render an actionable position on what “can be” to drive at results. In this endeavour I seek new “heuristics”<sup>157</sup> to guide practice so as enable the adaptation of public sector practice for long-run oriented solutions (and resolutions) with greater systemic elegance. This is about closing the discord between what Senge (2017) for example, describes as our gap between “aspirations and agency” (Senge, 2017). This is the fundamental task in resolving the *systemic mess* faced today, given the multitude of dysfunctional issues in our predicament. Given the centrality and magnitude of the discord that resonates in many contemporary democracies, the existing embedded – and in places stagnating – nature of a multitude of issues, calls for achievable change. These changes in arrangements will need to be both structural (i.e. mechanistic adaptations and institutional re-designs) and cultural (i.e. ideological and identity-related evolutions and new normalised operating heuristics). They need to “pivot” how we operate without a wholesale

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<sup>156</sup> *Wayfinding* encompasses all of the ways in which people orient themselves and navigate from place to place. Modern usage emerged from urban scholarship in the physical environment e.g. Kevin A. Lynch (1960) in *The Image of the City*. Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wayfinding>

<sup>157</sup> By *heuristics* I mean the ways, through mental shortcuts, we reduce the complexity of making decisions. I discuss and define this in further detail in 10.5.1.

organisation, constitutional and political system reform as the starting premise. In short, changes must be able to be imminently implementable and capable of making a genuine difference to micro-focused reactive presentism (the often over-specified) on one hand, and meta-visionary futurism (the often under-specified) on the other.

I have established the clear need for a governance system “step change” – or an intervention for systemic “discontinuous improvement” in Ackoff’s terms (Ackoff, 1994). We need the institutional design of public sector governance, with the associated mechanisms that it can manage, significantly transformed so as to enable an operating context where authentic and tangible change can be planned and performed. I contend this need is likely to be readily recognized as overdue across the political spectrum. Without increasingly fit-for-purpose governance, we will continue to experience continuously thwarted progress on a number of fronts. Today, too many commonly sensible desires resonating with our “truest interest” are transgressed as noble intentions are mutated through the operating procedures of advanced Western democracies. This is a problem of both dated protocols and archaic constitutional arrangements, alongside poor decision-making processes. The decision architecture is lacking the quality of design and supplementary knowledge provision to empower farsighted and intelligent (i.e. ambitious and realistic) action. Attainable action is highly necessary – arguably to the point of importance for the future of humanity.

### **7.5.2. Expanding Anticipation and Adaptation**

The *now*, the *next* and the *nexus* together represent a *new repertoire* for advancing public governance arrangements and form. Central to my position is open analytic space up for a better accounting of future interests. As Caney noted: “to omit the claims of the future is to give a truncated and provisional account of the rights and duties of current generations” (Caney, 2018, p. 490). We are often immersed in the *now*, give cursory attention to the *next*, and do not systematically attend to the *nexus*. Climate “crisis” trade-offs and response are acute examples of this. In Shoham’s terms, with reference to a bifurcated concept of practice with a current and future focus interacting, the secret to success is having both the goal of “finding satisfactory solutions” and the concurrent goal of “organic chaos” and then fluctuating between them with “two-sub-units, one for content and the other for impact management” (Shoham, 2010, p. 76-77).<sup>158</sup> In part, the theory developed accounts for this orientation where *problems/messes* and *solutions/resolutions* are subject to a process of exploration and alignment-finding, as well as the

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<sup>158</sup> The context of Shoham’s discussion is the consideration of what he calls “sustainability units” that are located in government where long-term policy-making is to be conducted by “foresight bodies” to influence the state to “act in a visionary way and take long-term considerations into account” (Shoham, 2010, p. 76).



ability to decide not to do or to stop certain activities, therefore holding open or creating space for more organic developments.

Expanding the “shared-purpose timespace” through actively expanding the temporal scope of issues, while actively layering levels of advanced issue comprehension for effective governance, is an imperative for genuine progress. Deepening anticipation is paramount for better decision-making. With a temporal sensibility placed centrally in a “first principles” styled design exercise, I arrive at a conception of a vastly improved system fit to counter the truncated and provisional accounts that current pervade governmental practice. It is a core correction to the *decision architecture*. It can help to provide for better issue identification, information formulation and knowledge construction processes for stronger advice, and a fresh “mindset” with an *intentional anticipatory dimension* (the “next”) to achieve enhanced decision performance.

Often this will necessitate oversight that can facilitate and enable adaption (i.e. change and adjustment) that is more fluid and responsive than current arrangements allow. Sometimes this will require greater clarity of commitment to longer-run issues. Therefore, the *nexus* is conceived to make decision orchestration more continuous and fluid, locating responsibilities in appropriate nodes and networks in systems. It is not about more centralised planning, often the default counterpoint to less marketisation. Rather, the emphasis is on responsive decision placement to enable better orchestration and providing the high-level system settings for action. Therefore, enhanced adaptation and improved anticipation go hand-in-hand for better policy framing, making and “decision moment” activities if they are to advance governance practices.

### **7.5.3. Contemplating Ensemble in Democracy**

While having a conceptually sound decision architecture is prerequisite for strong *ensemble* formation, the “design theory” of the form of arrangements is only a part of the picture. Governing is necessarily always an active, contingent and dynamic process. I conceive that it involves the emergence of contextually embedded “ensembles”, where subjective techniques and cultural nuances are part of the “civic-scape”. It is at once the interplay of the concretely real, as well as the imaginatively ideal. Social routines and rhythms are maintained, established and enforced. The timespace which is most hopeful, which is most motivational and uplifting, is not the space of inhabiting the present. Rather than the examination of “here”, it is the “out of reach” timespace where the self is questing in the “almost, but not quite” state prior to arrival, or the exploration of the “where we could go next”. Human motivation can thrive on the unknown-ness, indeterminacy and uncertainty in this state of “reach”. It is in this sphere of thought, we formulate our desired possibilities, future destinations and strategic stances. In this quest for improvement

is where participative engagement can enliven democracy, requiring both sharing and listening. It is the work of the *next* and it comes directly into play when deliberating at the *nexus*.

If the act of governance is not about reconciling and resolving only the present (now) itself, isolated from what is next, but about the acts of resolution performed between the two, creative tensions arise. These must be recognised and “held” for good decision processes i.e. one cannot subsume the other for a full and robust consideration. In having imagined destinations – all be they transient and impermanent “glimpses” of possibilities – we will not have mobilised to travel in this direction, or yet usually come close to “arrival” (the state of achieving desired results). Rather, resolution making is about the practice of marrying possibilities and hopes with existing predicaments and realities. It is about making plans in the realm of the imagined and being able to skilfully mediate between the two, to keep hope alive and make headway in a real sense. It is the sanctity of the “in-between”, where the speculative dream and the existing actuality interact. It is the sanctity of the timespace where fair and reasonable decision moments and systemic resolutions can be found. It is also in this space that the potential for viewing “solving” problems can be potentially reframed. Ways to “dissolve problems” (Sage, 1992, p. 232) can be found, unfolded, or be pressed for. By redesigning the system so the problem or mess no longer exists given new arrangements, a strategic path for a sought-after “dissipation” could occur in some situations.

Functioning in the *nexus* mode to allow for incremental adaptation and transformative absorption, “acceptable compositions” need to be found and then transparently aired. Decision framing and making becomes finding the way between structured business and unstructured social interaction, the exacting science and the expressive art, and the inspirational and the mundane. It can reinvigorate a politics in its best sense as a realm of guidance marked by a responsibility to do community service with humility. The pursuit of the greater good in genuine and clear terms, is not just the division of incentives and sanctions in the *now*. Fair from dull, grappling with and handling the *now/next* interface offers the hope of “hard-thought” schemes advancing that recognise shifting dynamics and unfolding issues. They can be imbued with straight-forward solutions and upliftingly creative responses to experimentation, or both in unison if that is what advances genuine progress.

The contemplation of resulting implications and the oversight of them, illuminates that for democratic remediation and advancement in practices, decision architectures must be “open”. While diagnosing, understanding and monitoring the *now*, and exploring, imagining and analysing the *next* require clear involvement from stakeholders and citizens in advanced democratic cultural

contexts, I advocate that so does the functionality encapsulated in the *nexus*. This is not a closed or semi-judicial conception of decision-making, portioned-off from the democratic contestation of ideas. Rather, while it is focussed and structured, it is the opposite. Transparency should be paramount and improved. The trade-offs between the *now* and the *next* should be explicitly revealed, qualified and quantified to make the implications of actions less opaque (i.e. the scale of impact in context, the winners and losers and so on). The reduction of information asymmetries should be a fundamental objective and a measure of success. To capture this openness with a colloquialism, it is the closing the loop of accountability on oversight with “undersight” for maximal transparency.

The practice of democracy at the *nexus* should build greater democratic trust, lift faith in civic arrangements and enhance societal accountabilities. A more “fit-for-purpose” decision architecture can support a more “fit-for-purpose” Civil Service and representative democratic apparatus that can both support and help to facilitate a more functionally-oriented politics. The enablement of excesses of power to perform dysfunctional acts of presentist future avoidance or current-state manipulation will encounter a different process. The framework is in part a way to restore representative integrity in civic dialogue and decision making, muting the capacity to hijack and pervert the social course of progress away from severe inequality and de-stabilising intergenerational injustices. By no means rendering the composition of political representation as insignificant for the steering of outcomes, the potential is for less extreme policy interventions to infiltrate and distort the system as a whole. There is the potential to help “inoculate” democratic practice with better processes that at the same time help to limit ideologically motivated acts devised to divide people from lives of meaning, self-dignity and a sense of connection to place.

If we take democracy to be a “space of reasons” (Lynch, 2012) driving at the ideal of “democratic politics as requiring a commitment to the rational pursuit of the truth” (Lynch, 2012, p.115), then the *nexus* is about “truth finding” interacting with the proximate emotional contours of identity and cultural atmosphere. If we extend my position that there is currently under-utilised functional value in democratic processes to see and resolve messes effectively, then we are served better by driving for an enlarged and enlivened *timespace* for democratic reasoning. In other words, a clear pivot to a “timespace of reasons”. A substantial improvement in mess resolution that works with and for a better inclusive future expands the Western liberal democratic project. As Thomas Gieryn (2015) describes with reference to architecture, “truth spots” are place “saturated with the ingredients of truth-making” (Gieryn, 2015). While his work highlights physical “truth spots” in social life (e.g. Courts and Government buildings) (Gieryn, 2018), enhanced democracy with attainable governance could see virtual “truth spots” as the manifestation of the new *nexus*.

Political practice to find and keep “re-finding” the attainable directions and interventions for progress can build a new landscape of “nexus spots”. This is where “decision moments” would be had to keep continuous improvement unfolding, while actively mitigate against dysfunctional encroachments that undermine system performance.

To curtail further discussion at this stage, I recap by stating the conceptual framework for *Attainable Governance* offers different operational pathways to current arrangements. It can refresh how we activate and achieve “doing” the work of public deliberation and decision-making. I chose the phrase “Attainable Governance” to convey orchestrating between (i) the *anticipated* as a conceptual agenda-stretching “top-line”, alongside (ii) the now, as the “bottom-line” practice of the “making-it-real”. The desired outcome is a focus on inherently deployable positions derived from fit-for-purpose decision architecture, advancing the quality of policy advice and refining existing governance practices with political humility. The proposition can act as a “fillip” for democracy. For a summary table of Chapter 7, refer below. In Chapter 8, I move to consider more generally the conditions for arrangements that can facilitate the framework’s practice and improve civic performance.

Table 7.5.1: Orientation and Practice Scope – Summary of the Attainable Governance Framework

ORIENTATION:	A. THE ACTUAL – “Now” governing	B. THE ANTICIPATED – “Next” governing	C. THE ATTAINABLE – “Nexus” governing
	<p><b>Now: the Admissive Present</b></p> <p>The practice of optimising and aligning the <i>admissive present</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- activating prevailing issue lifecycle practices for navigating progress</li> <li>- the intentional focus on a short-run perspective for objective plans</li> <li>- obtaining permissible gains through applied system experimentation</li> <li>- realising relatively high certainties where they are within scope of achievement given current knowledge or arrangements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Next: the Adjacent Possible</b></p> <p>The search for the predictable and aspirational as the <i>adjacent possible</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- envisioning future issue lifecycle options for navigating progress</li> <li>- the intentional focus on a long-run perspective for subjective plans</li> <li>- forecasting pertinent gains through simulated system experimentation</li> <li>- accepting relatively high uncertainties where they are marginal given current knowledge or arrangements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Nexus: the Acceptable Purpose</b></p> <p>The process of resolving the <i>admissive present</i> state with the <i>adjacent possible</i> state, for an agreed <i>acceptable purpose</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- synchronising navigation for both prevailing and future issue lifecycles</li> <li>- the transitional production of a short and long-run “composition”</li> <li>- exploring the dissonance “in-between” the permissible and the forecast, resulting in time-bound decisions on sovereign directionality</li> <li>- delegating the handling of short-run certainties, while retaining oversight of and monitoring uncertainties</li> </ul>
<p><b>PRACTICE SCOPE:</b></p>	<p><b>Governance for the Actual</b></p> <p>A relentless current situation focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- maintaining operational stabilities (e.g. managing shocks) and relevant contingencies</li> <li>- averting negative crises and disruptions</li> <li>- upgrade and renew systems so they are “fit-for-adaptation”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Governance for the Anticipated</b></p> <p>A relentless generative situation focus for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- projecting operational shifts (e.g. forecasting junctures) and relevant contingencies</li> <li>- sustaining positive ‘continuities’ and stabilities</li> <li>- generating and designing systems so they are “ready-for-absorption”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Governance for the Attainable</b></p> <p>A relentless focus on the transformative situation for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- resolving (and not resolving) operational stabilities and shifts, along with the associated contingencies</li> <li>- resolving (and not resolving) “contradictions” between the crises and continuities</li> <li>- resolving (and not resolving) the “fitness of” and “readiness for” adaptation and absorption</li> </ul>
<p><b>HORIZON:</b></p>	<p><i>Key timeframe horizons are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- election cycle to cycle (e.g. 5 years)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Key timeframe horizons are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- multiple election cycle (e.g. 10 years plus)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Key timeframe synchronicities are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- election cycle to multi-election periods</li> <li>- up to years and up to to decades</li> </ul>

<p><b>MINDSET:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- year to year, bi-annual and quarterly</li> <li>- daily, hourly and unfolding live</li> </ul> <p><i>Mindset</i> as relatively “concrete” state – primacy on disciplined materiality and objectivity</p> <p>An “<i>admissible gaze</i>” in plan-making, with a selective invitation to <i>sceptical diagnostics</i> (placing operational value on the primacy of <i>deductive</i> neutral observation and embedded evaluation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- decade to decade, sub-century periods</li> <li>- human lifecycles and ecosystem epochs</li> </ul> <p><i>Mindset</i> as relatively “conceptual” state – primacy on disciplined abstraction and subjectivity</p> <p>An “<i>adjacent gaze</i>” in strategy making, with an open invitation to the <i>ambitious innovating</i> (placing operational value on the primacy of <i>inductive</i> activity and exploratory practices of foresight, prediction and visioning)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identifying short (immediacies) and long (indeterminacies) focal-length issues as out of scope</li> </ul> <p><i>Mindset</i> as an absolutely “connected” state – primacy on toggling from the <i>concrete</i> to the <i>conceptual</i>, discerning how to contain failure, classify contradictions and continue success</p> <p>An <i>actionable amalgamating gaze</i> to combine the admissible and adjacent perspectives for agreement formulation of resolutions and decisions</p> <p>A fully transparent but operationally “closed” governing conversation that is an invitation to “<i>moderated resolution</i>” (placing operational value on the primacy of timely <i>judicious</i> practice and decision-making)</p>
<p><b>FOCUS:</b></p>	<p><i>Focus</i> on understanding the current state</p> <p>- Questioning of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <i>What is happening?</i></li> <li>(2) <i>What is the mess to be resolved?</i></li> <li>(3) <i>What would be a reflexive resolution?</i></li> </ol>	<p><i>Focus</i> on seeing the larger and longer system</p> <p>- Questioning of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <i>What do we really want to generate?</i></li> <li>(2) <i>How far can we stretch given what is plausible before we over-reach?</i></li> <li>(3) <i>What is the reflective solution?</i></li> </ol>	<p><i>Focus</i> on creating a <i>timespace window</i> for change and resolving/dissolving different perspectives between the “reflexive now” and the “reflective next”</p> <p>Questions of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <i>What activity needs to start or stop, speed up or slow down?</i></li> <li>(2) <i>What could help to open-up the abundant latent potential we share?</i></li> <li>(3) <i>Does this hold open enough scope for future unknown possibilities?</i></li> </ol>

## 8. Reformulating Governance: *Purpose, Knowing and Fusion*

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### 8.1 Outline

*“In the face of a degree of complexity and a scale that exceeds the capacity and reach of existing mechanisms of control, there is a tendency for governance discourse to become specialised and localised and in doing so to weaken the connection with other parts and the larger system. However, in the light of recent past events that highlighted the extent to which previously distinct governance regimes or systems are now even more profoundly and irreversibly interdependent, there is more evidence to support the proposition that for such engagement to be effective the governance discourse needs to transcend the limitations of institutional and political boundaries. That is, to take place within a broader conceptual framework – a meta-framework for governance discourse – that is broad enough to encompass the different governance regimes, systems and subsystems and the dynamic interactions between them and yet provides a common point of reference by reflecting and reinforcing the fundamental shared values and public policy objectives that establish the foundations of good governance.” – Alison Dempsey (2013, p.77).*

With the *Attainable Governance Framework* (AGF) established, I consider the conditions for “reformulating” governance arrangements to facilitate practice working within the framework. Reflecting on corporate governance, Dempsey (2013) expresses the need for a “broad conceptual framework” and a “meta-framework for governance discourse”. I now traverse the cultural settings for functionally oriented public governance systems, to begin to shape what could unfold for improved civic performance. A central challenge is that collaborative strategies for progress are fuelled by political fragmentation and inherent issue complexity. Complex societal problems and messes require the coordination of networks of actors, the clarifying of key signals between parties, and the linking of organisational nodes. Coordination can benefit from the conceptual framework’s architecture, if cultural conditions also support improvements in functionality. It is these conditions and the nature of them that I explore at various levels, with the view of developing a shared language, common understandings and a discourse at the *micro, meta, meso* and *macro* level.

This chapter therefore advances in service of considering the conditions for arrangements that can facilitate the framework’s practice and lead to improvements in civic performance. In 8.2, resolution about *purpose* can make an impactful difference in operational terms. Leading “purposeful”, “mission-seeking” and “agile” plan-making governance can make inroads in the AGF. These aspects of purpose precede kneading-out methodological considerations in 8.3, seeking to make explicit the knowledge generating assumptions inherent in the proposal were it operationalised. Implications for policy-making and wider research agendas are covered, bringing out the gap between current and proposed practice. 8.4 provides a summation of the

“orientation” developed, spotlighting the centrality of “fusion” for synthesized knowledge-making. This serves to detail a new style of policy and decision practice, distant from current best practice in both policy formulation and decision making processes. I close by reflection on how to recasting functions and facing dysfunctions more constructively to advance public policy practice.

## **8.2 Purpose: *Directional, Aspirational and Agile Plan-making***

Purposeful oversight is a prerequisite for intentionally progressing systems. A complexity-oriented analytic lens does not render governance and the quest for oversight as “beyond reach”. Trying to understand system dynamics, accounting for risk acknowledging uncertainties, can improve analytic work and make for better representations of presenting “realities”. This can then inform more realistic political expectations, more aligned monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress, and clearer decision optionality to conduct oversight. Similarly, an integral viewpoint and higher awareness of temporality is not signalling a reduced desire to understand and improve the oversight and management of social phenomena. Rather, these concepts are posited as core elements for the new directions of understanding that can enhance a unique mix of realistic, ambitious and purposeful governance of human systems.

A hallmark of successful governance is that it provides clear directional leadership. To produce results, a meaningful level of functional resolution about *purpose* has usually been achieved. Leading with clarity enables purpose-inspired “missions” and “fit-for-purpose” arrangements to support change in the Civil Service and the political sphere. I consider further: (8.2.1) “purposeful” directional activity, (8.2.2) “mission-seeking” anticipatory-informed activity, and (8.2.3) “agile” plan-making governance.

### **8.2.1. Purposeful Directionality: Temporal Horizons**

Governance driving for solutions and resolutions inevitably requires directional clarity for generating coherence. To forge and galvanise tangible commitments and purposeful actions, a preferred state or desired future destination to motivate and orient change will help. Where this is unclear – as it will be at times – the purposeful response is to be direct, transparent and honest about the situation (i.e. the lack of clarity about objectives). *Attainable Governance* is assisted by being intentionally transparent about existing shortcomings. It is inevitable that at times directionality will need to be relatively “fixed” (e.g. for investment certainty in public infrastructure) with a clear immovable target that generates enduring commitments to change. At other times, it will be relatively “flexible”, acknowledging the need to stay updateable and fluid as circumstances unfold. Working with and between directional certainty and staying adaptive for uncertainty, is where critical acts of judgement occur. “Purposefulness” in an attainable



governance mode brings to the fore the need to consider and position it (purposefulness) in a mutually self-supporting and systemically re-enforcing way. I discuss three aspects: (a) purposeful *integrative dynamics*, (b) purposeful *temporal horizons*, and (c) the subsequent rendering of purposeful *strategic orientations*.

Purposeful *integrative dynamics* (a) flags the need for expectation-setting and management about the level of integrated or integral understanding that is possible both now and in the future. For example, it may be that greater connectivity and more sophisticated modelling of analytics is highly desirable, but not yet possible given the level of investment in models and methods. In this scenario, shifting resources to ensure this knowledge can come “online” for future decisions may be a proactive strategic intervention decision at the *nexus* to “power-up” the *next*, while the *now* demands a conservative “placeholder” response. The decision may be to avert deteriorating performance while not over-investing in unproven experimental activity for example. Irrespective of the scenario being faced, purposeful collaboration to assist adaptive progress is a feature of an AGF forward-facing approach. Collaboration in management, governance and public administration is a key theme, as it is in the commercial sphere, to achieve results. For example, Torfing’s (2015) working definition of collaborative governance follows Ansell and Gash’s (2008) approach to see it as “a specific mode of interaction that is deliberative, multilateral, consensus-seeking, and oriented toward joint production of results and solutions.” (Torfing and Ansell, 2015, p.316). Irrespective of definitional nuances, there is a high probability that successful governance will feature collaborative styles of policy, framing, making and deciding. Being clear about the likely, desired and actual current levels of specific integrative analysis, general contextual assessment and particular issue connectivity possible, is a key part of handling expectations for integration in practice.

In a similar vein and central to my position, temporal expectations need to be advanced while current knowledge constraints are handled. Purposeful *temporal horizons* (b) require recognition of the multiple timescales at play with regard to an issue. As already established, this requires a sensitivity to and consideration of the different temporal perspectives stakeholders bring to understanding an issue (refer *timespace window* in 4.4). More broadly a “temporal purposes” typology (Table 8.2.1) is offered to provide a guide to thinking long, medium and short about “horizons” to help aligning attainable governance thinking. I provide three categories and supporting definitions of the objective focus and where the legitimacy of this perspective is likely to have authority:

Table 8.2.1: A Temporal Purposes Typology

<b>Categories:</b> <i>general temporal purposes</i>	<b>Primary orientation:</b> <i>objective focus</i>	<b>Authority:</b> <i>registering of legitimacy</i>
<i>Species long-run interests</i>	“Big horizon” or “big history” issues of human survival and progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some arenas of academic legitimacy</li> <li>- Largely unclear locations of political and cultural responsibility, accountability and decision-making</li> </ul>
<i>Societal medium-run interests</i>	“Deep horizon” issues of intergenerational prosperity and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some specific projects (e.g. Commissions, Taskforces, strategic studies or multi-decadal plans)</li> <li>- A range of, but often mixed and unclear, localities of political and cultural responsibility, accountability and decision-making</li> </ul>
<i>Individual, family and community short-run interests</i>	“Immediate horizon” issues of current quality of life issues and options in the ‘sphere of care’ for advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relatively defined by functionally overlapping locations of political responsibility, accountability and decision-making</li> <li>- A terrain of contested, overtly and subversively politicized cultural understandings interacting with dominant values, norms and practices in communities of interest (spatial and non-spatial interest clusters)</li> </ul>

Big, deep and immediate horizons to frame purpose can help to tease out the relative positions of different sets of interests and the motivation of stakeholders. Purposeful *strategic orientations* (c) are in part the amalgam of (a) the integrative and (b) the temporal, plus encompass the act of purposeful planning. This does not necessarily mean that planning has to be exclusive, rigid or inflexible; rather it is most likely to be inclusive, dynamic, flexible and able to lead adjusting within politically sensitive contexts. As Hoch (2009) states in reviewing Healey’s (2007) work: “Strategy does not refer to a guide set by the field commander, but to savvy decision making by clusters of stakeholders negotiating provisional collective agreements about problems of vulnerable interdependence, common special interests, or other contextual situations demanding collective action.” (Hoch, 2009, p. 211). In other words, a purposeful strategic orientation can be adaptive in nature. Taken together, these three aspects of being *purposeful* with respect to temporal horizons, cognizant of elements of inter-activeness and strategy orientation, suggest that the conception of purpose should be broad and inclusive to gather threads of “directional understanding” to assist issue navigation. Correlative to this emphasis is the value of aspirational cultures and supporting leadership to channel directionality for societal purposes that motivate civic progress.

### **8.2.2. Purposeful Aspiration: Mission-Seeking**

Capturing the imagination to stimulate innovation is a longstanding reality for specific projects, particular programmes and society-wide general social change agendas. Broadly speaking, missions are publically stated goals aimed at catalysing innovation for a clearly defined issue. They typically cut across multiple sectors with a goal to increase rates of existing development or to speed-up the emergence of new developments. Usually they are framed today in a “Grand Challenge” narratives, geared to inspire by setting goals to focus the efforts numerous stakeholders towards a shared result or outcome. Mission-oriented innovation policy defines an ambitious goal and then sets specific steps and milestones to achieve it (Foray et al., 2012; in Mazzucato and Semieniuk, 2018). It is a way structuring a complex set of policies is to conceive of an innovation strategy, moving towards a targeted and focusing result or outcome. In the context of the UK and Europe in particular, Mazucatto’s (2018) work on mission emphasizes the importance of a “concrete mission” to advance public value creation (Mazzucato, 2017, 2018). A mission requires public entities set out tasks that mobilize public, private and civic actors for bottom-up experimentation across different sectors (Mazzucato, 2017), that can motivate ambition for positive change:

*“The ambition to achieve a particular type of economic growth (smart, inclusive, sustainable) is a direct admission that economic growth has not only a rate but also a direction. In this context, industrial and innovation strategies can be key pillars to achieve transformational change—in particular, by identifying and articulating new missions that can galvanise production, distribution and consumption patterns across various sectors. Mission-oriented public investments are not about de-risking and levelling the playing field, but tilting the playing field in the direction of the desired goals... modern day missions can provide an even more fervent ground for an ambitious catalytic role for Government in creating and shaping markets which provide the basis for private investment.”* (Mazzucato, 2017, p. 2).

This approach requires integrative, systems-aware strategic plan framing and decision-making to create opportunities off a public investment base. It also requires an enabling regulatory environment that can reward desired behaviours e.g. long-term investments and profit reinvestment in green technologies (ibid). Implicit in such goals is the need for extended investment in knowledge production (and governance) of the *next*, so as to arrive at attainable decisions at the *nexus*. Having a “mission-seeking” culture does not have to imply a singular or monotone perspective. There is a case for distributed “missionfulness” or an embedded sense of higher purpose to drive systems improvement. The anticipatory mode of governance encompasses the need to become clearer about purpose and mission-oriented objectives to focus futures analysis to inform decision making. While structures and processes used to encourage innovation are important, research finds senior executives largely (94%) say that people and corporate culture are the most important drivers of innovation (Barsh et al., 2008). Likewise, to

cultivate civic and public sector innovation, it analogously follows that leadership and the culture in the context of the politics of the day, combining with senior public sector leadership and management, will be a significant factor in seeding innovation. On this basis, opening up the anticipatory mode as proposed, can enhance the conditions within which civic mission development can gain traction and flourish.

Mission-oriented and mission-seeking civic development require both aspirational target setting and monitoring activities. With missions viewed from a complexity and temporal perspective, there are system effects to consider such as issue dynamics and rates of change when there are multiple interactions and uncertainties. This drives new research and investigative requirements across all three governance modes, in particular making planning and investment in evidence a key “next” issue. There will be challenges in quantifying and measuring progress, with the longstanding issues associated with proof of causality being unattainable, risk quantification being difficult, along with Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) being a problematic frame.<sup>159</sup> Further, innovative public governance leadership itself – to produce the missions, strategies and policy details at the nexus – must be innovative: “Accelerating innovation may therefore require entirely new approaches to innovation policy.” (Mazzucato and Semieniuk, 2018).

While there is an emerging field of anticipation, futures, and associated practice methods and techniques, it is outside my scope to go into detail. However, a key observation is that current practice in public sector “mission development” – in a broad sense of societal expectation development assisted by techniques of visioning, forecasting, prediction and other anticipatory methods – remains piecemeal and uneven. Systems-attuned mission-making to address “messes” places new requirements on the task of mission development. While there is often specific policy-related work or place-based endeavours (e.g. local economic development plans) and a plethora of face-to-face and technology assist methods available to “anticipate”, the sophistication of practice is constrained in the public sector. This is particularly so at the “whole of system” or collective level of national governance, where political manifestos and policy platforms serve as the de facto statements of vision, aspiration and national “mission”. This raises questions of forging mission alignment as the primary function of coordination activity at a national level – in part the proposed work at the *nexus*. Both enabling and synthesizing mission connectivity as a transparent linking process to empower distributed action, is a key brake to release for greater societal innovation, engagement across sectors, and embedded progress that enlivens headway of key challenges.

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<sup>159</sup> Pearce, Atkinson and Mourato (2006) provide a reputable discussion of the problems and discounting and potential remedies (Pearce et al. 2006, p. 23, 183-190).

### **8.2.3. Purposeful Agility: Plan-making and Change**

*“Data and agility are the enemy of rent-seeking.”* – Erik Brynjolfsson (2018).

As rates of change matter, capacity and capability to change help achieve orientation to purpose. Better information (data) and a capacity to change policies and settings quickly, can have a range of impacts on results, including countering the ability of private interests to be anti-competitive and rent-seeking (Brynjolfsson, 2018). *Agility* in specific project management terms, general governance terms and particular transformation programmes, brings into focus government keeping abreast of private sector practice given accelerated data-driven decision making. It is often used to signal the organisation as a living organism paradigm, over the mechanical old paradigm that is outmoded by quick environment change, disruptive technologies accelerating digitisation and democratisation of information (Aghina, 2018). Machine learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) combined with “big data” are automating and augmenting complex decision making (Brynjolfsson, 2016), redefining commercial success and generating new challenges, new risks (including moral hazards) and possibilities in Civil Service practice. In this operating environment where the “platform” part of the economy – as well as the underpinning “pipeline” element<sup>160</sup> – require a speed of public sector “pro-activeness and reactivity”, having decision architecture and cultures than can handle being agile with long-run purpose, becomes paramount.

With operational agility and a culture of time-focussed “purpose” in public policy recognised as critical ingredients for success, so to is the framing of high-level objectives. The motivational clarity that can come from “mission-seeking” governance, assists to prioritise a drive for attainable resolutions. Getting targeted and timely actions results increasingly requires high levels of agility and newfound adaptiveness in policy, political and engagement processes. As such, leadership that embodies and exhibits “agile governance” can become a key ingredient for success. This equates to being able to deal with – as expressed in the *Agile Manifesto*<sup>161</sup> – a combination of faster change, customer or citizen focussed change, experimentation conducted by mixed teams, and new levels of personalisation and specificity in service delivery. With software development roots, agile stresses: “collaboration, adaptation, and iterative reviews—useful approaches in an era of rapid change.” (Deloitte, 2017). Consultants in helping clients “capture transformational benefits” use agile models, such as the “aspire, design and pilot” loop (Brosseau et al., 2019). This is where “aspiration” comes from a top team, a “blueprint” is produced to devise the operating

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<sup>160</sup> Alstynne et al. (2016) make a useful distinction between the nature and dynamics of “old” physical-based economic activity and “new” pipeline virtual-oriented technologies.

<sup>161</sup> As outlined in the *Agile Government Handbook* a U.S.-based initiative documents the “The Agile Manifesto,” helping to transform the way that many software systems get built. Source: <https://handbook.agilegovleaders.org/>

model and “agile pilots” are deployed to test areas to build an iterative process to find the way forward (ibid). *Agile plan-making* has become recognised as an approach that requires working with perceived contradictions. As Di Fiore (2018) outlines:

*"This new approach will require two fundamental elements. First, replacing the traditional obsessions on hard data and playing the numbers-game with a more balanced co-existence of hard and soft data where judgment also plays an important role. Second, introducing new mechanisms and routines to ensure alignment between the hundreds of self-organizing autonomous local teams and the overarching goals and directions ..."* (Di Fiore, 2018).

With regard to the later, accepting the input of quantitative analytics and qualitative knowledge as standard practice in Attainable Governance, both the processes and practices (e.g. institutional heuristics and “routines”)<sup>162</sup> need to move in tandem for tangible change. Consequently, I am advocating for both mechanistic change (the *Attainable Governance Framework*) and the adaptation of the supporting culture of policy and decision making to internalise the key characteristics of agility. These characteristics are fivefold: (i) frameworks and tools able to deal with a future that will be different, (ii) the ability to cope with more frequent and dynamic change, (iii) the need for quality time to be invested for a true “strategic conversation” rather than “numbers games”, and (iv), the availability of flexible resources and funds to respond to emerging opportunities. This generates two paramount requirements: (a) processes able to coordinate and align agile teams, and (b) processes that makes use of both “limitless hard data and human judgment” (Di Fiore, 2018). Therefore, *purposeful agility* in an Attainable Governance frame, raises governance ability to work with a stance readiness, open to reactivity and responsive to change requirements (developed further in 8.2.4).

An integrated and agile approach to “planning” prompts consideration of what a complexity based practice would require for success. A future-facing ideation emphasis (i.e. active anticipation of the *next*) supported by analytic work to conceive generating and reviewing progress towards a better future, is the knowledge state to be aimed for. Working with Ackoff’s conception of “interactive planning” as a methodology, Britton and McCallion (1994) posit an “Ackoffian”-based planning method with five interconnected phases. These are:

1. *Mess formulation*: an analytical phase that results in a clear description of the problems and opportunities confronting an organization
2. *Ends planning*: involving the development an idealized design and comparing it with the mess formulation to identify the gaps that need to be filled by planning
3. *Means planning*: whereby alternate ways are invented to achieve the planning gaps identified during ends planning
4. *Resource planning*: involving determining the resources that are available, the resources that are required to implement the means plan, comparing the resources

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<sup>162</sup> Refer to 10.5 for a discussion of and definition of *heuristics* and *routines*.

required with the available resources to identify the resource gap, inventing and evaluating alternative ways to meet the resource gap, and selecting an appropriate resource plan.

5. *Implement means*: the last phase, to identify the tasks required to implement the means plan, to assign these people for execution, and to design and establish a control system to monitor and control the execution" (Britton and McCallion, 1994, p.504).

With the purpose of this style of planning enabling stakeholder and organizational movement to progress more rapidly toward the ideal of "omnicompetence", Britton and McCallion consider entity form and process design should be more adaptive and better at learning (ibid, p.504). To be intentionally agility for change with a "considered" mindset and approach, suggests value in what Ackoff (1974) terms *interactivism*. He conceives of *interactivism* in his attitudinal typology of planning<sup>163</sup> as trying to not just prepare for threats but *prevent* them, not merely exploiting opportunities but *creating* them, and working as an *idealizer* planning to do better in the future that appears presently possible, rather being a mere "satisficer" or *optimizer*.

In short, seeking an ability to design and control destinies by pursuing "ideals they know can never be obtained but that can be continuously approached" (Ackoff, 1974, p.26-31), is the work of management and governance to advance societal progress. Ackoff goes on to identify the young – acknowledging that older people can possess "young" mindsets and vica versa – as more predisposed to acting with the future in mind:

*"The young, whose future is longer than their past, tend to be interactivists. They are the most capable of accommodating to change and of perceiving the kinds of changes required if social progress is to made. Because they have a larger stake in that future than do those who are older, they should have a hand in making of it what they want. As society is now constituted we tend to give age privileges it is not equipped to use to society's advantage, and to deprive youth of those privileges it is equipped to use to society's advantage."* (Ackoff, 1974, p.113).

In the face of accelerating rates of technological and social change, "interactivists" are akin to agile operators today. They share the desire to increase the ability of systems to learn and update, with all elements open to being re-thought or re-engineered. Experimentation replaces experience as the best guide to designing change. As Ackoff notes, *interactivists* like those working in an agile mode, are open to modifying arrangements, forms, entities and its human and capital resource mix (Ackoff, 1974, p.27). The agile or interactive operator is seeking to "avoid both errors of commission as well as omission" (Pourdehnad et al., 2011, p.7). Doing so is assisted by formulating and updating a purposeful stance. I now reflect on agility and speed further, before concluding

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<sup>163</sup> For Ackoff (1974), planning is required to deal with a systems of problems. He groups attitudes to planning into four general types: (i) *inactive* seeking stability or a conservative stasis, (ii) *reactive* as a reactionary return to the past; (iii) *preactive* as predicting and preparing to optimise for the future; and (iv) *interactive* as proactively creating opportunities and preventing threats for improvements (Ackoff, 1974, pp. 22-27).

this exploration of the applied practice of the framework with a formulation of “3 R’s” to summarise a purpose-oriented, systems-based agile stance.

#### **8.2.4. Purposeful Stances: Temporal Agility and the 3 R’s**

Temporal agility has been established as a contemporary necessity. The speed with which policy advice is generated and subsequent decisions made, requires close attention to rates of change for technological, economic and social transformation. At times governance decisions will require slow consideration and deliberation. At times fast and agile treatments will prove superior. At times, both in tandem will prove necessary to master the plurality of a mess. Slow speed of action and slow thought has advocates, emphasizing that it can be a way to respond to complex human predicaments:

*“Slow Thought is a porous way of thinking that is ‘non-categorical’, open to contingency, allowing people to adapt spontaneously to the exigencies and vicissitudes of life. Italians have a name for this: ‘arrangiarsi’ – more than ‘making do’ or ‘getting by’, it is the art of improvisation, a way of using the resources at hand to forge solutions.” (Di Nicola, 2018).*

Cueing from Tomlinson (2007) who states: “... it should be possible to build slow zones into our cultural-institutional practices as a selective form of applying the brakes” (2007, p. 157), I also seek to concurrently see the importance of opening-up fast-zones of cultural institutional practice. Sometimes “improvisation” allows rapid movement or adjustment, for the least inconvenience. To take the analogy of a car, in government we need the ability to build a new more responsive model that can accelerate and go far faster, as well as brake more quickly for rapid deceleration, as part of all-round greater handling performance. In doing this, we need to attenuate the impulse to drive “all out” purely in the moment, abandoning care for the vehicle. Rather, others will need to be able to inherent the car in a useable state. In this light, Tomlinson (2007) also lands on the importance of *balance*, as a process of constant reflexive re-balancing in the face of contingency, as a “positive control on life” (ibid, p. 158). He views the reward to be disclosed from the discipline – at either an individual or institutional level – accordingly:

*“The promise of the narrative of mechanical speed was order and progress. The attractions of immediacy are lightly achieved comforts and satisfactions. But neither of these can deliver existential fulfilment or security in the face of the temporally compressed contingencies of contemporary acceleration. Virtue to be found in speed is quite different: it is to apply effort to become nimble and graceful life-performers. The goal is balance. The reward is poise.” (Tomlinson, 2007, p. 158).*

For continuity in leadership, those undertaking roles in public governance (political and public service roles) have to imbue a degree of adaptiveness. Being able to “shape-shift” as events require is a pre-requisite for success. To perform the orchestration of governance with “agile style” is to possess a neutral stance, finding the *nexus* between the present (*now*) and the future



(next) where the individual and organisation are in a subjective state of (1) readiness, (2) reactivity and (3) responsiveness:

**1. Readiness** – a “stance of readiness” requires being both poised to act (“move”) as well as not act (“wait”).

It means being able to update in the moving context while remaining stationary, so when action is necessary (be it either to *move* and *wait*), the actor is in the best possible position. Taking the analogy of a dancer prepared to perform on a moving stage, this implies an active stance that is not static or passive in unfolding predicaments.

**2. Reactivity** – a “stance of open reactivity” requires being both poised to leave behind the past (“let go”) as well as engage with the future (“let in”).

It means being attentive to the shifting cultural frequencies that can fade into either detached nostalgic or futuristic idealisation. This implies an active stance that is neither closed or resistant to interpretations of shifting predicaments. Analogy: think of a dancer performing so as to stay in the area of illumination in an arcing spotlight, not drift behind or get too far ahead of the patch of light.

**3. Responsiveness** – a “stance of responsiveness” requires being both poised to counteract inaction (*push*) as well as counteract action (*hold*).

It means being symmetrical to hold the shape of a predicament. This implies an active stance that is not unable to quickly take a position to defend or advocate for activity contingent on the moves faced. Analogy: think of a complementary dancer performing in reaction to a leading protagonist, where they are required to switch from a primary lead (e.g. “offensive”) or secondary support (e.g. “defence”) type of pattern to counteract their partner for a balanced and complete performance.

In summary, the quality of *purpose* attained in governance can make an impactful difference to results and the process of delivery in operational terms. Purposeful temporally sensitive, mission-seeking, and agile plan-making in public governance is a cultural requirement to lift policy and decision performance. I move to expand this further, with deeper methodological detailing to devise explicit protocols to aid analysis.

### 8.3 Knowing: *Observation, Outlook and Orientation*

This section develops a set of “analytic protocols” that weave together an ontological, epistemological and methodological position in the quest for better “knowing” to practice pragmatic public governance in an *Attainable Governance Framework* (AGF) paradigm.<sup>164</sup> I call them *protocols* as they propose forms of process support for the framework’s application. When conducting analysis in the arena of public governance to support repositioning governance to improve performance, I am advocating the application of (1) the “observation” *stance* developed in 2.3 (engaging in analytic layering), along with (2) an “outlook” to focus enquiry (combining the “4 M’s layering” with the *now, next* and *nexus*); alongside (3), a leadership and functional role

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<sup>164</sup> By *paradigm* I mean in a classic Kuhnian (1962) sense, the set of common beliefs and agreements shared about how problems should be understood and addressed.

“orientation” to assist with calibrating where to focus, given the possible scope and scale of complex systems.

For purposes of definition, the ontological considerations introduced reflect a position of understanding “reality” from a functional, systems or pragmatic point of view.<sup>165</sup> This means acknowledging and recognising that in governance systems, “reality” is being constantly negotiated, renegotiated and interpreted. I recognise I am therefore bringing a pragmatic “tilt” to the *paradigm*, from the point of view that “usefulness” or public value comes from handling indeterminacies proactively by solving problems and resolving messes. From an epistemological perspective,<sup>166</sup> I work to bring to life clarification with organising concepts and angles of analysis to assist practice, which have methodological consequences for public sector practice and political implications. The objective is to advance a practical working set of *analytic protocols* to guide thinking and work in the AGF. I have been influenced by Starr’s (2018) view of epistemological meaning, which informed the leadership position advanced in 8.3.3. I also draw in general terms from Zellmer et al. (2006) for their discussion of developing an epistemology of complexity.

### **8.3.1. Observation: Analytic Layering**

A “protocol” for analysis in an AGF mode is outlined as a guide to orient and focus analytic activity across different fields, disciplines and contexts. Drawing from 2.3’s methodology discussion of the “conception of analytics” (refer Table 2.3.3), I now develop from this so as to assist “making meaning” for progress with four analytic layers of “ordering”; namely *micro*, *meta*, *meso* and *macro* (refer Table 8.3.1):

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<sup>165</sup> By *ontology*, I mean “ways of being” (Healey, 2003, p. 115) to explore the question of “what is reality?” (Guba, 1990). Ontological development can mean bringing to life a series of issues, calling into focus what exists and how people are doing so through researching what is happening and what exists.

<sup>166</sup> By *epistemology*, I mean “ways of thinking” (Healey, 2003, p. 115), working on the question “How do you know about this reality?” (Guba, 1990). Developing *episteme* is working for clarity about what we know about the world, with a focus on the how we are able to know it.

Table 8.3.1: Summary of Analytic Layering – “Ordering” (X) adjoining “Orientation” as Temporal Framing (Y)

<b>(Y) TEMPORAL FRAMING:</b> <i>“Orientation”</i>		<b>A. THE ACTUAL – Now Governing</b>	<b>B. THE ANTICIPATED – Next Governing</b>	<b>C. THE ATTAINABLE – Nexus Governing</b>
<b>(X) ANALYTIC LAYERING:</b> <i>“Ordering”</i>		Identifying the current permissible range for plans	Identifying generative potentials as strategies	Negotiating and ruling on transformative possibilities for agreements
<b>MICRO</b>	<b>Interests</b>	<i>Current interests</i>	<i>Generative interests</i>	<i>Transformative interests</i>
<b>META</b>	<b>Ideologies</b>	<i>Current ideologies</i>	<i>Generative ideologies</i>	<i>Transformative ideologies</i>
<b>MESO</b>	<b>Institutions</b>	<i>Current institutions</i>	<i>Generative institutions</i>	<i>Transformative institutions</i>
<b>FOCUS:</b> <i>“MACRO”</i>	<b>Interactions:</b> <i>“Sense-making syntheses”</i>	Positions within the <b>“current permissible”</b>	Postulates forming <b>“generative potentials”</b>	Decisions for <b>“transformative possibilities”</b>

I describe the content of the table further. Taking Bohm's (1996) frame of reference to "*what is to be done?*" into account, highlights the need for a way to systematically conceive of functionality in the terms of the object of analysis (e.g. the issue or topic, and area or jurisdiction) and empirically determine what this translates into, e.g. with respect to innovative thinking, creative option formation and tangible operational solutions for enhanced decision-making and practice. Specific concrete "micro" layer issues are paramount for understanding change. This can mean that particular details, when applied to the case of arrangements (structures and policies) need to be closely understood.

Additionally, the overarching "meta" philosophical level of general theorising about the nature of the issue warrants attention. By way of definition, *meta*<sup>167</sup> is used to indicate the abstraction "behind", "above" or "beyond" the described concept or properties of meaning, as such simply conveying the intention of expanded meaning and perspective derived from looking at the "issues about the issue". I also add that sound analysis requires specific consideration of the "meso" level issues of institutional arrangements. *Meso* is used to imply the intermediate or intermediating layer. This is done because this is usually where framing decisions are made about how to see and treat the focal problems and opportunities. Hence I propose that to make headway on complex issues necessitates engagement, in ways rarely systematically done, with the interactions between the *micro*, *meta* and *meso* "layers" of critical issues for societal progress. A new conception of *macro* as the amalgamating synthesis layer is added.

Adjoining the ordering layers as outlined, with the "orientation" developed with the core temporal decision architecture framing, establishes the areas of analytic consideration and a language to codify them, so as to assist governance and policy discourse. As previously developed, the distinction between *now*, *next* and *nexus* helps to directly facilitate and enable consideration and resolution of the temporal dimension. I now go on to establish an "outlook" to knowledge building through enquiry, complimenting this perspective.

### **8.3.2. Outlook: Knowledge-building Perspectives**

In this section I am forging a worldview or outlook for *Attainable Governance* by utilising angles of "knowledge-building enquiry". Table 8.3.2 summarises this and co-locates this "outlook" alongside the conceptual scope and potential focus to assist *Attainable Governance* thought. Ontologically, I take a position that is working from deriving *systems and complexity* insights about

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<sup>167</sup> *Meta* as a noun is employed to signal "an abstract, higher level of analysis or commentary" (as at <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/meta>). In epistemological use, the prefix *meta-* is used to mean *about* its own category (as per <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meta>).

governance, as a social construct with applied functional value to delivering practice improvements. In this regard, consistent with and extending from the discussion of complexity in Chapter 3, the outlook taken in analysis must be cognizant that:

- the nature of policy issues means that they are typical dynamic, interpretable, and incomplete constructs at any given point in time
- there are restricting limitations to causality due to the implications of incomplete knowledge where causality cannot be effectively determined
- with uncertainty and emergent adaptation present in systems, the treatment of value and risk where the unknowns out-weight “knowns” is often problematic
- the implications of the resulting indeterminacy in decision systems weights towards commitments both having to both clear certainties (fixed commitments) while also staying flexible and taking positions based on inherent uncertainty and the consequent desire for agility.

Accounting for the implications of this applied outlook, I propose three key positions can assist analytic progress by focusing on *issue*, *power* and *decision resolution dynamics*. The first is what I call the “wicked, wayward, wherefore” position. To define *issue dynamics* well means understanding:

- “wicked” as multi-dimensional, hard to bound and define issues – utilising the commonplace public policy meaning to indicate interconnected, systemic and urgent issues<sup>168</sup>.
- “wayward” as embedded in multi-polar contexts – explicitly adding the complex nature of contemporary operating environments as the wider domain that contextualizes the “wicked”.
- “wherefore” as for the reason of finding an accommodation of both issues and context – namely the “layered” (as previously proposed) understanding of wicked issues and the contextual networked analytics to understand the “wayward” operating environment, working with both to find balanced knowledge framing and decision making strategy position.

Second, the “is, could, can” position focuses on what is and could be “done”, bringing power into focus. To comprehensively interpret *power dynamics* means:

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<sup>168</sup> For a definition and discussion of “wicked problems”, refer to 3.4.3.

- “*what is actually done*” – following a Foucauldian “everyday” power focus,<sup>169</sup> seeking to make transparent issue related existing power dynamics with respect to the preliminary framing of, the active doing of, and the reflective evaluation of, the issue and arrangements to hand.
- “*what could be done*” – following a Habermasian “communicative” power focus<sup>170</sup>, seeing the aspirational possibilities of, and the moral consideration of options for an ideal (“utopian”) future that may be practical “unattainable” depending on the ideological and temporal frame employed.
- “*what can be done*” – as a *nexus* decision space or a series of decision points in a process.

Third, the “coordination, knowledge, and decision” position is to orient to the task of making decisions in governance roles. In the context of *decision resolution dynamics* this can require and mean:

- Taking a “*coordination*” position with numerous interdependencies – i.e. accepting the need to grapple with complex interdependencies as a governance or management-levelled operational requirement.
- Taking a “*knowledge*” position with uncertain, uneven and partial data – i.e. committing to a perspective with incomplete or imperfect information for rational decision framing and making.
- Taking a temporally defined “*decision*” position – i.e. taking decision/s in the *timespace window*, factoring in the rate of change and working a mix of certainty (“fixing”) and uncertainty (“flexing”) in the decision to achieve optimal rates of adaptation.

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<sup>169</sup> For a simple operative summation, Foucault’s works that covered issues of power saw it as (a) omnipresent i.e. being and “coming from everywhere” (Foucault, 1998, p. 63), (b) at once a positive and negative force in society, and (c) as a discursive form in flux transmitting, producing, reinforcing and exposing power to make it fragile (ibid, 1998, 1991). His famous argument was to “cut off the head of the king” in political analysis and replace it with a decentred understanding of power, searching for the utility from understanding the “micro-politics of power” (Flyvberg and Richardson, 2002, p.17).

<sup>170</sup> Flyvberg and Richardson (2002) claim: “The normative gaze of communicative theory looks towards an idealised future state of power-free critical debate.” (ibid, p. 17). They go on to say: “Habermas, among others, views conflict in society as dangerous, corrosive and potentially destructive of social order, and therefore in need of being contained and resolved. In a Foucauldian interpretation, conversely, suppressing conflict is suppressing freedom, because the privilege to engage in conflict is part of freedom.” (Flyvberg and Richardson, 2002, p.23). Hence my intention is to provide latitude for an exploration of both perspectives, with a view to then having ways to render a course of preferable (ideally non-violent) action.

Table 8.3.2: *Outlook and Attainable Governance Framework (AGF)*

<b>CONCEPTUAL SCOPE:</b> <i>Analytic layering</i>	<b>POTENTIAL FOCUS:</b>	<b>OUTLOOK:</b> <i>Core knowledge-building enquires</i>
<b>OBSERVATION:</b> key actors/agents in nodes, networks (links and signals) and systems	A Complexity Systems stance <i>as an approach to understanding systems-based phenomena</i>	Taking <b>Systems</b> and <b>Complexity</b> insights about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the nature of policy issues – as dynamic, interpretable, and incomplete constructs</li> <li>- limitations to causality – the implications of incomplete knowledge where causality cannot be effectively determined</li> <li>- uncertainty and emergent adaptation – the treatment of value and risk where the unknowns out-weight “knowns”</li> <li>- indeterminacy and commitment – the implications of both having to staying flexible and taking positions</li> </ul>
<b>Interests: a micro-specification lens</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the case for specifying the <i>layout of interest areas</i> (and associated policy and plan performances)</li> </ul>	Micro-specification of the layout of interests <i>as current (now), generative (next) and transformative (nexus) phenomena</i>	<b>Applied implication:</b> <b>1) The “wicked, wayward, wherefore” position</b> Where defining <i>issue dynamics</i> means understanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “wicked” as multi-dimensional, hard to bound and define issues</li> <li>- “wayward” as embedded in multi-polar contexts, and</li> <li>- “wherefore” as for the reason of finding an accommodation of both</li> </ul>
<b>Ideologies: a meta-generalisable lens</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the case for generalising <i>approaches to ideas</i> (ideologies, theories and concepts) and “logics” guiding thought</li> </ul>	Meta-generalisation of approaches to ideologies <i>as current (now), generative (next) and transformative (nexus) phenomena</i>	<b>2) The “is, could, can” position</b> Where interpreting <i>power dynamics</i> means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “what <u>is</u> actually done” – following a Foucauldian “everyday” power focus</li> <li>- “what <u>could</u> be done” – following a Habermasian “communicative” power focus</li> <li>- “what <u>can</u> be done” – as a <i>nexus</i> decision space or points</li> </ul>
<b>Institutions: a meso-mechanistic lens</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the case for mapping the mechanistic <i>architectures of institutions</i>, namely the of functionalities (or dys-functionalities) and associated operational arrangements of structures, networks and clusters</li> </ul>	Meso-mechanistic architectures of institutions <i>as current (now), generative (next) and transformative (nexus) phenomena</i>	

<p><b>Interactions: a macro-holistic lens</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the case for producing a holistic (or a 360-degree view) <i>amalgam of interactions</i> of the micro, meta and meso-layers</li> <li>-</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>for a macro “Sense-making Syntheses”</i></b></p>	<p>Macro-holistic amalgam of interactions</p> <p><i>as current (now), generative (next) and transformative (nexus) phenomena</i></p>	<p><b>3) The “coordination, knowledge, and decision” position</b></p> <p>Where <i>decision resolution dynamics</i> means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- taking a “coordination” position with numerous interdependencies</li> <li>- taking a <i>knowledge position</i> with uncertain, uneven and partial data, and;</li> <li>- taking a temporally defined “decision” position – i.e. taking decision/s in the <i>timespace window</i>, factoring in the rate of change and working a mix of certainty (“fixing”) and uncertainty (“flexing”) in the decision to achieve optimal rates of adaptation.</li> </ul>
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### 8.3.3. Orientation: Leadership in Practice

To further probe the governance leadership roles in the four layers, investigative “opening positions” that can help to assist garnering an overview of practice follows. Consequently, taking cues from Starr (2018), who posits an epistemology framework<sup>171</sup> to chart a leadership-oriented view of intellectual activity, I extend the theoretical tenor developed to form these enquiry *opening positions* to trigger empirical activity (Table 8.3.3.A). Accepting that people may hold overlapping conceptions or multiple perspectives that cut across the categorisation, the perspectives outlined is a “working guide” i.e. a heuristic in and of itself.

Table 8.3.3.A: *Investigating Leadership – Opening Positions for Enquiry of Policy, Systems and Strategic Leadership*

Layers	“Opening Positions” for enquiry to support analysis of public governance
<b>Micro:</b>	Policy as heuristically-oriented “rule of thumb” thinking – starting with what exists, surfacing the arrangements of authority and expressions of power.
<b>Meta:</b>	Systems design as a process of “systems expansionism” – interactively strategizing for a wider set of deeper options.
<b>Meso:</b>	Strategic intervention to re-design the system as a process of “analytic reductionism” – forming the arrangements to deliver the best level of decision resolution.
<b>Macro:</b>	Overseeing the relevant fusions of (a) <i>mindsets</i> , (b) <i>methods of thought</i> (heuristic, analytic and systems thinking) and (c) <i>methods of deciding</i> , for recursive learning in the practice of applied orchestration for attainable governance.

To conclude this section, the primary tasks and roles envisaged in the knowledge production landscape are outlined as four “analytic orientations” (Table 8.3.3.B):

<sup>171</sup> Following Starr (2018) in short *epistemology* means a “theory of knowledge” whereby we separate *belief*, being what we hold to be true, from *opinion* or our judgment.

Table 8.3.3.B: *Outline of Analytic Orientations – Roles and Tasks in Governance Investigations*

<b>Primary role:</b>	<b>Primary task:</b>	<b>Primary interest:</b>	<b>Focus:</b>	<b>Mindset:</b>
<b><i>(a) Located Policy-makers and Planners</i></b>	Fit-for-purpose strategies, policies and delivery in localities	<i>Micro-systemic view</i>	National and regional or place-specific level of functionality	Particular, layering-inwards and outwards
<b><i>(b) Contextual Thinkers</i></b>	Fit-for-purpose communities cultures and societies	<i>Meta-systemic view</i>	Integrated levels for a coherent societal culture	Abstract and layering-inwards
<b><i>(c) Located or contextual Intermediaries as Key Operatives</i></b>	Fit-for purpose connectivity and system seamlessness	<i>Meso-systems view</i>	Whole-of-system conceptions in flux given the point-in-time issue	Interacting in dual-modes (navigating the 'liquid' 'entanglement' between the abstract and concrete)
<b><i>(d) Contextual Designers as (a+b+c)</i></b>	Fit-for-purpose schemes and developments	<i>Macro-systems view</i>	Localized project level functionality	Concrete and layering outwards

Taken together, the *opening positions* (Table A) and the *analytic orientations* (Table B) presented, offer guidance for research and practice design. They encapsulate and “set out” the anticipated heuristics as part of a package of *analytic protocols* that can assist empirical work in doing the practice of policy-making and governance. I next focus on the macro “fusion” level to consider the synthesising challenges inherent in the application of the AGF.

#### **8.4 Fusion: An Analytic Sense-making Synthesis**

*“My bottom line is that the analytical way forward is not to ask: ‘can we distinguish cases in which ideas were more important or influential from cases in which they were not?’ but rather to ask: ‘how might we best distinguish between situations in which ideas play a somewhat different role in the interaction between interests and ideas that underpins all action?’”* – Peter Hall in exchange with Dani Rodrik, (2018).<sup>172</sup>

Inferred in this quote is the simple but profound notion of focussing on finding the (i) *ideas* that (ii) *make a difference* due to making and remaking with respective *interests* situated in (iii), a *context*. Understanding this and the “underpinning” implications for action, is a productive approach to knowledge development and synthesis. Consistent with the threefold integrative, temporal and integral theoretical stance developed, and expanded in Part 2’s conceptual design and guiding protocols for proposed practice advancement, a key feature is the emphasis on “fusion”. The mixing and melding of the micro, meta and meso into a “new macro”, is done so to produce an applied “point of view” that dovetails with Hall’s perspective. An analytic focus on “interactions” at the “sense-making syntheses” is central to the applied systems and complexity challenge. *Interactions* are taken to be about placing attention on “*amalgamations*”. This means taking a holistic viewpoint, integrating the *micro*, *meta* and *meso* for a *macro* position. I use the term *sense-making* not as retrospectively constructing an explanation to “fit” an outcome, as can be the case (Bevelin, 2007); rather, as real-time and prospective practice of working in an anticipatory *next* mode. Table 8.4.1 “Point of View” (Analytic Fusion with the AGF) provides an outline of the *analytic fusion* proposed: (see Table 8.4.1)

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<sup>172</sup> Peter Hall in exchange with Dani Rodrik, January 2018, Source <http://rodrik.typepad.com/>.

Table 8.4.1: “Point of View” – Analytic Fusion with the Attainable Governance Framework (AGF)

POINT OF VIEW: AGF ANALYTICS		A. THE ACTUAL – Now Governing	B. THE ANTICIPATED – Next Governing	C. THE ATTAINABLE – Nexus Governing
<b>OBSERVATION:</b> key actors/agents in nodes, networks (links and signals) and systems		<i>Identifying the current permissible range for plans</i>	<i>Identifying generative potentials as strategies</i>	<i>Negotiating and ruling on transformative possibilities for agreements</i>
<b>Micro</b>	<b>Interests:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attention on arrangements in <i>areas</i>, being issues as specific detailed policies and plans</li> <li>- (a specification viewpoint)</li> </ul>	<i>Current interests</i> Identifying the embedded arrangement of an area’s prevailing short-run interests and associated policy and plan performances	<i>Generative interests</i> Identifying the emergent arrangement in an area for amplification where long-run interests and associated policy and plans need specification	<i>Transformative interests</i> Reaching decisions on the “interconnecting arrangements” for policies and plans that mediate between specific short and long run issues on a case-by-base basis
<b>Meta</b>	<b>Ideas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attention on <i>approaches</i>, being general ideologies, theories and concepts</li> <li>- (a generalizable viewpoint)</li> </ul>	<i>Current ideas</i> Identifying the embedded approaches of prevailing ideas and dominant or accepted logics guiding thought	<i>Generative ideas</i> Identifying the emergent approaches for futures-oriented ideas and the new logics to guiding thought	<i>Transformative ideas</i> Reaching decisions where required on the “interacting approaches” that adequately “resolve” positioning current (embedded) and generative (emergent) ideas and supporting logics
<b>Meso</b>	<b>Institutions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attention on <i>architectures</i>, being structures, networks and clusters shaping functionality</li> <li>- (a mechanistic viewpoint)</li> </ul>	<i>Current institutions</i> Identifying the embedded architectures of prevailing functionalities (or dys-functionalities) and associated operational arrangements	<i>Generative institutions</i> Identifying the emergent architectures of futures-oriented functionalities and associated supporting operational arrangements	<i>Transformative institutions</i> Reaching decisions on the “interoperable architectures” for supporting the optimisation of short and long-run institutional design to facilitate transformation towards higher functionality

<p><b>ANALYTIC SYNTHESIS:</b></p> <p><i>Macro</i></p>	<p><b>Interactions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attention on “<i>amalgamations</i>” (a holistic viewpoint) integrating the micro, meta and meso for:</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Sense-making Syntheses</i></b></p>	<p>Positions within the “<i>current permissible</i>” range for:</p> <p><b><i>Admissible Plans</i></b></p>	<p>Postulates forming “<i>generative potentials</i>” via:</p> <p><b><i>Adjacent Strategies</i></b></p>	<p>Decisions for “<i>transformative possibilities</i>”, being rulings on the amalgamation of the admissible positions (plans) and adjacent postulates (strategies) resulting in:</p> <p><b><i>Actionable Agreements</i></b></p>
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Now I briefly discuss the discursive labels landed on and meaning proposed for the three modes at synthesis level, namely: Admissible Plans, Adjacent Strategies and Actionable Agreements. *Admissible Plans* are larger than traditional policy prescriptions or evaluative activity monitoring policies. They include the “micro” work of identifying the embedded arrangements of prevailing short-run interests and associated policy and plan performances within a mapping of “current interests”. Added to this is the explicit identification at the meta level of the embedded approaches of prevailing ideas and dominant or accepted logics guiding thought. This is normally outside the scope of policy-making practice and mostly done in a piecemeal fashion in academic or think-tank research environments. Third, the meso-level is geared towards identifying the embedded architectures of prevailing functionalities (or dys-functionalities) and associated operational arrangements. This is a strategic layer that is often not explicitly attended to, often only coming into scope with organisational restructuring, if at all. By way of *fusion*, the proposed analytic synthesis is the amalgamation of these three layers, with the task of bringing into clearer view the “current permissible” range of *Admissible Plans*.

The key point to make is that with regard to the current state, existing practice normally falls well short of the governance knowledge span proposed. To assist effective coordination of the necessary synchronicities to oversee policy systems, requires a deeper level of knowledge investment and production. By “activating the actual” to realize current state potential – and in doing so reducing asymmetries and advancing functionality – the governance of *admissible plans* underscores the different proposition for both knowledge creation and oversight that is implicit in this conceptual framework and practice schema. Similarly, and without repeating what is Table 8.4.1, *Adjacent Strategies* and *Actionable Agreements* both place new demands on policy-making and governance practice. While I have in this section focussed on producing a language for conveying the conceptual meanings embodied in the framework for application – recognising the ontological and epistemic nature of doing so – the nature of existing practice in both politics (e.g. manifesto making and governing decision making) and the Civil Service (i.e. operational strategies and policy delivery for public services) do not closely conform with the proposed approach. While it could be argued this is conceivably followed in a general informal or intuitive way, my position is that existing arrangements, institutional settings and the decision architecture employed and adhered to, are *not* consistent with the proposed schema. Particular systemic weaknesses lie in modes B (*next*) and C (*nexus*) knowledge formulation and practice.

## **8.5 Reformulating: *Recasting Functions and facing Dysfunctions***

*“There has been a shift from civil servants warning ministers and keeping them out of trouble, reflecting the traditional risk aversion normally attributed to the British civil service, towards ‘carriers’ of ministerial ideas, willing to try to implement policies even*

*when lacking broad policy community support. The changing relationship between ministers and civil servants has important effects on policy style because civil servants are now less able to strike a consensus with interest groups, as the civil servants often arrive at the table to decisions already made, rather than to engage in a process of mutual learning and exchange in order to generate policy solutions. The zone for negotiation is often much smaller than hitherto, and this fundamentally changes the nature of the interaction between civil servants and groups, and hence the policy style itself.” – J. Richardson (2018).*

My proposed schema is in part a way into systemic change without recasting the balance of these functions, or depending upon constitutional reform. Alternatively, it can provide a way into a reform agenda, that may lead to a review. For example, by pivoting to embrace an attainable theory of governance, the possibility to place the legislature and the judiciary in new roles comes onto the table with renewed clarity. The judiciary could play a key function in supporting *nexus* deadlocks should they unfold, mediating and resolving where specialized adjudication and judgment-making tasks are central to arriving at sound and fair decisions in complex technical areas. The arrangement of and speed of decision-making required would be at a different tempo to current court-bound procedures that are largely too slow for decision-resolution in “real-time”. Similarly, for the legislature, the potential for roles benefiting from open representative democratic debates and transparent engagement, could bring a new salience and dynamism to the life of the House where issues are dealt with on a secondary circuit of importance, i.e. they are often largely showmanship and where the “rubber stamping” of pre-determined Party whipped voting occurs. The development of such considerations in any depth falls beyond the parameters of this work, but are highly fertile territories for further development.

Recasting dysfunctions through an *AGF* opens the door to investigate the way in which issues are engaged with and at times, dispatched. There is often a build-up of legacy policies, legislation and regulations that have to be “cleared out” as new initiatives overlay the old. Rethinking how to navigate through, with and around the barriers presented to contemporary issues is a key operational concern. Further, there may be the potential, in the complexity-informed terms developed, to aid *dissolving* and *resolving* dysfunction. A focus on “doing away” with certain issues can help focus efforts to resolve the really important, while reducing resource allocation towards lower priority issues. This places new and different demands on knowledge making, requiring an investment and development in the enhancement of observational systems to better understand:

- *short-term* phenomena with “new and quicker” response feedback loops
- *long-term* phenomena with “mature and considered” response feedback loops, and;
- investment in realigning decision-making and justice producing mechanisms at the *nexus* to “handle accounting for both” quick and considered feedback.

In chapter 9 I go on to review current initiatives, recent thinking and the state of progress with commensurate propositions to address short-termism in both the UK and select other jurisdictions.



## 9. Reconstituting Governance: *Experiments, Considerations and Review*

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### 9.1 Outline

*“In practical terms, if one can speak of ‘practical’ when entering the realm of something so fundamentally nebulous as time and space, narrative expands the basis of how we envision the moral imagination... It requires an imagination that must more fully be aware of and embrace the multidimensionality of time rather than reduce it to its narrowest configuration” – J.P. Lederach (2005, p. 148).*

As collaborative orientations facilitate inclusive problem-solving and resolution-finding in practice, decision architectures can help to guide processes to achieve results. An expanded notion of the “present” cannot be relied upon to happen spontaneously through individual enlightenment. To bring about due “comfort” with action in the present that works with a longer-view, intentionality in the processes of engagement, listening, learning and allowing for new understanding to unfold, must be designed to enable good practice. In building a conceptual proposition to support continuously arriving at the *attainable*, a deeply democratic and systematic approach is necessary to “bring to life” what we can learn to be (increasingly quickly) the best way forward. In making a case for change to authentically meet the challenges of the future – and also the need to move more elegantly for integrated and timely advice and decisions in the present – I have devised a framework for a systemic “pivot” of contemporary democracy and culture to resolve and dissolve the challenges of our time (Chapter 7). I have then unpacked further the approach required to enact the *Attainable Governance Framework* (Chapter 8). To test this proposition against current proposals, I review recent developments in this regard in this chapter.

With a focus on exploring existing proposals in the UK that have been mooted, I also briefly discuss select national and international issues faced when attempting to institutionalise the long-view. The reasons to transform governance systems are manifold at micro and meta-levels. At the global level, achieving necessary change for human prosperity requires an attainable transformation guided by intelligent and coordinated governmental mechanisms. As outlined in the *Stockholm Resilience Centre’s Report* (2018), to achieve the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) requires a scenario resting on at least five transformational actions with global systems-wide effects, namely: accelerated renewable energy growth, accelerated productivity in food chains, new development models in the poorer countries, active inequality reduction, and; investments in education for all, gender equality and family planning (SRC, 2018, p.6). A rapid transformation to address these areas underlines the need for longer view-taking combined with shorter “action-making”. My general perspective of the response success of prior calls for transformative change

in this regard, particularly with respect to long-termism, are that they fall significantly short of what is required. Further, they do not sufficiently generate integration, adaptability and agility that are central concerns for effecting change. Pulling-up well short of calling action to date counter-productive, I nonetheless by virtue of my proposition and the ensuing assessment, claim to be offering an approach that is substantively different.

To this end, I first traverse the existing proposals and activities advanced (or previously conducted) by various Commissions, Offices and associated developments. My focus then turns to zeroing in on the most advanced package of reforms proposed by Caney (2016) for an assessment, followed by a discussion of other improvements taking place in the international sphere. I content they are highly constrained, early exploratory steps in and around the substantive challenge given the discomfort in various predicaments across jurisdictions i.e. the uncomfortable gap between existing governance performance in democracies and the traction in critical areas for improvement. I conclude with a synopsis of my position established in Part 2, underscoring the similarities and differences between the *proposition* compared to other proposals and practice undertaken to date.

## 9.2 Experiments: *Commissions, Offices and Acts*

*“The need for action is heightened by the political and economic uncertainties brought about by Brexit and wider global challenges, particularly from technological and climate change. ... the National Infrastructure Plan, the National Industrial Strategy and a UK Environment Plan highlight the need for an integrated approach and better collaboration between administrations. Communities and businesses also need to be given the confidence that deep-rooted regional disparities in national socio-economic conditions will not persist and that their investment prospects and well-being will not be undermined... A longer-term consistent policy framework for action is needed.” – UK2017 Commission (2018, p. 3).*

In the context of the UK, various initiatives have been proposed and developed with a futures orientation. I outline notable work since 2000. To date internationally, Futures Commissions within and outside government, have had limited success. A recent UK initiative is the *UK2070 Commission*. It is an independent inquiry into the spatial inequalities chaired by Lord Kerslake, with its purpose described as “to deliver change” whereby “deep rooted inequalities across the UK” are “not inevitable”. It does this from the premise that “we lack long-term thinking and [a] spatial economic plan needed to tackle them” (UK2070, 2018). The goals of the Commission,<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Goals: “To illuminate the imbalances in the nature of economic activity, including the patterns of investment, wealth, taxation and public expenditure, and the related social and environmental conditions across the United Kingdom; To illustrate the potential of national and regional spatial economic frameworks which enable and support regional and local action and priorities; and To identify policy interventions and mechanisms for collaboration to address imbalances between regions and nations, such

signal its intention to link local devolution with national action. Meanwhile within government, a plethora of long-term measures are taken by government departments, plus there are other independent bodies in the British landscape. For example, the *Industry Strategy Council* is independent body to advise the *Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)* on the long-term success of the Industrial Strategy.<sup>174</sup> It is tasked with publishing regular public reports assessing progress on the Strategy's implementation. The time taken to establish it has come under fire from opposition politicians (Cable in Monaghan, 2018). It can be interpreted as a watchdog with friendly teeth by design that has a "cross-over" leadership with a primacy to the present, evidenced by the Council's composition and leadership.<sup>175</sup>

Alternatively, from outside government the *Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development (FDSD)*<sup>176</sup> is a charity that has advocated for long-term thinking and taking into account the interests of future generations. It proposed the creation of a *House of Lords Committee for Future Generations* in March 2018 (FDSD-a, 2018). This resulted in thirty-three peers formally endorsing the proposal, according to FDSD in written evidence the Housing of Lords Liaison Committee (FDSD-b, 2018). Another initiative established with an awareness raising agenda is the *All Party Parliamentary Group for Future Generations*,<sup>177</sup> with a Secretariat of Cambridge students. Similarly, the thinking is at the level of endeavouring to foster greater long-run consideration in the Parliamentary sphere. As Parliamentary structures and their constitutional arrangements provide the legal anchoring for institutional arrangements – and the ability to change them – they have implications for what is possible in democracies. Such government initiatives may offer improved investment in foresight, but do not specifically address the decision architecture and knowledge content requirements implicit in transformation as previously outlined.

One proposed approach that does seek to "hardwire" in future accountability from a fiscal perspective, is Michael Johnson's proposal. Johnson (2019) proposes specific financial interventions to help better manage getting a long-term view on the table to curtail expenditure

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as governance and fiscal instruments including local taxation, land value capture and intergovernmental transfers." (*UK2017 Commission goals*, October 2018, p.2).

<sup>174</sup> The objective of the *Industry Strategy Council* is hold the government to account by monitoring its success in delivering the Industrial Strategy and its impact on the economy. Establishment of the Council was announced in the government's industrial strategy white paper (November 2017). Refer: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-industrial-strategy-council-meets-as-membership-announced>

<sup>175</sup> The Chair appointed being the Chief Economist of the Bank of England, Andy Haldane. Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chair-of-new-industrial-strategy-council-appointed>

<sup>176</sup> Refer: <http://www.fdsd.org/>

<sup>177</sup> Refer: <https://www.appgfuturegenerations.com/home>

that does not take account of younger and future citizens. Based on financial analysis, he makes five proposals to mitigate intergenerational inequity in government finances:

1. The UK's *Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)* balance sheet should include a liability to represent future State Pension payments, based upon a realistic expectation of the future cash outflow, discounted using gilt yields.
2. Draft legislation should be accompanied by *Intergenerational Impact Assessments (IIAs)*, to quantify its impact on future taxpayers.
3. An *Office for Fiscal Responsibility (OFR)* should be established to coordinate the production of Intergenerational Impact Assessments (IIAs) and to scrutinise the effectiveness and value for money of all tax reliefs.
4. All tax reliefs should be subject to a five-year sunset clause after which they would cease.
5. Departmental budgets should be set both gross and net of expenditure on tax reliefs, to ensure transparency as to the true level of financial support to each area of public policy (Johnson, 2019).

An *Office for Fiscal Responsibility* could provide a powerful mechanism and the concept of "Intergenerational Impact Assessments" (IIAs) would input the necessary analysis to support its work. As Johnson states: "The expressed purpose of IIAs would be to highlight prospective legislation's cost, efficiency and fairness for future generations." (Johnson, 2019). The IIA tool would help to improve fiscal transparency about how longer-term unfunded commitments are to be met, "to encourage parliamentarians to better appreciate the consequences of their proposals." (ibid). These are the type of core financial management initiatives that could come to fruition under the broader schematic proposition I develop. Johnson's advocacy has yet to gain traction for implementation, pointing to the need for a systemic design that can enable impetus for serious consideration of new interventions and mechanisms to garner change. Fiscal tools are a useful intervention point.

Other UK activities have preceded recent proposals this century. In 2007, an effort to improve measures to "...help ensure that Parliament as well as Government was well-equipped to consider long-term strategic issues" resulted in a *House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee (PASC)* report (PASC, 2007, p.35). It commented that:

*"Although successive governments have done a great deal to improve strategic capacity, and the present Government has taken this process further, there is still room for improvement. One of the key tensions in long-term policy-making is between the centre, which is able to take a long-term view and challenge departmental thinking, and departments, which have practical experience and in-depth knowledge. We believe that a strong central strategy unit is essential, but suggest that departmental Ministers should be more closely involved in its work. We welcome the Government's attempts to increase strategic capacity within departments, and the corporate capacity of the civil service as a whole. It is clear that this work needs to continue."*

*"We believe that communication is vital when considering the long-term. Openness about the ways in which government is thinking about the future will not always be easy. The nature of long-term thinking means that policy has to take account of real uncertainties. Speculative work may carry political risks. Government should be as open*

*as possible about the way in which it considers long-term issues, to build public understanding of possible future scenarios. Change in policy in the light of changing knowledge and circumstances is a sign of strength not weakness; and a public which recognizes that strategies are made in the light of the best evidence available at the time, with all the uncertainty that this implies, may be better able to understand the need for change.” (PASC, 2007, p. 3).*

Also operating in this context was the UK’s *Sustainable Development Commission (SDC)*, provided a decade of experience in developing a futures-oriented independent government body operating as a watchdog. Concluding in 2011, the SDC issued its last report, *Governing for the Future* (SDC, 2011). Commenting on the Commission’s demise, Prakash (2011) wrote:

*“Andrew Lee, head of the SDC, was critical of suggestions from the government that Defra and the EAC will be able to absorb some of the functions of the SDC. ‘Having a body that can challenge and that can raise difficult and uncomfortable issues is important. One of the great advantages of the SDC and other quangos which have been axed is that they were able to do that. Shining the spotlight and opening up difficult issues are two things we did which cannot happen inside a government department – you can’t shine a spotlight on yourself,’ he said.” (Prakash, 2011).*

Similarly, over the early 2000’s a series of government “Foresight” reports were issued. After the release of a City Series in 2016, the *Government Office for Science* under the *Foresight* banner, produced one research and analysis report in 2017 (*Future of skills and lifelong learning*) and one in 2018 (*Foresight Future of the Sea*) (GoFS, 2018). A repository of thirty reports covering a range of topics from health, identity and environmental change from 2003 onward form the *Foresight* projects conducted to “give evidence to policy-makers to help them make policies that are more resilient to the future”.<sup>178</sup> However, there appears to be no further work underway.

Recent developments do include the establishment of an Act and an *Office for Future Generations* in Wales, with the first Commissioner appointed.<sup>179</sup> Meanwhile outside the bureaucracy on other civic fronts, recent climate change civic action is converging on ideas such as a citizen’s assembly and participative measures to introduce change. A UK social movement group calling on the government to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2025, is also seeking the establish a *Citizens Assembly* to lead planning and action to devise an emergency plan with a war-footing status (Taylor and Gayle, 2018). At this stage, these initiatives have contributed to awareness building, dialogue and played an important role in “softening” the context for further development. For example, the Opposition Day Debate on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2019, saw a motion passed recognising the “climate emergency” as the “most important issue of our time”.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Refer: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/foresight-projects>

<sup>179</sup> Source: <http://futuregenerations.wales/>

<sup>180</sup> Refer to: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2019/may/mps-debate-the-environment-and-climate-change/>

Existing activities in the realm of public policy reform may be viewed as going some way to improve future-focussed policy and decision-making. Some academic commentators and proponents depict relatively weak piecemeal proposals and trials (as discussed further in 9.3), such as governmental futures committees (e.g. Caney, 2016; Király et al., 2017). Thompson (2014) argues that Commissions can help deal with fragmentation and what he calls “the problem of many hands” (Thompson, 2014). They can play an important role if their rationale and scope enables better identification of the “individuals who contribute to the failures of government and thereby reduce the chances of future failures” (ibid, p.268). Taking what he terms a “modified individualist approach to the problem of many hands”, Thompson advocates strengthening individual responsibility in government to hold its “officials accountable to democratic citizens” (ibid). This can assist, but collective accountability remains the primary challenge to be addressed for complex, interdependent issues (e.g. messes and systemic messes, rather than problems per se).

In short, *Commissions, Offices and Acts* can all play useful roles as “checks and balances” on short-term power or “presentist” abuses of incumbency. However, my view is that they are likely to be relatively “weak” interventions. This is in part due to the delays and lags involved in additional steps in existing “laggy” processes. Recognising the utility of all of these proposals, my position is that they do not individually, or in combination, offer a strong enough set of conditions and processes to achieve the desired (and necessary) shift. Ultimately a new systemic design has to help shift the wider culture, the politics and the organisational processes in ways that embed a new ethos and practice. Financial tools and procedures are potentially powerful, but not enough in and of themselves. I now assess the most developed approach devised to date in the UK.

### **9.3 Considerations: *Caney’s UK Parliamentary Design Package***

*“The Proposal should not be seen as a panacea that will eliminate harmful short-termism; but, we have reason to think that it would make a positive contribution, and do so in legitimate and feasible ways.” – Simon Caney (2016, p.22).*

Caney has advanced from within the academy the most comprehensive framework to date. Caney (2016) proposed a fivefold package to help “make the future visible and designs the policymaking process in ways that make it hard to ignore the future” where the “separate parts combine in a mutually supporting way” (Caney, 2016, p.21-2). Working with elements of Finnish design and experience, Caney’s proposal invokes a cluster of five elements for various control mechanisms and culture-building exercises. In the round, they are devised to insert the long-run into the domain of decision taking where short-termism can override. I outline the proposal and provide an assessment in Table 9.3.1:

Table 9.3.1: *Caney's Fivefold Package of Reforms and an Assessment*

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Outline:</b>	<b>Position in response:</b> (positive ✓ / negative ⊗)
(i) <i>Manifesto for the Future</i>	- requiring incoming governments to issue a "Manifesto for the Future" that outlines their policies for addressing long-term trends	<p>✓ - a transparent political statement that offers a process to explicitly factor in the future and provision of a statement for analysis and accountability purposes</p> <p>✓ - lodges futures-oriented assessment in the political manifesto-making process, being the pre-election phase where high-level policy settings are pre-determined before government formation</p> <p>⊗ - risk of being a weak compliance exercise that may give rise to consideration of contemporary concerns in a longer timeframe in a pragmatic sense (the capacity to judge validity of promises and actions occurs after-the-fact, thereby offering limited accountabilities)</p> <p>⊗ - uncertain implications in terms of accountability as contingent on voter engagement and party capabilities (a form of "aspirational projectionism")</p> <p>⊗ - produces another high-level strategy document that risks fragmenting party manifestos and places more onus and legitimacy into political pre-election policy detailing where access to quality information may be highly constrained</p>
(ii) <i>Committee for the Future</i>	- creating a "Committee for the Future", whose role is to scrutinize policies for their long-term impacts	<p>✓ - establishes a formal step in the policy and decision making process that provides a legitimated "check and balance" in the machinery of government</p> <p>✓ - helps embed long-term considerations into the policy-making processes of Civil Service entities</p> <p>⊗ - potential as a moderate scrutiny mechanism that is contingent on the voice and power the Committee is given (e.g. the nature of veto power) and the composition of political representation</p> <p>⊗ - high risk as a decision-making bottleneck with a Committee as a centralised point of power, producing operationally viability issues that can drive a superficial checklist compliance treatment of issues</p> <p>⊗ - has failed in other jurisdictions (Israel) and related initiatives (the <i>Sustainable Development Commission</i>) similarly folded in the UK (2011)</p>
(iii) <i>Parliamentary Visions for the Future Day</i>	- building into the parliamentary process a regular "Visions for the Future" day in which the Government's Manifesto for the Future and its record is scrutinized by the Opposition	<p>✓ - structured deliberative public engagement with the manifestos and politics of the day</p> <p>✓ - a theatre of open accountability offering citizen scrutiny and an avenue for debate, if done well making a genuine impact</p> <p>⊗ - potentially weak if commitment and participation is not valued or it is not viewed as central or "mainstream" business</p> <p>⊗ - a "stage managed" event that mirrors the presentist politics of the day as another forum whereby actions have to be justified, making potentially for another antagonistic or defensive event focussed on point-scoring, or an outlet to critique the aspirational as detached from the "actual".</p>

		⊗ - potentially acts to reinforce simplistic centralised accountability of Ministers when more systemic and mature accountabilities are likely to be relevant (e.g. distributed leadership and collaborative responsibilities)
(iv) <i>Council for the Future</i>	- creating an “Independent Council for the Future”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>√ - an independent office (Parliamentary Commissioner model) that has powers to investigate, research and produce advice to Parliament</li> <li>√ - potential for thoughtful and important “checkpoints” producing feedback and assessments with validity in the system can help effect tangible change</li> <li>⊗ - may not get traction or make impact in the politics of the day (assuming it provides advice and recommendations for due consideration)</li> <li>⊗ - potentially externalises knowledge and key resources into a particular entity, rather than distributing them through a wider networked system</li> <li>⊗ - introduces contestation about representativeness for “independence”, with energy and resources into creating another entity rather than improving performance within existing organisations</li> </ul>
(v) <i>Long-term performance indicators</i>	- employing long-term performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>√ - facilitates measurement and analysis that embed long-run accountability metrics into the system</li> <li>√ - facilitates reconceptualising long-run objectives and pathways to achieve change</li> <li>⊗ - introduces analysis framing challenges that are underpinned by value judgements that may require change for meaningful long-run targets</li> <li>⊗ - requires more than a compliance response with a simplistic projectionist “extension-mania”.</li> <li>⊗ - in and of itself, fails to provide any decision making architectural changes and account for the need for rapid short-term action on long-run issues</li> </ul>

Caney sees this package as working in concert “to nudge politicians to consider the long term” (2016, p.22). In particular, the first three elements facilitate “priming”, as per nudge psychology and behavioural economics (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008). Caney recognises the need for a multi-point system intervention to effect change, noting:

*“...without the independent Council for the Future and its reports it is hard to assess the plausibility or otherwise of the Government’s plans and the extent to which government policies do adequately reflect long-term interests. At the same time, these reports would not perform the valuable role that they are designed to do if they did not use performance indicators that accurately reflected people’s long-term interests. Furthermore, the good work done by these initiatives would be undone if government departments had to work to short audit time frames.”* (Caney, 2016, p.22).

Noting others have followed similar lines of thought and my previous comments about their limitations (refer back to 9.2), accounting for the assessment summarised above, my principal out-takes are:



- additional entities responsible for broader temporal horizons (e.g. the unspecified “future”) can have the unintended consequence of “decentering” accountability for the long-run from the nodes of control current responsible for the integrated treatment of issues
- a “checks and balances” approach with audit-like accountabilities can slow decision processes when what is required might be more rapid and agile responses to deal with long-run messes
- additive cultural building initiatives can marginalize long-run issues from mainstream ownership, responsibility and accountability, and have adversarial outcomes in terms of the policy and political dynamic
- additional accountability functions that deductively seek to “sheet home” individual responsibility in complex systems can become antagonistic to systemic reform, collective accountability and collaborative initiatives
- solutions based on the establishment of new entities in the government system take time to resource, establish, become effective and are vulnerable to resource cuts if they are perceived to – or actually do – hamper progress in terms of both decision timing and consequent rates of change on key issues.

I now conduct a brief discussion of other initiatives, discuss mitigations and summarise my position with reference to the other positions advanced.

#### **9.4 Improvements: *Initiatives, Mitigations and Synopsis***

*“If you want people to think longer-term you have to make them comfortable and give them the support to do that...” – Brian Eno of *The Long Now* (Eno, 2018).*

Accepting that to make people “comfortable” requires a level of information, assessment and analysis with an appreciation of individual risk, what citizens do at the ballot box is currently rarely informed by comprehensive work that gives an appreciation of the range of likely long-run outcomes. Combined with the reality that voter “decision making” is not based on purely rational considerations, the Civil Service architecture to help provide more information is a critical leverage point to move away from the growingly self-injurious “presentist bias”.<sup>181</sup> At a Civil Service delivery level, building greater “comfort” in thinking “long” requires an environment where that is politically possible. A transparent and level playing field between parties can greatly assist the reduction of short-run electoral point-scoring to maintain or gain power. Looking beyond the UK, I consider if there are any other better schemes or concepts on the horizon. In principle, wider-scale national, regional and international arrangements can provide connectivity for inter-jurisdictional fairness with consistent treatment of the long-run. I now comment on the potential of international initiatives, assessing harmful “lock-ins” and wrap with a synopsis.

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<sup>181</sup> Refer to definition and discussion of the *presentist bias* in 5.3 and Appendix 1.

#### **9.4.1. Initiatives: Nation-States and International Conventions**

A notable recent national development emerged from Finland. The Finnish government published an *Opportunities for Finland* report to “enable a broad understanding of complex and interlinked issues” (Marrs, 2019). It included 12 themes the permanent secretaries hope will provide a basis for election discussions. The report stated: “The next government of Finland must be provided with good conditions for making difficult decisions, and we must have uniform, forward-looking ministries to implement these”, and; “This document helps to grasp the large-scale development trends and build decision-making with a long-term perspective” (ibid). Again, this falls short of the proposition advanced.

It is not entirely implausible that a top-down development strategy may have a chance of being established given the growing nature of transnational collective action problems. However, they will need to be developed and supported from a national level and promoted in the international sphere. Currently there have been symbolic developments at the United Nations (UN) for example, with the *UN Climate Change “People’s Chair”* launched by Sir David Attenborough in November 2018.<sup>182</sup> The current landscape is such that initiatives require nation-state initiation and promotion through international networks. As Gardiner (2014) recognises, the reality of this “states-first” approach (rather than relying on individual or global level action) is a “promising strategy”, but does have shortcomings. With respect to creating Commissions and other entities, he comments:

*“the simultaneous creation of distinct institutions within each nation-state, with appropriate powers with respect to existing institutions, may pose a much larger challenge than even the more direct approach of beginning at the global level. For another, plausibly, even when the national task is complete some kind of integration at the global level would still be needed to deal with problems like climate change.*

*On the other hand, it is not clear that national representation for future generations is even appropriate. First, in considering serious climate effects that play out over many centuries and millennia, the importance of current national arrangements and their geographical boundaries is likely to fade dramatically given global development, migration, and other factors. Second, it is far from clear that reform designed to fill the institutional gap should replicate the basic structural features of current institutions. In particular, even if existing nation-states were likely to persist over the relevant time periods, there would be a strong case for designing intergenerational institutions differently, so as not to reproduce obstacles to intergenerational concern.”* (Gardiner, 2014, p. 309).

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<sup>182</sup> Refer UN launch online video. Source:

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2018/11/the-peoples-seat-speak-up-on-climate-change/>

Gardiner (2014) proceeded to advocate for a global “Constitutional Convention”, “whose role is to pave the way for an overall constitutional system that appropriately embodies intergenerational concern” (ibid, p. 305-6). With an instigating role to call our attention to “the heart of the problem”, the process would be devised to “discuss, develop, make recommendations toward, and set in motion a process for the establishment of a constitution” (Gardiner, 2014, p. 306). At this stage, international efforts have largely been either at the level of (a) goal setting with the SDGs, (b) issue specific initiatives as with climate agreements, or (c) generally embedded in the multiple concerns raised, debated and considered in international institutional forums. The outlook could not be presently described in optimistic terms.

#### ***9.4.2. Mitigating Lock-ins: Criteria and Drivers of “Harmful Short-termism”***

While action in the present and decisiveness in the short-run can be necessary or desirable, depending on the issues to hand, concerns about the efficiency or effectiveness of resource utilisation over time underpins problems of short-termism. Caney (2016) posits that short-termism that is harmful when there is a failure to safeguard long-term interests when either:

- (i) Pursuits have a cost where the result is “less good outcomes than are available” (2016, p.5), making the options taken “inefficient” or a poor choice given the likely results down the track. In other words, from relatively immediate through to longer-run consequences where the duty of care that would normally be anticipated as appropriate for people’s longer-run interests is absent or fails to be activated; and
- (ii) Pursuits by one generation that violate their obligations to future generations, rendering their actions as ethical questionable with regard to a reasonable duty of care to future people (ibid).

This brings into play intergenerational ethical considerations across a full array of issues. While many society-wide settings, such as climate mitigation and healthcare investment may be evident areas of concern, there is a dimensionality of all issues that relates to the temporal bearing of costs and benefits from current or future use. Situations where activities in immediate or near-term timeframes bear a present cost, consequently reduced provision of service or availability of resources in the present (e.g. taking on the costs of long-term mitigation by investing in coastal protection and resilience measures to reduce seawater incursion and erosion at the expense of other infrastructure or service provision that has value in the shorter-term). Caney notes that “harmful short-termism” is a “widespread and practical problem” (ibid, p. 7). In the context of path-dependencies and lock-ins where changing the direction of travel is systemically difficult, Caney goes on to unpack the drivers of harmful short-termism:

Table 9.4.2: *Caney's Fivefold Package of Reforms and an Assessment*

<b><i>Institutional drivers:</i></b>	<b><i>Aspects of human psychology:</i></b>
<i>Ignorance of the future</i> – not being aware of long-term trends and consequences	<i>Creeping problems</i> – gradual and slow building phenomena
<i>Electoral dependence</i> – cyclic pressure to optimise in the short-run to maintain power	<i>"Identifiable victim" syndrome</i> – the psychological tendency to protect less those who you do not directly identify with (e.g. the interests of people in the future)
<i>Economic dependence</i> – reliance on sponsors exercising short-run interests	<i>Vividness, hot and cold processing systems</i> – responding well to "vivid" risks ("hot" mechanisms from personal experience), but not well to information acquired not from personal experience ("cold" mechanisms from abstract, general social scientific trends)
<i>Media coverage</i> – new cycles generating a focus on immediacies	<i>Invisibility</i> – "out of sight/out of mind" effect of the human tendency to ignore what is not in front of us.
<i>Auditing duration</i> – if the period of assessment is near-term only	<i>Positive illusions</i> – being prone to "over-estimation of capabilities", 'illusion of control over events', and "perceived invulnerability to risk"
<i>Types of performance indicators</i> – if they focus on measuring the short-run	<i>Self-interest</i> – where current generations may prefer to promote their own self-interest over and above that of others.
	<i>Temptation and weakness of the will</i> – being aware of a long-term issue (threat or opportunity) decide to avert the action (to reduce the threat or exploit the opportunity)
	<i>Procrastination</i> – reluctance to take action as in the tendency to postpone or delay decisions that require confronting difficult choices.

Source: Summarised and developed from Caney (2016, pp. 10-13).

This summary table of Caney's contribution to thought on drivers and the psychological dimensions of short-termism provides a useful assessment tool to review issues.

### **9.4.3. Synopsis: Weak Moderation Mechanisms**

*"Whatever else the Cabinet members [Ministers and Prime Minister] do or do not do, they determine the priorities. They determine the order in which issues will be addressed and the resources that will be devoted to the issue... The very structure of the decision-making system is geared to meet the needs of the present and its problems, not deal with the future and its problems. ... Analytic advice bought before ministers will not easily prevail should it be thought that taking action upon it will imperil the government's chances at the next general election. The policy conclusion to be drawn is that the biggest enemy of the future is the present."* – Sir Geoffrey Palmer QC, Former Prime Minister of NZ (2017, p. 68-9).

By way of synopsis of the proposition compared to an assessment of other proposals or prior initiatives surveyed in this chapter, I consider the “attainable schema” advanced as a stronger contender to enact genuine change in public governance. That is not to say the types of initiatives outlined may have utility and play potentially useful roles if they internalise the *Attainable Governance Framework* into their modus operandi. Acknowledging the overwhelming primacy of the short-run interest does not happen on every occasion and with every issue, Palmer (2017) plainly states the problem common in democratic governments that is supported by analysis (e.g. Goetz, 2014; Thompson, 2005). Going on along Caney’s lines to propose a *Commission for the Future* in New Zealand, Palmer recognises the limitations that have played-out with independent Commissions and the difficulty with enforcing executive powers so watchdog voices are heard and heeded (Palmer, 2017, p. 72).<sup>183</sup> I contend the design of Commissions are not strong enough for the tasks at hand today. It is not simply about better accounting on select issues for the long-term and reporting to the legislature, in isolation of other critical challenges in a contemporary predicament. Commissions with weak powers can produce quality advice that is duly ignored if the political tide is running against them. Similarly, fiscal mechanisms as proposed by Johnson (2019) can be overridden and assessments discounted if a compliance culture pervades government practice and political leadership is unfavourably disposed towards deferring to longer-run accountability.

Weight on a single small entity, such as a Commission, in a complex system where decision-making pressures suffer from already being overly concentrated in the centre, is not a viable solution. This was evidenced by the short-lived experiment of the Israeli *Commission for the Future* explained by Shoham (2010) as not being able to perform intergenerational “moderation” before its demise. Similarly, like Caney (2016) and emulated by the British *FDSD*<sup>184</sup> perspective, there is not a “fuller” set of “checks and balances” mechanism that extends a Commission’s likelihood of success through ensuring other key points of intervention in the system. Despite being a multi-dimensional series of initiatives in the decision-making sphere, the Caney proposal is caught in the same sub-optimal operational predicament that was the Shoham model’s downfall. While each of these proposals and approaches offers insights into detailed aspects of the overall problem and the shape of specific solutions, I content they are in their own ways partial responses too easily overwhelmed or diluted by the endless primacy of the nature of the “politics of the day” that can “blow aside” technical and advisory impediments to assuage the vested interests leveraging power in the present. They are relatively weak with constrained powers, piecemeal and not

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<sup>183</sup>For example, the *Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment* in New Zealand.

<sup>184</sup>The *Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development* (FDSD) proposed the creation of a *House of Lords Committee for Future Generations* in March 2018.

fundamentally embedded to pivot arrangements and practice. Specifically, they fall short as outlined in the “principal out-takes” provided (refer 9.3). A deeper systemic intervention and culture change is required, grounded in integrative policy practice (integrated adaptivity), improved temporal treatment of issues (for short and long-run steerage) and a more integral philosophy to work of progressing rigid silo-based thought and practice with ingresses to improve connectivity and joined-up solution and resolution formulation.

## 9.5 Reconstituting: *Ensemble Schema for the Attainable*

*“[Can]... the pathologies of social acceleration be overcome without attacking its central driving forces[?]...Does it “merely” take a series of institutional reforms oriented towards gaining sufficient control over high-speed society, or, alternatively, is the only answer to the problem of speed a revolutionary pull at the emergency brake as an escape from the course of history altogether...?” – Hartmut Rosa (2005, p. 459).*

There is not an emergency brake in national and international governance systems. Notwithstanding, efforts to construct, garner buy-in and operationalise brakes if they were viewed as necessary, are bound to be contested, fraught and delayed. Rather than seeking a strategy or singular device to “slow the system” (in its widest sense, a market-based Nation-State network managing international issues with associated agencies), it is more than ever a case of improved performance for braking, acceleration and cornering in a decentralised international system. With a diversity of cultures, ideals and practices travelling with differing foci and rates of change, we have little choice. De-acceleration in and of itself is not the solution to finding greater justice in an organisationally multi-polar, culturally pluralistic world featuring a mix of multi-speeded issues. There are de-accelerative shifts in some arenas on the horizon, with for example population ageing in Western countries (Dorling, 2019). However, in a global sense, growth pressures remain constant, with inequalities accentuating further. Rather, I have proposed handling the integration of complexity with greater temporal sensibility and a more deeply ingrained practice in policy-making and politics, than can be gained without a wide-reaching moratorium on development or growth. In effect, my case is that we are pragmatically left with options within the spectrum of institutional reforms that Rosa alludes to above – but we need to think beyond piecemeal checks and balances to a more fundamental schema and instigation of cultural practice – as represented in the *Attainable Governance Framework*.

Within academic literature and practitioner commentary, strong moderation mechanisms and better decision architecture are repeatedly identified as necessary. The mechanistic and compositional dimensions for orchestrating better decision-making proposed, are a way to overcome sub-optimal governance performance and systemic stasis. To overcome distractions, divisions and discord in the UK’s public policy and politics, the case to usher in a new way of “playing, listening and responding” to conditions has been developed. Like any proposition,

recognising the complex and interconnected nature of predicaments and the need to resolve the plurality of non-asymmetric human responses, a conceptual framework or a cultural realignment are not “silver bullets” fixing all ills. I do however make the case for the functioning of bureaucracy as integral to navigation, bringing into frame the role and power relations with the politics of the day. Ultimately if the “machinery of government” is to play an integrative role, it has to overcome being seen and experienced as the “enemy” from both the civic realm and the commercial realm. To have legitimacy and act as the consummate broker to perform work from institutional engineering and cultural persuasion, the range of fixes, deals, policies and actions required for short, medium and long-run progress are multi-dimensional and varied. Throughout, the demand is unwaveringly an acute sense of timing. Synchronistic and synthesizing “integrality” necessitate a new sensibility. They require the support of a new decision architecture if progress is to be made.

Rather than trying to solve problems and make change happen by imposing specific solutions, enabling self-organisation and empowerment at the best level of resolution is a common position taken in leadership, management and public policy literatures (e.g. OCED, 1996). To lead effectively in the *systemic mess* as such, it stands to reason that the “leadership gaze” needs to focus on creating the conditions that can produce change. This simply allows for change to become self sustaining. To get to such a state from the present state, requires a variety of changes. The conditions to do this are both happening to us and being created by us. The challenge then becomes how to channel, at the right scale and the right time, the shift in processes so as to attain better “system control” (governance) alignment with the nature of our shared purposes.

Attaining a global “course correction” is highly challenging, within the multi-polar and pluri-lateral reality of power and influence today. Transformations can be distracted by populist-oriented immediacies and nostalgia fuelled resistance to change, systemic and enduring divisions, and general discord about the state of democracy. Rather than looking for systemic and structure problems, it is easier to blame the past or present leadership and/or the system in general and non-specified terms for the predicament. Politicians tread between the risk of polarisation with populist-stoked and individualised negative personifications of political “governorship” activities, on the one hand, and intellectually-abstracted and clinically depersonalised “expert advisory” activities on the other. Criticism often takes on an acute personalised angle, or an abstract and generalised form of “shrugged-off” responsibilities. In this regard, what it takes to effect change in systems-based arrangements and cultures is focussed on in Part 3.

## Summary of Part 2: *Imagining the Attainable*

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*"The human abilities to draw conclusions from the past while letting go of past patterns (if necessary) and to look beyond the constraints of the present are key to the possibility of fashioning a desirable personal, societal and global future. Embedding this way of thinking in the daily life of the public and policymakers, and then strengthening the practical ability to use this intelligence, are critical elements in the creating of a desirable future for the world" – S. Shoham (2010, p.35).*

*"To meet the challenges of the 21st century, we need thinking that is holistic, multi-layered, multi-generational, anticipatory, and tolerant of ambiguity. ...A psychological and cultural mind-shift is needed, but this will not occur until we make some substantial changes to the structure of our government. Until we change how we govern ourselves to become more participatory and more anticipatory, we are looking at a future of repeating the same mistakes at grander scales, with less of a reservoir of resources for recovery." – J. Dunagan, *Institute for the Future* (2012, p. 843).*

### **2:i) Synthesis**

If Shoham's (2010) and Dunagan's (2012) views have merit, the governance challenge requires "letting go" past patterns and intentionally forming arrangements to embed an anticipatory mindset into day-to-day operations. I have formed a robust schema to inlay a different style of intervention. The proposition is a re-orientation of institutional structure and a re-orientation of practice, not reliant on wholesale government re-organisation, constitutional change or international reforms. It can remain agnostic on spatial devolution issues, working with both centralised and decentralised arrangements. Woven into the *predicament's* grounding and the *proposition's* logical proposal building, is a theoretical strand of development that works to identify and synthesize relevant literatures. So far the knitting together of: *complexity theorising* in Part 1, of which (a) the *systemic mess* is a condition, (b) *integrative design* is a focus, with (c) *temporality theorising*, of which *timespace* is conceived of as the core conceptual devise given the socially constructed and contextually contingent "nature of time"; highlights theorising that can underpin time-sensitive governance in complex systems.

To assist both imagining and "sense-making" about the future in an evidence supported way, the significant role of the "anticipatory" or the *next*, provides the capacity to "pivot" between the *actual* and the *anticipated* to find the *attainable*. Methodologically, this drives the disciplined rendering of micro-tasks for issue specific analysis, the generalised intellectual adventure as the meta-task, ultimately interacting with the meso-tasks to help formulate new macro-theory propositions. I contend all levels of knowledge development are required, offering concepts and language to support new policy and decision discourses. Facing the fundamental issue of resolving the *systemic mess* adequately today given our predicament, I have made the case for what can be conceived of as a "systemic bridge" between *what has been*, *what is*, and *what can be*. In closing



down the discord between between aspirations and agency, or finding functional alignments between form and context, I have sought to open-up the way forward with an agenda that encompasses the necessary twinning of structural intentionality (guided by decision architecture) and cultural transformation (the techniques of governance and decision-making). This means bringing forward what we know about the nature of government, organisations, markets and human behavior, so in an informed fashion, we can “let go” what we must, invent what we need, and work out what contradictions to actively resolve. Equally this also allows us to work out what to ignore, “park”, or leave aside for another day.

### ***2:ii) Imagining the Attainable***

Imagination and innovation, as discussed in 6.3, will be vital. Modern democratic practice needs a restorative boost to regain legitimacy and trust. Creativity is necessary. My proposal is that a new systemic design and culture must be at the heart of realistic and authentic governmental adaptation. We must exhibit the courage to build a bridge forward towards the mirage of the future – fully accepting the premise that the other “bank” (metaphorical side of the river) is unknowable. Rather, it is enough to quest for better terrain that has mutual benefits yet to be revealed and realised. In this quest, our ability to let go “what now is” for “what can be” at the *nexus*, becomes paramount to ensure progress is not thwarted. We cannot let our potential be muted by an unambitious present, shadowed by an overly domineering and scarred past. Rather, the systemic goal for public governance is to seek the continuous and automatic consideration of a “deeper present”, where the past and future are connected to the understanding of the present. To underscore: because of the centrality and magnitude of the discord that now resonates in democracies – and reverberates across all hierarchical systems of organisation – the embedded and sometimes stagnating nature of the multitude of issues in play, necessitates change that is both institutional (i.e. mechanistic and structural re-design) and cultural (i.e. ideologies and normalized operating heuristics).

### ***2:iii) Challenges given the Proposition***

A key issue becomes the “change context” so that transformation is orderly and effective at a scale of significance, rather than reactive and piecemeal so that the ability to make a genuine impact dissipates or is undercut by old paradigm practices. At stake is affecting change before the destruction of institutional capacity is so high in systems that the ability to do transitioning effectively is severely constrained that it is unable to succeed, further undermining governability. Incumbent power-brokers who either ideologically do not believe in the value proposition of government, or are motivated to constrain it for the maintenance of personally favourable conditions, erode the “capacity to get things done”. Therefore, what it takes to effect change is the focus of Part 3.

The case to be made supports the idea that transformative progress is contingent on having a shared set of ethics (*axioms* and *principles*) to lead to increasing functionality in the political sphere. Rules-based systems, be they local or global planning and regulatory regimes, inevitably will lag behind cultural change. Yet without systems design and education “out front”, it is hard for culture change to be done and for a recursive process of experimental change to unfold. Finding ways of effectively dealing with the tension between “*what leads and what follows?*” is central to the development of *procedures*. I seek to establish a “procedural ensemble” for supporting the mechanistic architecture with cultural “operating software”, I have argued mechanisms e.g. structures) in and of themselves are not enough for transformation to be successful. How we think about the future and what we can learn from attempts to introduce anticipated futures, informs the operating culture and atmosphere of democracy. It provides an exploration of procedures as active, aligned and “orchestrate-able” practices for applied governance. In theoretical terms, it brings into play the strategic framing of public administration and management activity. It also opens the consideration of what ethics and ethos could anchor the AGF in for political “neutrality” in the Civil Service to serve the greater good.

# PART 3: PROCEDURES

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## Outline of Part 3: *Procedures*

### 10. Application: *Process, Practice and Praxis*

- 10.1 Outline
- 10.2 Process: *Nexus Governance Cycle*
- 10.3 Practice: *Optics, Connectivity and Cycles*
- 10.4 Praxis: *Analysis, Systems and Tactics*
- 10.5 Application: *Practicalities, Heuristics and Pluralities*

### 11. Activation: *Adjustment, Axioms and Arête*

- 11.1 Outline
- 11.2 Adjustment: *Progressing beyond Outcomes*
- 11.3 Axioms: *Flexibility, Freedom and Fortitude*
- 11.4 Arête: *Power, Pivoting and Potential*
- 11.5 Activation: *Integrative Anticipation*

### Summary of Part 3: *Orchestrating the Preferable*

## Outline of Part 3: *Procedures*

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*"Implementing effective foresight... demands that two considerations be taken into account. The first centers on the issue of content, or how to generate insights, and the second focuses on actionability, or how to implement these insights."* – S. Shoham (2010, p.71).

*"Democratic, participatory, anticipatory governance structures must be built holographically, that is, they must be present within from the highest levels of constituted structures of government, down to the fabric of everyday life decisions."* – J. Dunagan (2012, p. 843).

- The actionability of the everyday determines success. To address the challenges as summarised by Shoham (2010) and Dunagan (2012), attending to the centrality that a "mind-shift" is required for advancement, I develop what are categorised as the *procedural*<sup>185</sup> dimensions of governance. I work within the bounds of "technique"<sup>186</sup> denoted as a defined and skillful way of carrying out a task, or the act of doing a "procedure".
- Bringing the policy framing and decision architecture (*Attainable Governance Framework*) as proposed in Part 2 "to life", brings the focus onto ways to refresh practice and lead producing a conducive operational "atmosphere". It is necessary that concepts and their implicit values are carried in "good faith" into an array of procedures, from legislative processes to regulatory design and judicial interpretations, if change is to be achieved.
- Part 3 compactly outlines the attributes to offer the potential of better policy decisions and more broadly, public governance practice that is cognisant of future needs. I initiate an exploration of procedures as active, aligned and "orchestratable" movement for applied governance. Bringing into play the strategic framing of public administration and management activity, I introduce the notion of "purposeful modularity" as a strategic orientation to deal with complex decisions and workflows.
- Sketching out the contours of a new "praxis" to bring into being the propositional strategy, the "application" and "activation" chapters set-out the ingredients of culture-building. Bearing in mind the popular management claim that "culture eats strategy for breakfast",<sup>187</sup> the implementation of frameworks and "doing of ideas" is always suspended in a contextual setting that provide openings, ambivalence, alongside a mix of passive and active resistance.

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<sup>185</sup> By *procedural* I simply mean a "relating to the usual or official way in which something is done".

Source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/procedural>

<sup>186</sup> The adopted definition of *technique* follows Jacques Ellul in *The Technological Society* (Ellul, 1964).

<sup>187</sup> Attributable to management academic Peter Drucker, Cave (2017) discusses the origin and meaning the phrase that is popularized in both private and public sector management. Kaul (2019) also provides a discussion on the evolution of the phrase, underscoring the need for strategy and cultural alignment.

- I consider the contemporary operating environment and the practicalities of implementation, noting that it may require a crises-induced temporary “pause” in political conflict to produce the conditions for a “pact” to be facilitated between the politics of the day (i.e. the governors in power and “governors-in-waiting”) and the Civil Service (Whitehall senior leadership) to introduce a transition or “pivot” in strategic policy-making practice.

The task is to:

<b>TASK: <i>Produce the core methods for new democratic practices with processes and principles to enhance applied policy and decision making.</i></b>		
<b>PART</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>GOAL</b>
<b>Part 3: <i>Procedures</i></b> As the principles and processes to activate the proposal	<i>Objective: (Part 3)</i> Outlining the culture or system attributes to offer the potential of better policy and decision performance	<i>Design: Core Strategies</i> An applied agenda of practice content and heuristics to establish the operationalization of Part 2

## 10. Application: *Process, Practice and Praxis*

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### 10.1 Outline

*“There is a third general, nonmaterial element of human life which, along with space and time, has been profoundly modified by technique: motion. Here, too, we observe the same process. Motion is the spontaneous expression of life, its visible form. Everything alive chooses of itself its attitudes, orientations, gestures, and rhythms. There is, perhaps, nothing more personal to a living being—as far as the observer is concerned—than its movements.”* – Jaques Ellul (1964, p. 330).

This chapter extends into applying the *Attainable Governance Framework* (AGF) in a preliminary way. It is in Ellul’s (1964) terms, the detailing of the “motion” or actions of “the way things are done”. With a focus on the key dimensions doing practice, I explore and conceptualise some of the operational “how to” of *Attainable Governance* in light of the framework’s parameters developed. In this respect the focus is on the process-related scope of activity and its operative cycle (what I call the *Nexus Governance Cycle*), along with the practice details to conduct the cycle and the change-related issues involved in AGF practice.

The rationale for going to this level of resolution – at least in an introductory fashion – can be summarised as being in part based on learning from practice experience, appreciating the need for procedural clarity and guidance when working in governance support roles. How a theoretical framework is assimilated into government constitutional structures and operational bureaucratic settings, goes a long way to achieve or dissipate the potential systemic impact in practice. To provide an operational précis of an applied change programme requires drilling into the tangible considerations bound-up in bureaucratic processes and operational implications in the Civil Service. By identifying and working with core cycle of advice formulation and decision making, practice steps are unpacked to look at the normative patterns necessary for bending towards the attainable schema. Applied practice to operationalise the framework is aided by procedures and a shared language to communicate it with. In this regard, I produce (10.2) and then go on to detail (10.3) the *Nexus Governance Cycle*. This is tailed by a discussion of change and its challenges, with a set of “praxis” concepts to assist interpreting and leading transformation (10.4) followed by a synthesis of observations about designing for change and implementation practicalities (10.5).

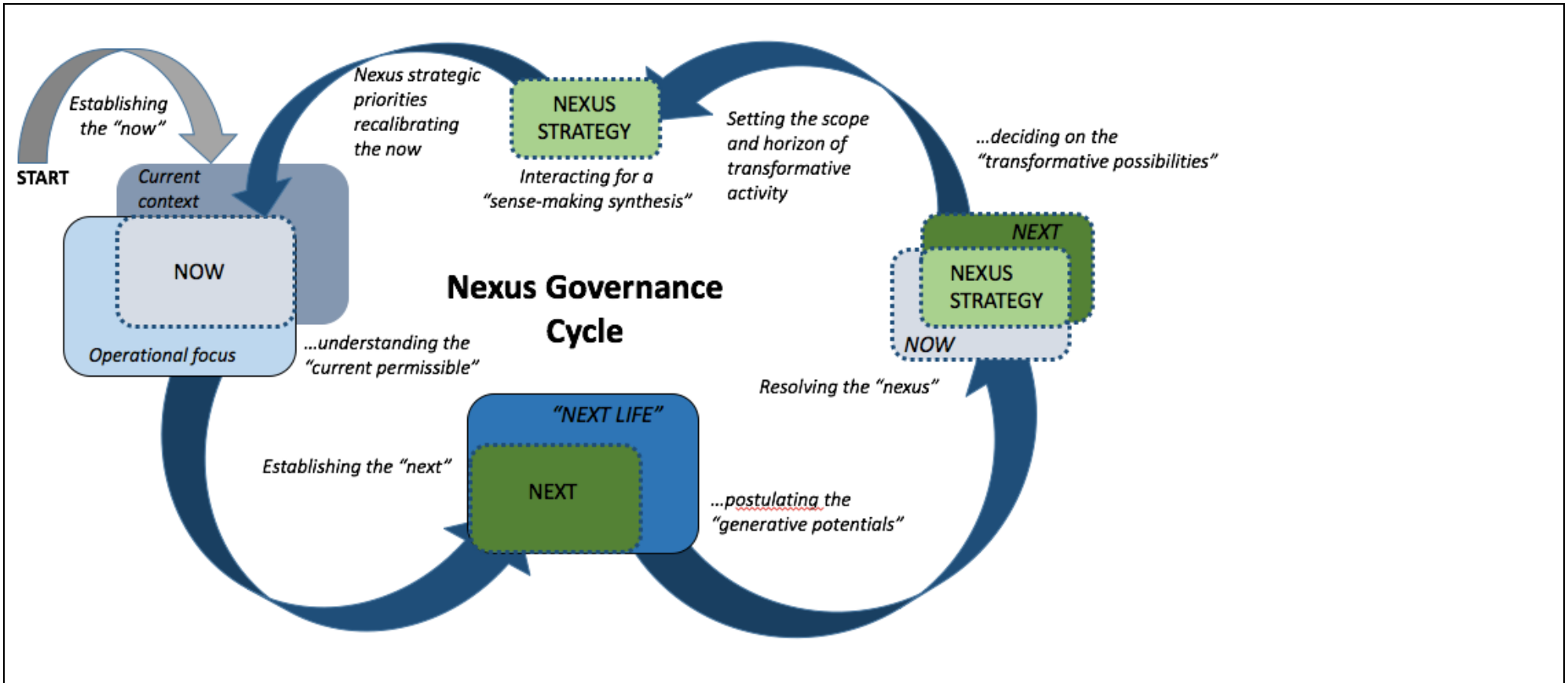
### 10.2 Process: *Nexus Governance Cycle*

In this section I outline the central process for applied *Attainable Governance* practice. Organising concepts, connections and patterns that support applied practice of the framework are developed further in 10.3. To resolve issues at the *nexus* requires a shared way of seeing change and talking about process. It also requires an agreed standardized procedure. As is normal practice, the

starting point is to conceptualise the overall policy and decision process cycle. While there are a number of cycles commonly used in policy-making (e.g. Bridgman and Davis, 2000), there is less common decision architecture. Practice tends to be coded into the arrangements of specific entities (e.g. departments) or into Parliamentary procedural rules. The intention of this operative cycle is to shift both policy processes and decision processes accordingly.

The *Nexus Governance Cycle* places an emphasis on understanding the cyclic and adaptive nature of development. It highlights that the work and ensuing results at the *nexus* becomes an input into the ensuing cycle of analysis, development and decision making. Nexus strategy priorities influence the “now” in turn, feedback back into the next cycle of analysis or decision making, and so on. This *Nexus Governance Cycle* is represented in table 10.2.1, followed by a more detailed breakdown of each step.

Table 10.2.1: Nexus Governance Cycle – Application of Attainable Governance Framework (AGF)





## 10.3 Practice: *Optics, Connectivity and Cycles*

I now unpack the key stages in the cycle. I have arranged the practices to “see and do” AGF operational application into three dimensions, namely: (1) *optics* referring to the procedure to establish the scope of activity, (2) *connectivity* to detail the levels of linkage of strategic coherence, and (3) *cycles* to help bring these understanding together and calibrate the rate of change that is desirable and attainable. In summary:

Table 10.3.0: *Three Practice Dimensions – Application for Attainable Governance*

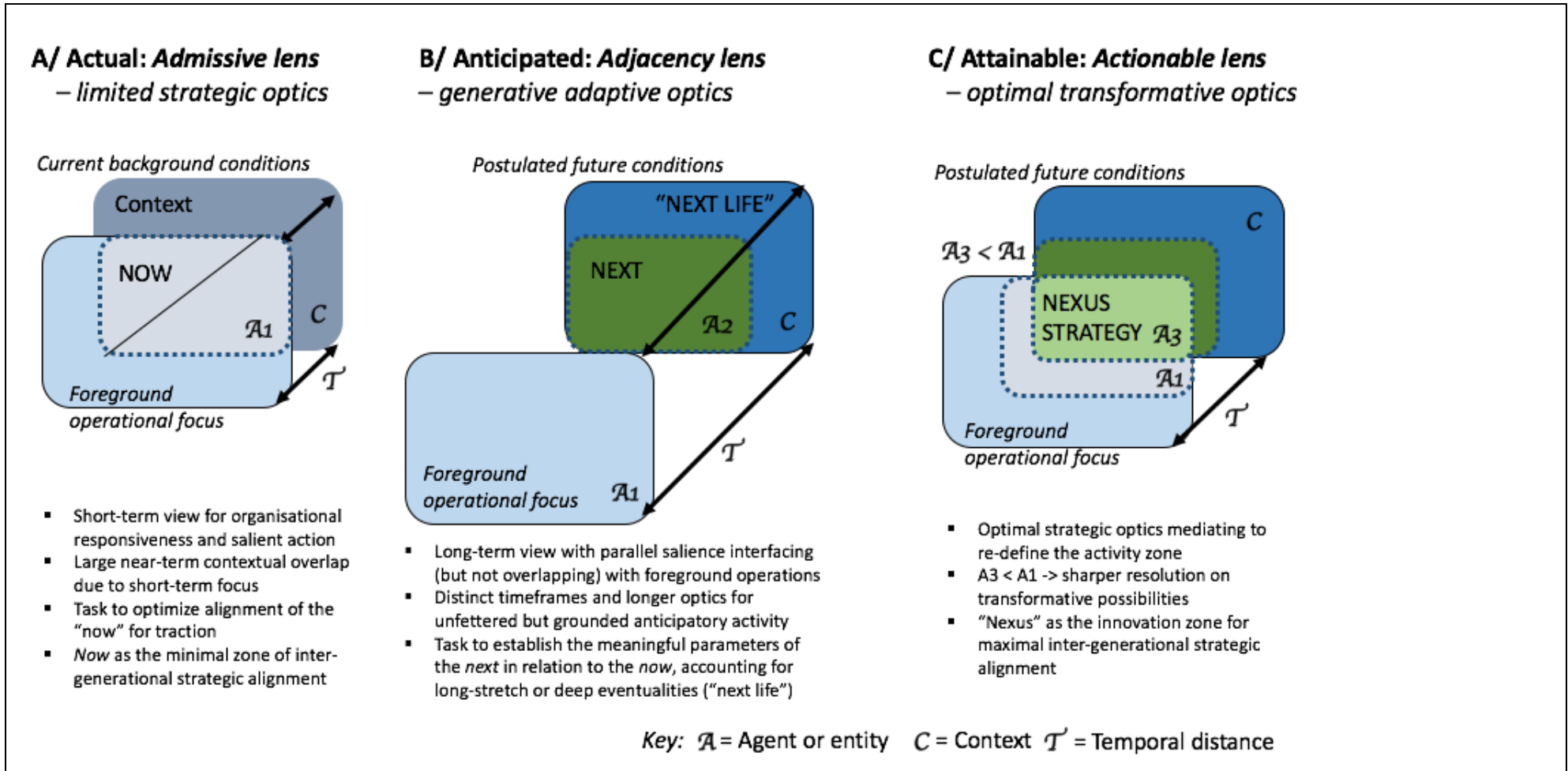
<b><i>Dimension Practice</i></b>	<b><i>Dimension Purpose</i></b>	<b><i>Dimension Précis</i></b>
<b>Scope of activity</b>	<b><i>Optics</i></b> determining the field of vision and focus	<i>“Seeing change” as a process</i> of building optimal transformation optics and testing the scope and scale of activity
<b>Degrees of linkage</b>	<b><i>Connectivity</i></b> determining the degrees of network linkage	<i>“Getting resolution” on linkages</i> as formulating governance connections and test the degrees of strategic connectivity
<b>Rate of change</b>	<b><i>Cycles</i></b> determining the scope and rate of change	<i>“Iterating strategies”</i> as understanding systems to determine the best approach to issue scope and rate of change handling methods

### 10.3.1. *Optics: Seeing Change*

The initial phase of analysis places primacy on understanding what are the existing constrained strategic options available given a particular situation in the present, followed by generative postulation of what may be possible. In light of these two positions, the work at the nexus becomes the search for the optimal pathway of transformation. “Seeing change” as a process of building optimal transformation optics and testing the scope and scale of activity, drives a view of the scope of activity to be considered for change.

Determining the field of vision and focus for what is short-term and “now” – what I call an *admissive lens* – versus what is “next” or an *adjacency lens*, sets up the process of bringing the two views together at the *nexus*. I call this attainable resolution space the *actionable lens*, reflecting that arriving at “nexus strategy” involves the process of identifying and defining the common ground within the overlap of the now and the next. This is represented in table 10.3.1:

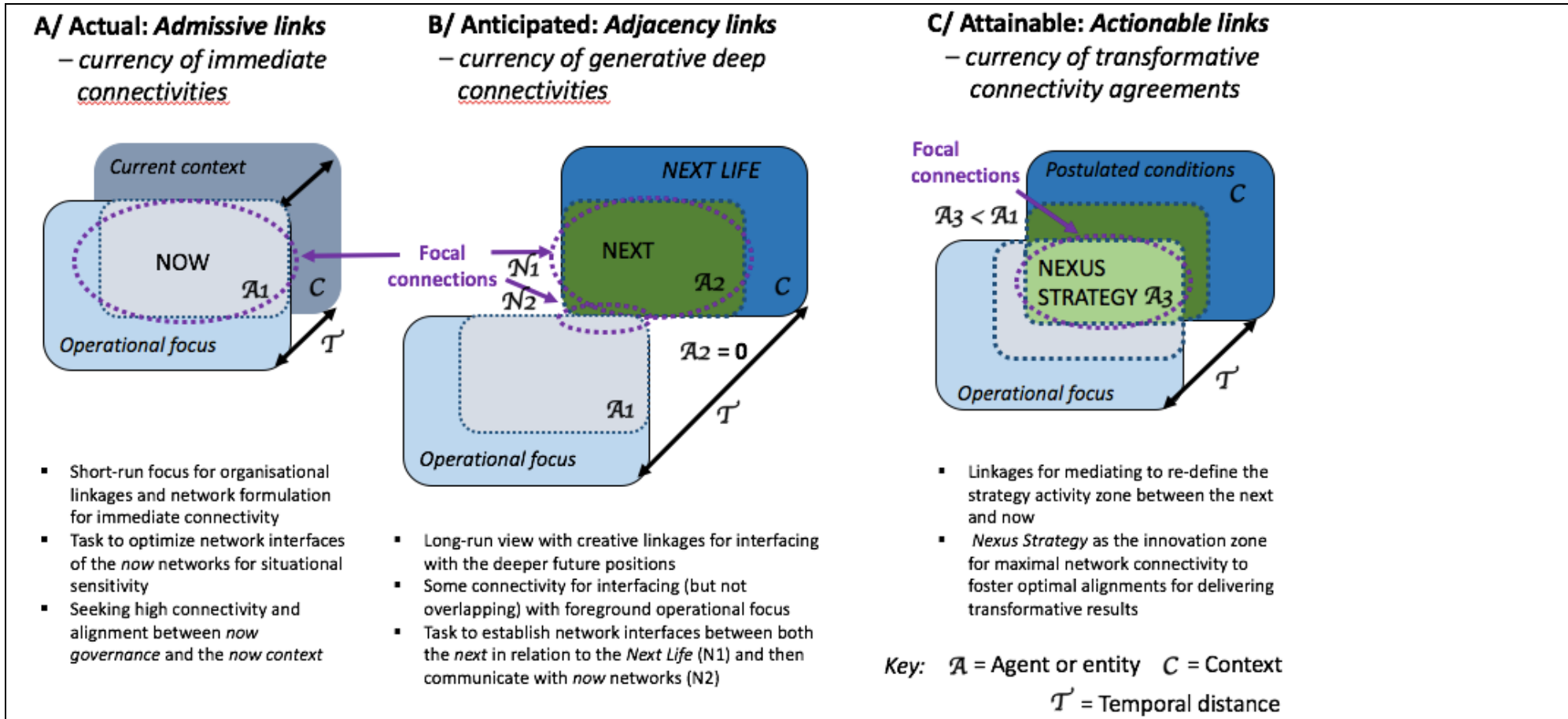
Table 10.3.1: Optics for Change – Application of the Attainable Governance Framework (AGF)



### **10.3.2. Connectivity: Getting Resolution**

Building on the base cycle and optical procedure outlined, the second phase of analysis places an emphasis on understanding the existing strategic “links” versus the potential currency of deeper links playing for example, forward in time. In light of these two assessment of key connections, the work at the *nexus* becomes the quest for the optimal agreements attainable in a given situation to aid and abet transformation. “*Getting resolution*” on linkages as a process of formulating governance connections, then testing the degrees of strategic connectivity possible, is the work of the *connectivity* phase of analysis. Determining the focus for what is short-term and “now” – what I call an *admissive links* – versus what is “next” or the *adjacency links*, sets up the process of bringing the two views together at the *nexus*. I call this attainable resolution space *actionable links*, reflecting that arriving at “nexus strategy” involves the process of identifying and defining the common ground within the overlap of the *now* and the *next*. This is represented in table 10.3.2:

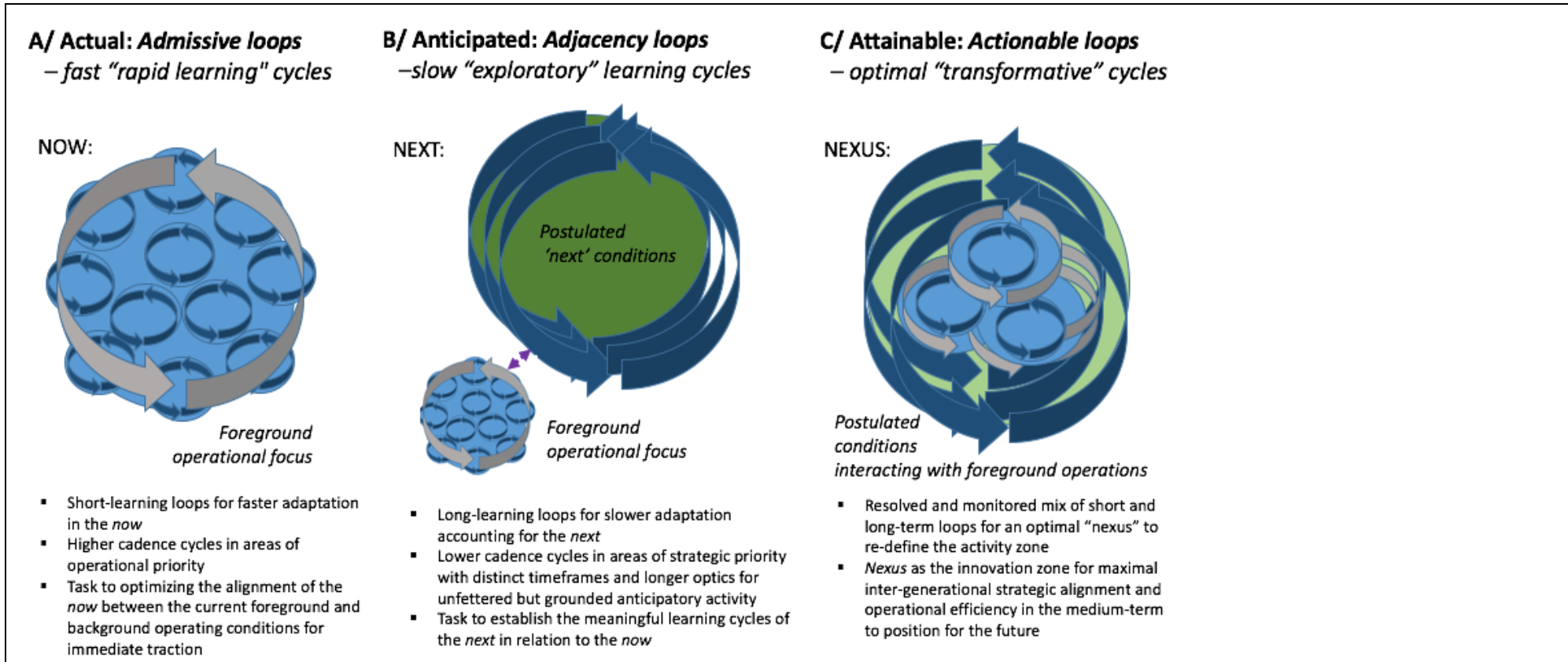
Table 10.3.2: Network Connections – Application of the Attainable Governance Framework (AGF)



### **10.3.3. Cycles: Iterating Strategies**

A third conceptualization of analysis places an emphasis on understanding different forms of knowledge and the learning cycles or “loops” that characterize this way of learning. It highlights that the learning cycles in the three modes have differing speeds, or “cadences” to arrive at decisions for transformative possibilities. To better appreciate rates of change “*iterating strategies*” can help to determine the best approach in a given situation. Determining the focus for what is short-term and “now” is what I conceptualise as *admissive loops*, being rapid learning cycles. Whereas *adjacency loops* refer to slower knowledge building in longer-run exploratory cycles. In light of these two perspectives, the work at the *nexus* becomes the trial and error of resolving the optimal attainable actions in a given situation to steer transformation. Put another way, the *nexus* becomes where the *actionable loops* for transformation are devised and monitored with governance orchestration. *Nexus strategy* and decision making is seeking to influence the “now” with input from the “next”, with medium-term settings that bridge in ways to support better “inter”-generational alignment.

Table 10.3.3: Learning Loops – Application of the Attainable Governance Framework (AGF)



Having established this practice “process”, I now turn to unpacking “change” and change practices. The task remains to open-up consistent applied methods to operationalise the *Nexus Governance Cycle*.

## 10.4 Praxis: *Analysis, Systems and Tactics*

Change praxis is difficult. *Praxis*<sup>188</sup> is therefore the active application of the conceptual framework – or the broader *attainable schema* with practice ideals included. It involves the specific terms, the functional acts that can infuse new dynamics of interaction into the political climate to produce progress. To make effective strategic headway for governance resolutions requires specifically unpacking and understanding peculiarities about *change* in practice. Understanding change is important for authentic cultural leadership that can guide and govern progress. Governance practices to support change within an AGF requires accepting that *transformation* is necessary on a range of fronts and implies an imperative to change at pace and at scale to face a challenge (Cabinet Office, 2017). I discuss change and transformation at three levels of abstraction, following by a synthesis. In short, these are understanding change at the level of:

- *Change Analysis* – the formulation of an approach to the *diagnostics, assessment* and a supporting *typology* of change
- *Change Systems* – to orient to better detail navigating organisational forces given the 3Cs of *crisis, continuity* and *contradiction*, and;
- *Change Tactics* – to consider issues of resistance, modularity and praxis for innovative practice.

### 10.4.1. *Change Analysis: Diagnostics, Assessment and Typology*

In this sub-section I outline the scope of a practice approach to change analysis, consist with and developing the application of the *Attainable Governance Framework*:

- a) *Change Diagnostics* – with a guide to “analysis”, is set out in Table 10.4.1.A. (*Change Diagnostics to Test Issues in the AG Frame*).  
This provides an orientation to a timespace-based mapping of stakeholder power (“control”) of *sequencing* and *scaling* “courses of action” in a governance context.
- b) *Change Assessment* – to guide “assessment”, as outlined in Table 10.4.1.B. (*Governing of Change in the AG Frame*).  
This develops a matrix to cross the three types of change with the systems concepts to assess the “degree of innovation” evident in a governance context.
- c) *Change Typology* – an “Assessment Typology” is devised in Table 10.4.1.C. (*Typology of Change Governance Functions*).  
This offers a way to think through the issues, resulting in a synthesizing statement of *Culture Wellbeing, Systems Health* and *Operational Status* in a particular governance context.

In combination, this offers a practitioner interpretation of the conceptual scaffolding for *Attainable Governance* to provide a guide for application. In each applied instance, specific interpretations would need to be worked through so as “fit” the analytic activity and governance requirements into the framework.

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<sup>188</sup> By *praxis* I mean the standard definition as the “process of using a theory or something that you have learned in a practical way.” Source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/praxis>

Table 10.4.1.A: *Change Diagnostics to Test Issues in the AG Frame*

<b>A) Change Diagnostics</b>	<b>Primary effects to understand</b>	<b>Mechanism of power to analyse</b>	<b>Dimensions to test</b>	<b>Actors to identify</b>
<b>Temporal treatment:</b> <i>(i.e. the “Time” or the multi-dimensional conception thereof)</i>	Intention of time-plans – the <i>sequencing</i> and linear clock-time scheduling of issues	Agency as control of <i>timing</i> over the treatment of the rate of change  (with attention to starting, resetting <i>speed</i> and stopping to affect the rate of change)	Shorter/Longer (S/L) – rapid/limited or slower/unlimited?  More/less <i>temporal precision</i> along the continuums?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Map who can <i>orchestrate</i></li> <li>- Map who decides who is orchestrating</li> <li>- Seek to uncover the motivation and incentive structure of orchestration</li> </ul>
<b>Boundary of topic:</b> <i>(i.e. the “Space” or parameter treatment)</i>	Intention of spatial arrangements – the <i>scaling</i> and setup of issues	Agency as control of the <i>scalar</i> over parameters of topical scope  (with attention to the proximities, porosities and linkages to effect node and network size)	Narrow/Wide (N/W) – constrained/limited or inclusive/unlimited?  More/less <i>boundary specification</i> along the continuums?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Map who can <i>orchestrate</i></li> <li>- Map who decides who is overseeing</li> <li>- Seek to uncover the motivation and incentive structure of oversight</li> </ul>
<b>A “Scheme”:</b> <i>(as the timespace composite)</i>	The <i>undertaking</i> in a scheme  (the “course of action” in timespace)  – recognising both the <i>sequencing</i> and <i>scaling</i> of issues	The correlative primacy of timing and scalar controls to affect the substantive <i>speed</i> and <i>scope</i> of schemes.	Composite matrix of dimensions (combining as above)  More/less <i>precision/specification</i> along the continuums?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Map who can <i>orchestrate</i></li> <li>- Map who decides who is composing</li> <li>- Seek to uncover the motivation and incentive structure for composition</li> </ul>



Table 10.4.1.B: Assessment: Governing of Change in the AG Frame

<b>B) Assessment of Change Governance:</b>	<b>Core facilitative activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Systems concepts</b>	<b>Practice focus</b>
<p><b>1. Enabling change</b></p> <p>Objective – a high quality <i>open culture</i> and <i>enabling system</i> for effective progress</p>	<p><i>Innovation readiness oversight</i></p> <p>– awareness of potentials for risk-taking yet “safe enough to try” e.g. for all actors/agents/ recipients</p>	<p>The ability to “lead” and initiate experimentation – policy changes, new intervention design and development, pilots, investment in labs or new partnerships</p>	<p>e.g. enabling <i>adaptability</i> and <i>emergence</i> as a process and state of uncertainty</p>	<p><i>Analytic focus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- timespace dynamics of <i>now</i> and <i>next</i> elements</li> <li>- identification of the critical <i>nexus</i> issues</li> <li>- innovation “readiness” assessment</li> </ul> <p><i>Culture focus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- change “leading” capacity and capability</li> <li>- leading <i>now</i> and <i>next</i> change strategies</li> <li>- leading <i>nexus</i> decisions and consequential change implications</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Understanding change</b></p> <p>Objective – a high quality <i>evaluative culture</i> and <i>learning system</i> for effective progress</p>	<p><i>Innovation absorption oversight</i></p> <p>– attentive and responsive to shifts for learning advances for the culture and system</p>	<p>The ability to “sense” and quantify change - e.g. resource evaluation, learning and development at an interpersonal level, a programmatic level and the inter and intra-programme level</p>	<p>e.g. understanding <i>phase changes</i> and <i>bifurcations</i> as key moments of transition</p>	<p><i>Analytic focus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- timespace dynamics of <i>now</i> and <i>next</i> elements</li> <li>- identification of the critical <i>nexus</i> issues</li> <li>- innovation “absorption” assessment</li> </ul> <p><i>Culture focus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- change “sensing” capacity and capability</li> <li>- leading <i>now</i> and <i>next</i> change strategies</li> <li>- leading <i>nexus</i> decisions and consequential change implications</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Acting for change</b></p> <p>Objective – a high quality <i>responsive culture</i> and <i>decisive system</i> for effective progress</p>	<p><i>Innovation decisiveness oversight</i></p> <p>– clear and appropriate flexibilities and capacity to “lock-in” for a disciplined culture and system</p>	<p>The ability to “navigate” and overcome blocks and barriers where existing arrangements are too rigid or fragile (e.g. at institutional, judicial, organisational and individual levels)</p>	<p>e.g. acting to deal with <i>path dependencies</i> and insufficiently developed system architecture</p>	<p><i>Analytic focus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- timespace dynamics of <i>now</i> and <i>next</i> elements</li> <li>- identification of the critical <i>nexus</i> issues</li> <li>- innovation “decisiveness” assessment</li> </ul> <p><i>Culture focus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- change “navigating” capacity and capability</li> <li>- leading <i>now</i> and <i>next</i> change strategies</li> <li>- leading <i>nexus</i> decisions and consequential change implications</li> </ul>

Table 10.4.1.C: *Typology of Change Governance Functions*

<b>C) Typology of Change Governance</b>	<b>Cultural assessment</b>	<b>Systems assessment</b>	<b>O/S (Operating System) Synthesis</b>
<b><i>Enabling change</i></b>	Open culture: <i>degree of openness?</i>	Enabling systems: <i>support to update?</i>	Open and enabling for “change capability”
<b><i>Understanding change</i></b>	Learning/Evaluative culture: <i>level of understanding?</i>	Learning/Evaluative systems: <i>embedded feedbacks?</i>	Evaluative and learning for “change aptitude”
<b><i>Acting for change</i></b>	Responsive culture: <i>fluid or entrenched?</i>	Decisive systems: <i>ability to decide?</i>	Responsive and decisive for “change fitness”
	A synthesizing statement of <i>Culture Wellbeing</i> and its capacity for openness, learning and evaluative capability, and responsiveness to change.	A synthesizing statement of <i>Systems Health</i> and their capacity to enable, learning and evaluative capability, and decisiveness in change.	A synthesizing statement of <i>Operational Status</i> and the state of learning and change capabilities, aptitudes and the state of “fitness” for responsive.

#### **10.4.2. Change Systems: Innovation for Shifting Conditions**

Conceptualising innovation from a systems viewpoint can assist learning and decision-making. In this sub-section I briefly discuss thinking about “change innovation” in different ways accounting system conditions. The nature of issues (problems and messes) and the scale of threats and opportunities is always changing. Some phenomena will call for more oversight, some for less. The level of attention necessary to understanding issues and make assessments to inform sound strategies of action to achieve desirable outcomes, necessitates the availability of a political and policy-making realm that can function effectively to do so. With increasingly complex and interconnected problems, it would be reasonable to assume that will require proportionately more public investment and expenditure for a fit-for-purpose, strategically-aligned and tactically adaptable system. In some areas this may need to mean an expanding Civil Service, in other areas less. The issue is what is the Civil Service’s role to catalyse authentic progress, and if it is actively required, what is the level of support effectively to activate it. A systems viewpoint brings up the fundamental issue of dis-connectivity within the public sector. The *Observatory of Public Sector Innovation* (OPSI) (2018) summarises the situation as one where practice is fragmented:

*“Around the world, the majority of government innovation agendas are built on loosely defined concepts and inconsistent implementation strategies. Most governments do not incorporate innovation into competency frameworks that prepare civil servants to meet challenges... Perhaps, most importantly, innovation too often occurs in pockets and silos – an age-old challenge of government – such as hubs and labs. As long as this is the case, innovation may at best burn like a series of bright matches, but will never ignite a fire across government. ...such change must transcend fragmented government structures designed for earlier times that employ tools and problem-solving methods that no longer work in the context of unprecedented complexity and uncertainty.” (OPSI, 2018, p.14).*

Integrative and systems-informed approaches to change and transformation are therefore valuable in practice. For example, this is because (a) they identify the real purpose behind the change process, (b) they help to analyse the interlinked determinants behind complex problems (i.e. *messes*), and (c) they help to design systemic innovations that work in specific contexts (OPSI, 2018, p. 45). Accepting the need for continuous learning and adaptation, attaining a state of “permanent institutional innovation” (Unger, 1987) is aided by a systems-based mode of insight, seeking aligned initiatives and coherent change. Given conditions are not static, understanding the key conditions of change offers a way to gauge the “state of” a system, thereby supporting strategic actions and improvised responses to shifting conditions. In thinking about ways to update Civil Service governance to reflect today’s challenges in the UK, CE of the Civil Service John Manzoni (2019) considered supporting innovation rather than a strong focus on controlling risks and value for money was part of the shift: “It’s a very complex set of accountabilities, across all the Civil Service, so how do you actually create an environment in which people can take decisions and move forward?” “By the nature of our control systems, we definitely waste less public money

than we would if we were in the private sector. The truth is, though, we also change a lot more slowly. It's a very interesting balance and, actually, we've got to turn the dial a bit." "The world outside is changing fast... and we've got to be a little braver." "My challenge is that you can have a nice life, go to work every day, and it's really interesting. But how do we actually open up our system, so that we can embrace change, and deal with the really hard challenges we face?" (Manzoni in CSW, 2019).

In the public realm, when conditions are often unstable and uncertain – be they by virtue of unforeseen circumstances or by deceitful manipulation – how to lead people on the cultural tracks of identity-making, while concurrently operationalising arrangements, is always challenging and often highly problematic. Change for the greater good with the least cost incurred in the process can be marred by a number of issues. In basic terms, change can be conceptualised into three categories (3C's) to help deduce options to support better governance analysis, theory and practice. The categorisation I use is: a) combinations of dealing with internal and externally motivated *crisis*, b) being bedevilled by paralysing stasis or lurching forward from fear or apathy when dealing with issues of maintaining *continuity* or sustainable rates of change, or c) the difficulties handling *contradiction* when finding ways to adequately "compromise" or accept differences between these two states (crisis and continuity) as they produce reconciliation challenges.

From this viewpoint, different change conditions call for different leadership strategies. For example, Stam et al. (2018) posit that in times of crisis, leaders who use more promotion-oriented communication are more likely to be endorsed than leaders who use more prevention-oriented communication (Stam et al., 2018). While offering hope in the form of a better state in a crisis is important, so is the treatment of continuity. Management research of change leadership (Venus, 2013; Venus et al., 2018) underlines the importance of handling issues of identity effectively to help to reduce fear of change: "In overcoming resistance to change and building support for change, leaders need to communicate an appealing vision of change *in combination with* a vision of continuity. Unless they are able to ensure people that what defines the organization's identity – 'what makes us who we are' – will be preserved despite the changes, leaders may have to brace themselves for a wave of resistance" (Venus et al. 2018). How managers and politicians deal with contradictions is also a critical test of the default or counter-veiling strategies leaders employ in complex public sector environments. van der Voet et al. (2015) document how high complexity can drive the forcing of top-down approaches when more outward oriented strategies may garner results (van der Voet et al., 2015). In some respects, UK Civil Service head John Manzoni's comments reflect this procedural innovation challenge and the associated culture change

required so officials have a license to act and make decisions at an appropriate level of accountability:

*“... ‘This system tends to look upwards, and that is a very, very dangerous place [to be],’ he said. ‘That is the single most striking thing that I have noticed since coming into the public sector: the upwards focus of the system. ‘Would the minister like to do this, would the politicians like to do that?’ ‘It’s something that, in my world [of business], is called upwards delegation, and you never do it. You certainly don’t have control of your destiny if you’re waiting for an answer from someone else all the time. So the question is: ‘How do we create a sense of controlled destiny at every level in our system?’ This doesn’t happen overnight.’” (Manzoni in Hall, 2019).*

To round-out this sub-section, my key observation with respect to change research is to simply note that the “mindset” adapted toward change and transformation at (a) a practice level, (b) at a conceptual level, and (c) at a leadership level of governance or management style, can have important implications for managing culture and identity in change. Given that culture in change is a critical variable in success alongside and in alignment with strategy (Kaul, 2019), it is a key factor that if overlooked, can render efforts to update specific activities – as well as arrangements – as merely well-intentioned but inadequately “landed” in practice. As specific tactics in management affect outcomes, I now turn to discussing tactical factors for successful *Attainable Governance* application.

#### **10.4.3. Change Tactics: Resistance, Self-Organisation and Modularity**

*“An institutional innovation accepted for the sake of its practical rewards is often implemented only in the form that least disturbs dominant interests and prevailing preconceptions... The enemies of the path of least resistance are thought and democracy...” – Roberto Mangabeira Unger (2019, p.269-270).*

How change is implemented can determine policy success, or otherwise (Herd and Moynihan, 2018).<sup>189</sup> Good ideas and intentions can inadvertently dissipate in applied settings, even when intentions are favourable. Entrenching laws once they are passed, as well as enforcing regulations, is often difficult (Basu, 2018). My argument has advanced the idea that both “fixed” and “flexible” forms of change are required to “lock-in” and “leave open” different system elements to support the right mix of stability and rates of adaption. The previous section has contributed applied procedural thought, then considered the challenges of embedding changes to occur or “stick”. It is vital to have the conceptual frame and operational tools to strategically “read” and tactically “interpret” for governance-led progress. Change, with the destruction and renewal that can involve, is at the heart of understanding design processes in any sphere of activity. Readiness for

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<sup>189</sup> For a discussion of how for example, “administrative burdens” can consequentially delay or frustrate given policies are not “self-executing”, refer to Herd and Moynihan (2018).

change, be it conceived of as resilience or anti-fragility,<sup>190</sup> suggests the innate ability to adapt at a rate correlative to the shift experienced. As such, what is “seen” and has signal visibility (i.e. what is individually or systemically on the “radar-screen”) and what is “linked” with signal fidelity (i.e. connected or interfacing so as communication of feedback is possible) becomes critical for effective change *tactics*.<sup>191</sup> This is where the operational drivers are more immediate “positional plays” rather than mission-oriented plans, blueprints for transformation, or programmes of continuous change. I identify potential tactical issues in the *Attainable Governance* frame, such as resistance and modular change for a new “praxis”.

Resistance matters. Advancing practice (or praxis), following Unger’s (2019) terms, is about both thought (ideas) and structural aspects (arrangements) coming together for innovation (Unger, 2019, pp.269-70). He refers to: (a) *thought* “...about structures and their transformation” (ibid). Innovation is predicated upon the quality of thought about arrangements and processes of change to navigate resistance. Second, he refers to (b) *democracy* as the means to “...master the established structure, without requiring crisis to serve as the condition of change”) (ibid). This point emphasizes that arrangements are functional enough so as to be able to govern effectively prior to the point of merely reacting to failure. This governance condition is central to the proposition established and supporting procedures developed in this work. Consequently, key to appreciating transformation and how to govern change in tumultuous times, is the search for what triggers, seeds and spreads discontent or unnecessary resistance to progress. It is possible to seek to diagnose the circumstances in which a shift in civic mood or the evolution of societal norms are rooted (e.g. political feedback and opinion polling). In tactical terms for constructive adaptation, leadership culture for open accountability is highly important as it sends signals through networks about what is acceptable and what is not.

Getting decision-making to optimise a system requires capacity to act in the “best” way and the best location where signal visibility and fidelity is clearest. Often hierarchical arrangements work against this – something recognised in not-for-profit and an increasing number of businesses as an area of development – reflect in the advent of sociocracy<sup>192</sup> and other management methods

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<sup>190</sup> Anti-fragility is a term developed and popularised by Nassim Nicholas Taleb (Taleb, 2012), to signify the opposite of fragile, namely possessing a flexible yielding quality beyond resilience or robustness that improves over time when placed under stress.

<sup>191</sup> By *tactics*, or being tactical, I imply a more granular response with specific actions to “manoeuvre”, compared to a strategic level of activity that is operating to navigate more generally towards a “destination”.

<sup>192</sup> Sociocracy has emerged in the not-for-profit consulting market and has seen applications in a variety of commercial applications in networked, low hierarchy requirement or entities seeking to develop a collaborative and adaptive culture. e.g. Sociocracy 3.0 is a recently relatively version of the methodology and practice concepts. Refer: <https://sociocracy30.org/the-details/>

advocating non-hierarchical forms of self-management and collaborative oversight. Increasingly self-organising practices are central tenants in “new economy” or platform-based activities, where re-conceptualised dynamics are emerging changing the playing-field for all entities. The new economy places different demands on institutions, financial systems and policy frameworks. Meanwhile traditional “pipeline” production of commodities (Alstynne et al., 2016; Gawer and Phillips, 2013), as well as platform-based businesses, place strains on public sector functions and governance. Drawing on thinking about the current economic transition, my perspective is that increasingly governments will need to deal with transitional issues between the old economy and political system settings and new ones. In this context leadership and management thinking that embodies complexity-based thought, evolutionary and decentralised management is finding traction. For example, Laloux (2016, 2018a,b) advocates a people-centric approach with radically streamlined structures that facilitate active involvement and self-management with “teal” attributes.<sup>193</sup> In an interview he pin-points symptoms:

*"It's our whole management system [rather than individual responsibility], the whole way we structure and run organization that is reaching its limits, it isn't able to deal with the complexity of our times. You know if things are too slow, then they don't know how to get people motivated, and if things aren't agile enough, then it's too bureaucratic, things aren't innovative. Top executives are bearing this incredible pressure on their shoulders..."* (Laloux, 2018a).

To counter these tendencies, a management style of "sense and respond" commensurate with adaptive tactics within a systems sensibility is advocated, rather than "predict and control" acting in more linear vision, strategy and execution mode (Laloux, 2018b). A self-organising mindset is what David Sloan Wilson from an evolutionary perspective calls "the cultural equivalent of multicellularity" (Sloan Wilson, 2018) and what Elinor Ostrom calls "polycentric governance" (Ostrom, 2010). The notion of self-organisation and other similar pluralistic conceptions all point towards the tactical challenge of resolving what is the best level and scale of conceiving of units of activity and governance oversight. In other words, addressing the question: what is the best scale of coordination, and how do we best see if the parts work together rather than against each other? Or, what is the optimal “modularity” beyond existing binaries, to get dynamic adaption? In support of an evolutionary perspective, Acemoglu (2018) reflects in conversation with Sloan Wilson:

*"One possibility, which I find very plausible and unifying, is that what evolution has endowed us with is a set of modules. Then it's a great survival strategy to be able to tap into different modules and go with it. Some of those modules emphasize egalitarian cooperative behavior, while some others emphasize taking orders in a hierarchical*

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<sup>193</sup> *Teal* refers to an “evolutionary” worldview or stage of consciousness, referencing the colour-coding of Ken Wilber that LaLoux (2016) adopts. Markers include a capacity to let go of pre-conceived ideas and search for evolutionary purpose, learning and listening with a desire for wholeness, and the hallmark of self-managing teams in organisations (La Loux, 2016, pp. 38-39; 2018).

*situation, especially when that hierarchy is maintained by force or threat of force; some others emphasize the ability to be despotic and extractive.... Being one of these things is probably inferior to having a flexible set of modules for being able to adapt to one's environment."* (Acemoglu, 2018).

Increasing the reservoir of capacity and capability to orchestrate integrated decisions requires boundary decision-making so as the working parts of a system are not too large or not too small. This is a meso-functional type of response, rather than a critical generalized level of analysis, such as Rosa's employment of the concept of alienation (Rosa, 2013).<sup>194</sup> I work with the assumption that more complexity increases systemic stress and operational difficulty. Therefore, there has to be a procedural reduction of analytic complexity in the conception of, and consequently delivery of, ideas for implementation.

To generate a reduction of complexity to support clear policy navigation can be assisted by seeking enough agile and flexible practice to ensure that modular compositions are pursued at the best level so as to accommodate progress. This can enable a distributed approach where more modular knowledge (e.g. of outputs, objectives and outcomes) can contribute collective intelligence to decision-making. Linking from the earlier discussion of *purpose* (refer 8.2) and taking the notion of *modularity* introduced here, I posit the concept of "purposeful modularity" to convey a balanced treatment of intentionality and adaptability in tandem. It can help with framing and operationalising strategic orientations to deal with complex issues, decisions and associated workflows in a governance system.

## **10.5 Application: *Practicalities, Heuristics and Pluralities***

How to do implement an *Attainable Governance Framework* will be contingent on circumstances in specific contexts. I first reflect on "pivot"-supporting attributes, noting the importance of a "pact" between the politics of the day and the Civil Service as a necessary condition for change. In a more general sense, I then reflect on ways to ensure progress in light of today's technological changes, with for example, Artificial Intelligence (AI) impacting policy-making. Third, I summarise the discussion of the framework's application, spotlighting the pre-requisite of an operative political environment that can deal systemically with a plurality of viewpoints, so as to render workable solution-sets in an electorally-engaged fashion.

### **10.5.1. *Practicalities of Implementation***

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<sup>194</sup> Rosa (2013) advances alienation as a negative pathology of a social acceleration akin to a "frenetic standstill" (2013, p. 318), as part of what has been described as the project of retrieving the Hegelian and Marxian concept (*Entfremdung*) in contemporary critical theory (Tregó-Mathys in Rosa, 2013, p. xxx1).



While it has become commonplace to see the Civil Service as the malleable and responsive servant of the political master of the day (e.g. as amplified by current U.S. practice), the Westminster model's intention is that it acts strongly in accordance with being an "accountable servant" of the wider "public interest". At its heart, this means being entrusted to practice impartiality, provide operational specialism and enduring continuity (e.g. Aucoin, 2012; Diamond, 2019a,b).<sup>195</sup> The intent is not to "de-couple" from political leadership and formal guidance (i.e. abuse executive powers), but to function in a way commensurate with politicians as the "Board" level governance agent in corporate terminology, where Cabinet could be conceived of as the "Board of Boards". This assumes that Ministers act at a governance oversight level, rather than as senior management (officials and practitioners) enacting strategy and operationally deliver policy settings. The historic norms and expectations about this division have been tested by the pressurization than is experienced today (Morse, 2019),<sup>196</sup> often drawing political operatives into active issue management and advocacy for stakeholder interests in the name of representation.

By way of comparison, Boards of Directors of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) act as intermediaries between the State (the public "owners") and the SOE's executive management. Best practice emphasizes that the role of the Board should be clearly defined and founded in legislation, that directors should focus on strategic guidance and corporate performance (rather than traditional "conformance" emphasis), and the "State should inform the board of its objectives and priorities through proper channels to ensure the board maximum autonomy and independence" (OECD, 2013, p. 12). This amplifies the conveyance of high-level purpose, strategic direction setting, and monitoring to ensure performance and accountability is discharged in the public interest. Political 'best practice' for governance stewardship at a national level can exemplify similar attributes. However, there is a lack of robust empirical academic study, of and evidence

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<sup>195</sup> For comparative analysis on impartiality in public administration in the UK, refer to Aucoin (2012). He notes a fundamental feature of the Westminster model is: (i) the public service acts impartially and is not to be used as a partisan tool by the government of the day (i.e. the public service is not to be directed or expected to act in ways that promote the governing party interest beyond what is required by their professional duties); and (ii) the public service provides advice to the government in an impartial manner because it is staffed on the basis of merit (i.e. a longstanding central feature of the Westminster model is merit-based appointments and the use of nonpartisan criteria as the basis for advice and administrative decisions) (ibid, pp. 177-8). He discusses the impact on New Public Management (NPM) reforms in this regard. As a counterpoint, Diamond (2019b) argues that "the institutional resilience of Westminster systems, particularly their capacity to safeguard norms of public service impartiality and non-partisanship in the face of the politicisation and externalisation of the policy-making process" is underestimated in his study and remains persistently resilient (ibid, p. 256-7).

<sup>196</sup> Morse's comments are covered fully in 5.2.

supporting, adherence to Ministerial and Cabinet practice at this level, despite the apparent importance of stewardship for country-level performance.<sup>197</sup>

Central to enacting the AGF to advance strategic practice is the underlying reality that the Public Service has agency in its relationship with the politics of the day. Even if latitude is seemingly constrained, there is capacity for pro-active change to improve performance for all and “remould” practice (Grube, 2015). Passive resistance and stalling as opposed to constructive change, serves only to erode trust, breed resentment and wear patience thin. Instead, the proposition developed is one of mutual benefit to focus time and effort, hone accountabilities and to appropriately sheet home responsibilities to those best able to “think, act and do”. Ideally, a cross-partisan agreement acknowledging the need for systemic practice change to avoid the shared problem of “harm” to politicians would assist. With governors inadvertently at high risk of undermining sound conventions due to contemporary pressures, it would be advantageous to reset governance protocols as proposed. As a critical success factor in this regard will be the need to generate “buy-in” across the political spectrum; having shared agreed principles to anchor practice too becomes paramount. 11.3 develops a set of “axioms” as a starting point to help ensure that a lack of inclusive guiding principles and associated language does not become an unnecessary stumbling block to forging shared interests and agreed motivation for progressing strategic policy practice. Further, an “ethos” for establishing an inclusive practice is also outlined (refer 12.4).

A transition to *Attainable Governance* will require politicians to see merit in a retreat from some operational detail and pre-determined policy commitments, along with a mindset akin to a “Director on the Board”, challenging but trusting the operative level of management. Being paranoid and “at war” with the public sector at large is an ill-suited headspace for maximising collaborative value and extracting strategic progress. Supporting institutional system design to deliver leadership and public services that adds-value – rather than adherence to an ideological working premise that anything “public” is a form of toxic encroachment on the private,<sup>198</sup> with the exception of socialising down-side losses if profitability collapses – requires a forthright reconsideration today. At its core, change is contingent in a general sense on the politics and the bureaucracy coming to terms with contemporary dynamics in a way that facilitates recalibrating arrangements for mutual benefit and civic advancement. This requires enough of a “pact” that

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<sup>197</sup> A recent exception is a paper by Tiernan and Holland (2019) in the Australian context proposing that conventions are not keeping up with current practice, requiring a new approach (Tiernan and Holland, 2019).

<sup>198</sup> I have personally encountered the attitude and analogy of the bureaucracy as a “weed” on both the right and left of the political spectrum (in the capacity of working as a consultant and as an official for politicians and political operative staff acting on their behalf).

recognises the importance of clear role distinctions and more functional systemic design parameters to overcome short-term biases and reactive impulses that are not contributing to societal improvement.

Consideration of the implications for power dynamics and “control” per se will have to be grappled with in specific contexts and activity arenas. An awareness of where power is concentrated, where it is unavailable, and where it might require adaptive treatments for better results, is a necessary feature of systemic reform. I discuss power as a phenomenon in practice in 11.4.<sup>199</sup> In the UK context, a pivot to *Attainable Governance* is achievable today working with much of the “machinery of government” that is in situ. Rather than embarking on wholesale organisational reform to shift issue boundaries – or even embark on more abstract constitutional re-renderings – the practice upgrade works with existing organisational architecture to evolve and reset decision-making processes as the central intervention. Nonetheless, to re-position arrangements and power as required for better results, may generate the need for institutional evolution in the medium to long-term.

In response to the implementation questions: “What can be realised and how in the current context?”, and “What specific initiatives might assist?”, as developed and discussed further in the conclusion (e.g. 12.1-5), my implementation perspective is:

***A pivot is viable and within the bounds of the operational ambit of the Civil Service*** – the combination of a new strategic policy-making arrangement as outlined provides the rationale and design philosophy on one hand, and the framework design and operational language reset on the other. Building on current practice improvements, there is scope for recalibrating practices and shifting language. Taking advantage of “intervention moments” to activate specific existing knowledge about change opportunities, alongside engagement with new activities to generate understanding from new perspectives, aligns with the AGF logic of improvement that works to enhance contemporary organisational architecture as it is.

***It requires a political realisation (ideally, across parties so change endures) of the value of delegating strategic and operational activities and tasks while “stepping-up” governance oversight and civic accountability requirements*** – a system strategy pivot requires a re-calibration of political governance “reach” in many spheres of practice, i.e. addressing political over-reach as the desire for “controlling” what is often uncontrollable,

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<sup>199</sup> I follow Bourdieu’s perspective is that power is constantly recreated and legitimised through an interplay of agency and structure – what he terms as being in “habitus” (Bourdieu, 1977) as discussed further in 11.4.

consequently overwhelming leadership judgement and leading to counter-productive interference in operations.

***It requires a temporary political “pause” (or “cease-fire”) to survey institutional conditions*** – this can foster honest conversations about role accountabilities and useful system design distinctions to locate power optimally in the civic interest. This can ensure decisive action and moderate extremism in a dynamic, learning-oriented civic culture, recognising the complex and interconnected nature of contemporary civic challenges. These discussions and the process of deliberation and repositioning may benefit from intermediary facilitation (i.e. trusted and independent facilitators respected by the political and Whitehall communities of interest alike).

“Finding the moment” and the conditions to effect change can be worked on and achieved in the current context. Ongoing “crises” and the layering of crises in particular, can reveal “thinness” in coordinated governance coverage. It can also reveal the inadequate “whole of government” coordinated response to crises in appropriate timeframes. This convergence can produce fertile conditions for post-crisis reflection and new-found resolve for action.

I next consider the related and more “day-to-day” issue of the centrality of the ways practices are automatically done as a key factor in change. Given knowledge and cultural understandings accrue in institutions, how this combines with the application of existing and emerging technologies poses a dimension of challenge to systemic reform.

### **10.5.2. Heuristics and Technological Progress**

As how ideas are deployed can either support successful adoption or the thwarting of good intentions, I have sought to develop practice “heuristics”<sup>200</sup> for *Attainable Governance* (i.e. the content of 10.1 to 10.4). This brings into focus the extent of standardization, codification and the formulation of *heuristics* in complex operating environments for civic best practice and results. It

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<sup>200</sup> By *heuristics* I mean the ways, through mental shortcuts, we reduce the complexity of making judgements in decision-making. We employ our guiding human mental “software” system for doing cognitive work and processing thought through strategies, principles and methods. The shortcuts or methods of varying levels designed we use to cope with and act with purpose and meaning in life are heuristics (refer to [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heuristics\\_in\\_judgment\\_and\\_decision-making](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heuristics_in_judgment_and_decision-making)). I note that in evolutionary economics Nelson and Winter (1982) used the general term *routines* for all “regular and predictable behavioural patterns” of firms was “routine”. (Nelson and Winter, 1982, p. 14). They elaborate on different types of “searches” where routines that govern short-run behaviour are called “operating characteristics”, while other procedures are more analogistic to biological processes such as being in the “gene” selection process (more reflexively coded in change) or routine changing processes to reform the “rules” over time (ibid, pp. 16-18). While I use heuristics to imply routines at the reflexive end of the spectrum, I do so recognising that learning new routines and norms, encoding knowledge through “remembering by doing”, and updating normalised routines, is all part of the strategic endeavour.

is viable to argue that concepts like *transparency* and *risk* are well-developed in public policy (e.g. Choi and Sami, 2012 on transparency; Fineberg and Stern, 1996 on risk), supported by sophisticated support structures, frameworks and resourced processes in the worlds of law, public policy and commerce. The need to distill and negotiate standardisation and the associated benefits are well understood, quantified and executed by government entities and the judiciary. In most instances, codification is relatively settled. Commonly accepted units of measurement and formal resolution processes are in place. However, the impact of technological progress can have important heuristic implications.

Cognitive standardisation to support decision-making is more problematic if procedures are delegated to computationally pre-coded formulaic methods. Worrying that Silicon Valley is, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning will, undermine democracy further, Harari (2018) places the spotlight on the risks of data concentration as a means to undertake emotional manipulation and gain undue control. He posits politics now as the struggle to control data flows, whereas it was previously about the power of machines in the industrial age.<sup>201</sup> Concerns about data privacy and use, amplified by AI developments, will continue to raise new problems and opportunities. As all levels of activity are within the purvey of public policymakers – whether it is taxation, regulation, investment or subsidies – governments play a central role even when they are stretching to play catch-up with new technologies, e.g. cryptocurrencies.

As Coyle (2019) comments, observing that given it is “impossible to uninvent technology” this does not presuppose an acceptance of “technological determinism” (Coyle, 2019). Rather, societal evolution and economic structural change are “refracted through policy decisions” (ibid). This opens up choice-making about what we want to mute or amplify for working towards greater prosperity, increasing the urgency of challenge that governing bodies face today. Against a backdrop of rapid technological transformation, political backlash has been building and surfacing in advanced Western economies (e.g. UK, France) while the threat that AI represents for abuses of power continues to gather momentum (Frey and Osbourne, 2013; Acemoglu and Restrepo, 2018).<sup>202</sup> The rise of the platform economy has served to accentuate the “digital premium”, be it

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<sup>201</sup> Harari (2018) notes the previous political logic as one where the control of land held political sway. Not to diminish the importance and continually emerging significance of data today, I contend it remains that land *and* machines continue to underpin economic activity and therefore still matter (e.g. the case for the oning economic significance of land is made by Ryan-Collins et al., 2017). In the UK we have layers of economic power build on the fundamentals of land, capital, labour and data control. Each demands its own grounding in relevant logics of conception and interpretation to quantify private value, public value and civic interest.

<sup>202</sup> The UK Government has progress work in this area with the *Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation*. Refer: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-centre-for-data-ethics-and-innovation/centre-for-data-ethics-and-innovation-consultation>

in Silicon Valley or London's Fintech industry. Overall, there has been a consistent pattern that has emerged of economic clustering with affluence concentration and spatial divides. Key issues of rebalance, redistribution and redress are and will remain critical areas for attention so as to ameliorate and work on a reversal of fortunes in disadvantaged areas.<sup>203</sup>

The ethics of decision-making with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and algorithms that are capable of improving quality, consistency and bias reduction if well designed, present a range of fundamental and operational questions. It is increasingly necessary to have governance systems that can handle the machine-person interface effectively for the efficient handling of appropriate decisions. It is increasingly necessary to have governance designs that can handle slow deliberation and considered responses for stable transitions. A necessary task for performance improvement and increasing authenticity and civic trust in tandem, is to work on the cognitive complexity of decisions in public governance systems. Questions of purpose, fairness and how to arrive at the best possible position at each decision-point, demand attention in public policy and civic oversight. Smarter, technology-enabled practice at the *nexus* can employ heuristic devices.

In theory, digital-enabled governance and service provision offers the potential to increase system sensitivity to citizen and user requirements, to speed-up provision and to automate lags out of bureaucratic systems. In practice, the drivers of why transformation is being introduced are significant. The intention behind change and the framing of what is in-scope and counts determines the depth and breadth of provision. It also sets the extent of "knowingness" of the State. Individual and collective patterns of information that offer beneficial opportunities (e.g. customisation), but also introduce extended intrusion and hence the possibility of power abuses. This requires an intentional consideration of morality and the associated testing of processes and practices that become "the way things are done". If everyone thinks from an individual-centric perspective, then the collective assumptions about the best "truth" may not be usefully distilled to inform action. This points towards the value of the resurgence of a collective morality. To guide an operative landscape with the contours that would facilitate such practice, the navigational detailing requires some form of shared values.<sup>204</sup>

### **10.5.3. Politics and Pluralities**

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<sup>203</sup> There is a large academic and grey literature on agglomeration effects and urban inequality in the UK. For example, a *Centre for Cities* report (Swinney and Thomas, 2015) documents the urban economic transition in the UK from 1911 onwards to illustrate the scale of change.

<sup>204</sup> While not specifically expanding this point to advance shared values for governing with advanced communications and processing technologies, I produce general principles for axiomatic guidance in 11.3, offering a broader response to articulating a system-informed civic morality.

Change in public policy terms is refracted through both a political and bureaucratic lens. This is where the determination of what “shared values” are practically occurs. Civil Service practice and political agendas have to interact and lead to an agreed strategy and course of action (or inaction). I have advanced that for change to effectively “pivot” from current practice to a new form of future-facing practice, a new framework with design-led motivation embedded is required. My case is that an *Attainable Governance* “praxis” implies implementing procedures that actively seek *purposeful modularity* to strategically guide headway. While my focus has been on re-casting the design of the bureaucratic lens, the political aspect of the equation for change remains a live challenge. I signal a cross-partisan agreed post-crises “pause”, resulting in a third-party facilitated “pact” to effect improvement between Ministerial and Civil Service leadership, is a pre-requisite for a system “pivot” in practice.

Politics should always play an important oversight function in shaping the parameters of what is possible. One attribute whose presence in democratic politics is an indicator of a desire for engagement and broadly being attuned to enacting the “will of the people”, are the practices of forms of civic dialogue (be they general or targeted to stakeholders) and community of interest consultations. A “participative movement” in policy-making has been a key feature of practice directions in the past decades. Public policy literature suggests on the whole that public participation enhances democracy and empowers citizens (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007), as is exemplified by the approaches advocated by both theorists (e.g. Fung and Wright, 2001) and practitioner think-tanks (e.g. Nesta and IDEO, 2017). This direction in practice has only intensified with the access afforded by new technologies, where digital inclusion and exclusion become genuine issues that shape the design of civic engagement. Likewise, the ends to which online means are deployed must consider questions about the type of civic expression sought and the choice of methods (Coleman and Shane, 2012, p. 279, 391-2).

For example, digital engagement may be a strategy by design to empower (or disempower) either political stewardship or unelected Departmental agendas (Coleman and Gøtze, 2001, p. 17). It presents opportunities for both (a) liberative empowerment and better visibility on issues for advancing headway, as well as (b) introducing new forms of online censorship or extremist influence (Tucker et al., 2017, p. 47-8). While the potential for activating widespread engagement is still nascent, there are innovators (e.g. Future Cities Catapult in the urban planning space)<sup>205</sup> who are advancing civic engagement tools in the UK context. However, the question of how

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<sup>205</sup> The London think-tank focused on digitisation and online engagement to improve local planning, resulting in the *Local Digital Declaration* (July, 2018). Refer to: <https://futurecities.catapult.org.uk/2018/07/18/blog-local-digital-declaration/>

democracies should react to digital developments remains largely unresolved (Tucker et al., 2017, p. 48) and a subject of experimentation in Whitehall. What is highly pertinent in the navigation of the range of views that can be accessed and promulgated in an online setting, is that governance systems need to be able to handle and respond to a wide range of positive engagements, while also being capable of dealing with negative reactions in an appropriate fashion without imposing State suppression and undue censorship. This will remain a contentious balance.

This direction of “technological travel” highlights the pre-requisite of an operative political environment that can deal systemically with a plurality of viewpoints, so as to render workable solution-sets in an engaged fashion. In this regard, the *nexus* in the proposed schema operates as the governance interface for exploring the praxis required for achieving improvements in detailed, concrete, “step-by-step” terms. In transformative conditions, advancing fit-for-purpose contemporary governance processes and techniques to facilitate change will often require decision mechanism refinement and sometimes architectural changes to institutional arrangements to be able to better lead and calibrate strategy. Reconciling the associated socio-cultural and spatial dimensions of key issues in the political sphere will continue to be difficult, as we try to reconcile what is the best way forward.

My position has been that *procedures*, as outlined in (i) the *Nexus Governance Cycle*, (ii) the *practices* detailing optics, connectivity and cycles, and (iii) *praxis* (analysis, systems and tactics) for changing applied governance arrangements; require particular care in design, delivery and deployment if they are to lead to real change, embedded systemic transformation and impactful application. These are the processes where difficult issues and decisions are reckoned with. If the future depends on what problems or messes we decide to work on, then I have sought to make the case and demonstrate that getting to the essence of governance and its design, is a necessary imperative. With governance the mainstream concept to describe humanity’s “self-control problem” (Ackoff, 1974, p. 18), we are confronted by a need for a multitude of systemic reforms to better design and manage systems so they can cope effectively with dynamic problems interacting in messes. The challenge is to think of participative and trustworthy solution mechanisms in a multi-polar world that can better solve complex problems for effective results.

In practice, solution-making as a process of finding agreed pathways forward works best in a political context where there is the “bandwidth” to hear and involve a range of perspectives. Accepting a plurality of viewpoints based in different interpretations of events, cultures and customs, the potential to unite lies in forging a new framework for decision resolution based on what resonates in our shared interest, rather than what divides us in the present and from the



future. This would mean to practice embracing the future as if for ourselves in perpetuity, emboldening democracy for the “future-present” so as to act with the highest moral conduct.

I consider what I call “activation” in the next chapter; namely thought and practice that is geared for enacting progress to achieve implementation. I discuss the implications for outcomes thinking and principles to guide practice, highlighting some of the key changes that are necessary in thought and approach to embed a pivot in policy-making practice.

## 11. Activation: *Adjustment, Axioms and Arête*

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### 11.1 Outline

Alongside the application of praxis for democracy in the future-present (chapter 10) with applied implications in the procedural realm, is the equally challenging terrain of formulating and finding shared ground in discourse, values and operating principles to “do” change. I advance the general case that an *Attainable Governance* “pivot” requires a rethinking of the orientation to public sector outcomes as the desired expression of civic values. Expression of civic values has long been a challenge in public sector thought leadership. The proposed *next* requires a more considered and precise articulation of operating principles and objectives, informing and enhancing governance quality at the *nexus*. Likewise, the normalisation and codification of civic “virtues” for practice embodying integrity and system functionality is required to underpin democratic advancement. In the UK the *Nolan Principles* (1995)<sup>206</sup> articulate the seven principles of public life, encapsulating the basis of ethical standards for public office holders.

Knitting together practice with guiding principles for civic purpose, commensurate with the AGF requires working with and from today’s best practice and extending out with a system-based temporal sensibility. Hence first I consider the implications for outcomes-oriented public policy practice, as implied by the conceptual framework and procedural details sketched-out to date, framed as the “adjustment” in mainstream public administration thought (11.2). This results in a perspective that views outcomes as a simplistic, outdated and inadequate frame of reference to explore, determine and specify public sector and civic goals and objectives.

Second in 11.3, I develop a position for improving the probability of inclusive discourse at the level of abstraction of principles (or “axioms”). The axomatic orientation of normative principles and the transitional tactics that could be employed are explored, with the objective of an evidence-informed normative support layer to accompany the proposition. As such, I am intentionally reaching forward in the spirit of creating the techniques to inform aligned patterns of behaviour and a constructive leadership mindset. This is advanced at a level of abstraction to encompass Civil Service practice on one hand; and acceptable axioms for engagement across the political spectrum on the other. At the base, formulating ways to handle, conduct and make change in timespace – be it from incremental and evolutionary to transformative and radical in nature – demands an appreciation of the application of processes, principles and practices. Third, I reflect

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<sup>206</sup> The Nolan Principles are *The 7 Principles of Public Life*, namely: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership. Source: [https:// www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life)

on the power issues involved in “pivoting the politics”, speculative design implications, and the quest for finding our civic potential or “arête” (11.4), before concluding commentary of activating “integrative anticipation” (11.5).

## **11.2 Adjustment: *Progressing beyond Outcomes***

Managing for outcomes in an evidence-based policy environment is standard New Public Management (NPM) practice that remains deeply ingrained in central agencies and is influential in public sector practice.<sup>207</sup> Fiscal disciplines and techniques such as Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA)<sup>208</sup> underpin decision-making advice and Treasury second opinions. The reckoning of public value and the parameters of what clears the public expenditure bar in government is produced through a lens that often sees intervention as a last resort where the market has failed to deliver. The process for finding solutions to problems is the operating zone that is deemed to have civic value, is politically possible and administrative deliverable. Therefore, public value is often conceptualised as triangulating between the authorising environment (gaining formal and informal legitimacy and support), productive capabilities (operational resources e.g. staff and infrastructure) and the agreed performance direction (the identification of public and private value as stated in a mission or objectives) (Moore, 1995, 2013). The adaptation of commercial strategic concepts from a market-based paradigm into the civic realm was often imperfect and messy, as Moore acknowledges (Moore, 2013, pp.1-3), with difficulties where the relevant public “customer” was a collective public. Resolving whose interests to act in is less than straightforward. With an emphasis on working with commercial, political and civic interests for agreed operational terrain to make policy changes (e.g. Hartley et al. 2017), adjustments are often small and inconsequential until some form of crisis prompts ex-post revision.

A Weberian view of bureaucracy brings into scope the Civil Service as a system “expressing values as much as rules” (de Jong, 2016). It can be an accountable system that is efficient and fair, or not by virtue of exclusion via establishing and maintaining the validity of some concepts and language, while not others. While in large part the problems of dysfunction in advanced Western jurisdictions are tactical level user navigation issues, where citizens are in receipt of multiple services from a siloed provider (or series of providers), sometimes practice generates administrative burdens (intentional and unintentional acts or inactions) that dull the uptake of entitlements or diminish policy effectiveness (Herd and Moynihan, 2018). At a strategic level, the integration and sequencing issues at a policy and delivery level are significant factors in success.

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<sup>207</sup> NPM is the subject of expansive consideration since developments occurred in the 1980s. For an account from a seminal figure in the field, refer Hood (1995).

<sup>208</sup> Refer Pearce et al. (2006).

Innovating for progress in the public sector requires a shift and this requires the support of, and active drive of, multi-pronged leadership at a variety of levels and sources. In reimagining the value proposition of the public sector to meet contemporary demands, questions of whether arrangements (i.e. frameworks, protocols and procedures) and the culture of civic life are improving, are central concerns. An AGF brings into focus the stretch from the actual to the anticipated, along with the issues in resolving the attainable.

A key factor is the determination of desirable outcomes. Outcomes are usually taken to mean a desired end-state. As earlier noted, Mazucatto's (2018) work on concrete missions to advance public value creation (Mazzucato, 2017, 2018) supports focusing on rendering a shared meaningful vision – in AGF terms – the need for purposeful aspiration and a full exploration of the anticipated *next*. The notions embedded in a narrative and nodal shift for reframing public value discourses and civic decision architectures challenge the generalised notion of “outcomes” in public administration and the values embedded within. Typically, the level of inclusive abstraction arrived at is either so broad as to be operationally meaningless, or so precise as to be constraining and inflexible state without adequate reference to inter-related outcomes. Outcomes as akin to “desired states” at a strategic destination rather than the process of travel, or milestones within it (i.e. the objectives signaled in the journey). Ryan (2019) notes that often outcomes, in the strategy documents signaling intent and progress in government, fall short insofar as they often simply list goals and objectives (Ryan, 2019). He adds:

*“... then the lower-level objectives stated in these plans often miss out the long-, medium- and short-term client and/or societal conditions progressively required to enable the goal to emerge (which, for planning purposes, could be identified as externally-focused and more tangible immediate, intermediate and long-term objectives). Instead, we find instead an inward focus on what the organisation is going to do or produce – sometimes, for no apparent substantive, purposive reason.”* (Ryan, 2019).

This default to the internal when strategic functions are stretched, or over-exposed to pluralistic dynamics, is a symptom of presentist governance and an under-resourced exploration of the *next*. It also reflects the difficulty of measuring and quantifying high-level objectives to meet reporting standards. It underscores the need for more investment in the mode of anticipation – something central to my case. When improving the “climate of thought” to ensure relevant information and knowledge is sought to bear on key issues, moving *beyond outcomes* needs to be considered. The AGF expands the process of determination of outcomes (and/or value) beyond a simple or poorly specified outcomes framework. Lifting the focus of oversight so as to conduct the work of governing within practical constraints, accepting boundaries to rationality and the plurality of moral positions, places outcome identification and testing into the category of being an input into anticipatory analysis (i.e. working on the contours of determining the *next*).

*Attainable Governance* places good practice as the application of more attention at higher level than is normal current practice in Westminster system and public policy thought, so as to push beyond outcomes in a standardised sense. The rendering of resolutions at the nexus becomes a refreshed and dynamic site of outcome framing, making and adaption in an interconnected system of objectives. It by virtue of design, places primary governance “orchestration”<sup>209</sup> attention onto the impacts, intentions and interfaces of relevant civic objectives. In short, and outlined in table 11.2.1:

- *Impacts* – the “impactfulness” as manifestly determinable in the process of doing
- *Intentions* – the “intentionality” of motivation, mission and shared purposes; and
- *Interfaces* – and “interfacing” as the practice for interaction for constructive exchanges and intermediation processes.

Table 11.2.1: *The 3 I’s of Impacts, Intentions and Interfaces for Attainable Governance Practice*

<b>3 I’s</b>	<b>Definition:</b>	<b>Comment:</b>
<b>Impacts</b>	- as understanding the process of change rather than the outcome	- <i>Impactfulness</i> matters, as manifest in the process of doing
<b>Intentions</b>	- as understanding the holistic and collaborative motivation, the individualistic and competitive motivation, and the commensurate interaction of the two.	- <i>Intentionality</i> of motivation, mission and shared purposes matter
<b>Interfaces</b>	- as understanding the nature of system dynamics whereby connections lubricate interaction and the resultant intermediation of ideas and activities.	- <i>Interfacing</i> as the practice for interaction for constructive exchanges and the associated intermediation processes, matter to achieve navigational headway at the nexus

Implicit in a public policy systems-design oriented mode of practice is the sentiment captured by Ackoff (1994). First, knowing what you do not want to achieve is not enough. You must possess and invest in a process of building shared *intention*, so as to formulate a common purpose and a galvanizing mission. Second, action learning by doing is necessary to understand and advance *impact*. Third and additionally, the learning through applied interaction brings to the fore the design of constructive *interfaces* for meaningful intentionality and impact. In Ackoff’s words:

*"An improvement program must be directed on what you want, not what you don't want. And determining what you want requires you redesigning the system, not for the future, but right now. And asking yourself, what will you do right now if you could do whatever you wanted to do. Because if you don't know what you would do if you could do whatever*

<sup>209</sup> By *orchestration*, as defined in 7.2.1, I mean transparent oversight to initiate and guide collaborative behaviours.

*you wanted to, how in the world can you know what you can do under constraints?"*  
(Ackoff, 1994).

Therefore, I highlight the need to rethink “outcomes” as a categorization in strategic public management terms. Instead, I propose an *Attainable Governance Framework* as previously established, adding that the *orchestration* of impacts, intentions and interfaces can help to tease out civic objectives. I now turn to sketch-out the high-level principles that can assist inclusive thinking in the framework.

### **11.3 Axioms: *Flexibility, Freedom and Fortitude***

*“...though complexity generates a range of policy expectations and implications it does not offer a clear moral or value framework for these expectations/implications. For example, from a complexity perspective basic human rights (rights to food, education and expression for example) are fundamental to the successful functioning of a complex society. These basic rights allow the ‘agents’ within the system to ‘satisfice’ their potential and increases the probability that the society will prosper under varying conditions ... However, what is the value of this outcome?”* – Ansell and Geyer (2017, p 158).

Weighing-up the relative value of options and preferred results is a core governance task. While the *Attainable Governance Framework* proposes arrangements that can facilitate a complexity-aligned system and process for getting to better future-focussed decisions, advisory and governor judgement remains critical. Politics retains its status as the domain of deliberation and decision making. Ameliorating negative and entrenched social, environmental and economic issues cannot be fixed alone by new frameworks and practice methods for advancing engaged research and more informed governance. A new type of evidence (as a result of the AGF) and new procedures for more considered framing and treatment of producing analysis and making decisions is fundamentally a prerequisite for a step-change improvement in democratic legitimacy. However, repeated intervention failure to resolve adversities that endure today are not simply about inadequate technologies, institutional arrangements and a lack of advisory intent. Along with deliberate integration, better decision architecture and heightened temporal awareness; the need to confirm some shared high-level *guiding principles* of practice for a complexity-framed worldview is paramount to overcoming diffuse policy coherence and political polarisation, languishing civic trust and at times outright political deceit leading to performance shortfalls.

This section provides an initial exposure into the territory of principles, to both mark out the level of abstraction that might be used to forge common ground and to signal key angles for curation that embody a systems-informed sensibility. These are general working principles that could be embodied and practiced to complement application of the framework. To be more specific, seeking a view to establish the shared territory of high-level guiding principles that can be worked with to effect change, the challenge set is to find the moral common-ground for inclusive

operational salience across the political spectrum. Positioning the AGF as “neutral” public policy and governance practice, the task becomes one of marking out the widely acceptable “axioms for the attainable” that can be agreed across the political spectrum. As is usually the case in practice, I start from a normative standpoint. I take the same standpoint as the *World Bank* (2017), assuming that “every society cares about freeing its members from the constraint threat of violence (*security*), about promoting prosperity (*growth*), and about how such prosperity is shared (*equity*). ...and aspire to achieve these goals in environmentally sustainable ways.” (World Bank, 2017, p. 4). Accepting that *transformation* is necessary on a range of fronts and implies an imperative to change at pace and at scale to face challenges (Cabinet Office, 2017), I also assume that societies care about aligning governance arrangements to adequately and effectively guide transformation so that policies and decisions are commensurate to the scope, scale and pace of the challenges faced.

I propose three basic organising *axioms*<sup>210</sup> for procedural guidance – namely (1) *flexibility*, (2) *freedom* and (3) *fortitude* – supported by a configuration of what I call general “guiding principles”. With socially-mediated community narratives influencing political understanding, shaping the expression of patterns of values and norms can help chart constructive discourse. Finding axiomatic commonalities that can become shared communicative “software” for use with governance “hardware” (e.g. the AGF), is a constant discursive challenge in civic practice. A normative approach to principle formulation suggests an emphasis on guiding behaviour. From a moral philosophical standpoint, normative ethics attempt to provide a general theory that tells us how we ought to act. The primary concern is with providing a moral framework that can be used to work out what kinds of actions are good and bad, or right and wrong. Within the field of normative ethics there are three main strands of thought (virtue, deontological and consequentialist thinking).<sup>211</sup> As my interest is in framing normative principles to guide actions to improve results in fields of wider scope and increased temporal depth, I focus on a moral framework to guide consequences, rather than emphasize the morality of the agents – as in virtue ethics – or the specifics of the acts performed in a deontological sense. Therefore, I consider the axiomatic development of principles should be seen as normative and consequentialist in philosophical orientation.

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<sup>210</sup> By “axiom” or *axiomatic* I mean the standard usage where an axiom is “a statement or principle that is generally accepted to be true, but need not be so”. Source *Cambridge Dictionary*, Source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/axiom>

<sup>211</sup> Akin to an outcomes focus in public policy oriented towards making the world a better place, consequentialism in general terms holds that we ought to act in the way that brings about the best consequences (Source: <https://moralphilosophy.info/>).

I take it that guiding *principles* – or a statement of shared interest at the level of a vision – will always contain some ambiguity and innate fluidity. This is a strength and a weakness. As with any search for understanding between people, there will be different interpretations and nuances to discuss and deliberate. Sometimes enough alignment for resolution will be the result; at other times divergences will prevail and agreement will not be reached. Hence the focus on three general axiomatic themes and a family of supporting principles, is premised in tandem with the arrangement changes as previously proposed (i.e. the AGF, its underpinning theories and supporting procedures). I also contend that the general dynamic of reshaping social values to reflect contemporary conditions will by virtue of design, be useful “heuristics”<sup>212</sup> to help with (a) *moderating excesses* (divisive political tactics), (b) directly bringing *inter-generational justice* issues into clearer focus, and (c) *pivoting the politics* (from narrow and shallow to wider and deeper consideration as the norm). The proposed principles under each axiom are now outlined and elaborated upon.

### **11.3.1. Flexibility: Improving Precision in the Present**

To improve precision of analytic framing and decision making in the present, requires recognition of the need to pursue *flexibility* to facilitate both short-run action and long-run adaptation. Consistent with a complex adaptive system (CAS) mindset and the pursuit of agility, the need for continuous adjustment in path navigation brings to the fore the need for designs that create potentially smaller temporal units (e.g. more “real-time” feedback) or more compressed modules of activity to support “flow-finding” decision making:

<b>(1) Axiom of Flexibility:</b>	<b><i>Improving Precision in the Present</i></b>
<i>Facilitating a “nearer and distributed now”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A commitment to realising the “latitude of action” of an agent/actor in the moment (i.e. the reflexive movement of an individual and a collective entity e.g. a group or team with shared accountability), advancing the ability of the agent to respond with precision when in the best position to act (i.e. optimising knowledge and evidence in the background and “on the ground”)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Principle of Shortness</i></li> <li><i>Principle of Flow</i></li> <li><i>Principle of Plurality</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A commitment to temporal treatments that go to the smallest relevant unit of time measurement possible</li> <li>– Key idiom, phrase or colloquialism: “<i>Go Shorter</i>”</li> <li>– a commitment to enabling maximal adaptation</li> <li>– Idiom: “<i>Max. Flex</i>”</li> <li>– a commitment to reducing absolutist mindsets, with their associated intolerances and monolithic domination, in favour of operating to respect a varied and relativistic set of ideas and delivery mechanisms (e.g. anti-monopolistic practices)</li> <li>– Idiom: “<i>Many Ways</i>”</li> </ul>

<sup>212</sup> By *heuristics* I mean the ways, through mental shortcuts, we reduce the complexity of making judgements in decision-making. Refer 10.5.1.



### 11.3.2. Freedom: Cultivating Ambition for the Future

To help expand possibilities of the “intrinsic value of freedom” (World Bank, 2017)<sup>213</sup>, cultivating ambition and examine the future purposefully, requires recognition of the need to pursue *freedom*. By this I mean freedom for facilitating both a short-run ability to exercise interconnected agency in positions where action is achievable – and the equal ability to recognise that constraints (e.g. lack of knowledge) with some issues, will mean that courses of action are best left undetermined. Importantly, it means the freedom to have vision and engage with future possibilities in a constructive sense, be it anticipatory undertakings that are simply motivating consideration of “what next?”, or in a more thorough sense, develop collaborative purpose (e.g. missions, statements of intent, agreement on outcomes) where aspirations are able to expand the perceptions of possibility.

<b>(2) Axiom of Freedom:</b>	<b><i>Cultivating Ambition for the Future</i></b>
<i>Finding an “open and ambitious next”</i>	– A maximal belief in betterment and avidly cultivating higher-order aspirations and abundant possibilities for genuine testing
<i>Principle of Long-ness</i>  <i>Principle of Fix-ability</i>  <i>Principle of Transferability</i>	– Pressing for the longer view with a commitment to temporal treatments that go to the “largest” relevant unit of time possible – Key idiom, phrase or colloquialism: “Go Longer”  – A commitment to directing momentum while recognising the need to be indeterminate where evidence is inconclusive by staying more widely focused and “un-fixed” – Idiom: “Min. Fix”  – A commitment to design for maximal interoperability, maximising linkages and connectivity to aid feedback with systems; and enabling learning between systems, to build inherent “anti-fragility” (Taleb, 2018) for continuity and adaptation – Idiom: “Many links”

### 11.3.3. Fortitude: Forging Open and Courageous Commitments

Direct, “free and frank”, and fearless advice is an important foundation condition for democratic functionality. As a long-held keystone for an effective Civil Service “speaking truth to power”, both politicians and their advisors in the context of media scrutiny need to “call it straight” rather than fudging and distorting to quell perceived public opinion. Fortitude is courage in adversity.

<sup>213</sup> As a World Bank Report (2017) on governance and law noted that aspects of governance such as “freedom” have *intrinsic value* (i.e. value in symbolic terms and of themselves). In economic terms they refer to freedom as an “opportunity set” and development as taking away exclusions from opportunities (i.e. the “removal of unfreedoms”), recognising that *instrumental value* also matters (i.e. key “positive” freedoms in development processes tangible open-up other freedoms). (World Bank, 2017, p.4).

Operating effectively at the nexus to improve public governance underscores the importance of maintaining and improving political and advisory civic practice. Raising professionalism and the way decisions are taken so clear evidence is used and less arbitrary decision making occurs, as Sir Amyas Morse (Comptroller and Auditor General of the National Audit Office) reflects on increased political intervention, requires vigilance:

*“The Civil Services have improved... there needs to be a rebalance between Ministers and the civil servants... There are still incidences of inappropriate bravo when it comes to spending taxpayers money. And that results in involuntary prioritisation away from things that might be where the money could be better spent. We need big brave thoughts backed-up by professional implementation skills.”* (Morse, 2019, ~19-21 mins).

Arguing transparency matters a lot, Morse notes that transparency (versus secrecy) has not improved in the current Parliamentary cycle, with the impact of Brexit producing a more negative atmosphere. He reflects: “There is nothing in the political discourse about transparency and in my view it really does matter a lot.” (Morse, 2019, ~16-18 mins). Direct and fearless governance action is that the heart of having fortitude. For example, courage is required when tackling the socialization of losses and private capture of gains i.e. profiting in ways to externalize costs in the present or push them forward into the future; or acknowledging the uncertainties when facing unforeseen challenges such as climate change.

<b>(3) Axiom of Fortitude:</b>	<b><i>Forging Open and Courageous Commitments</i></b>
<i>Forging a “direct and fearless” nexus</i>	– Proactively exercising “considered belief” in a commitment for substantive civic betterment, with an underlying resolve to open engagement and knowledge-sharing for courageously transparent decision framing and making.
<i>Principle of Transparency</i>	– Driving for full and frank openness – as much as is possible and practical – in assumptions, framing and decision making content, timeframes and processes for honest and straightforward practice – key idiom, phrase or colloquialism: “ <i>Visible methods</i> ” and: “ <i>Be honest early. Be honest often.</i> ” (Lederach, 2005, p. 160).
<i>Principle of Decisiveness</i>	– A commitment to clear, concise and timely advice with unambiguous expectations and processes for an alacrity in decision making, supported by timely and prompt reviews of progress to incentivize results and minimize inaction and “drift” – Idiom: “ <i>Swift action</i> ”
<i>Principle of Accountability</i>	– A commitment to taking positions and live with the consequences, with a focus oriented to the issues of collective responsibility, not individualized blame and punishment. – Idiom: “ <i>We are in it together</i> ”

A key factor to motivate re-setting democracy is the critical underpinning issue of *trust* for improved accountability – something that is implicit in the three axioms and unscored as the 9<sup>th</sup>

principle. I will add some further comments on trust and then finish this initial discussion. Frederick Douglass (Smithsonian Institution) in 1867 makes it plain:

“*Trust is the foundation of society. Where there is no truth, there can be no trust, and where there is no trust, there can be no society.*” (Skorton quoting Douglass, 2018).

In the contemporary context, the quest continues, with calls such as the *Institute for Government's* (IfG) report advocating for stronger accountability, shifting from blame to learning in complex systems (Guerin et al., 2018). As they state: “The scale and scope of government activities has grown increasingly complex in recent decades, and this trend looks set to continue. However, complexity is not an excuse for negligence, neither should it serve as a cover; rather, it is a challenge that government must face. Strong accountability helps responsible individuals to manage complexity better.” (Guerin et al., 2018, p. 3-4). Public sector practice issues are similar to the accountability in practice in applied industry settings (e.g. construction)<sup>214</sup> or for markets more generally in that those with governance oversight have responsibilities to lead and build trust. Dempsey's (2013) discussion of corporate governance and the 2007-2009 *Global Financial Crisis*, points to the OECD's assessment of widespread failures to properly and fully implement mechanisms and practices, with “creative compliance” and unclear roles and responsibilities. She observes: “Boards of directors were ultimately responsible for a lack of effective oversight.” (Dempsey, 2013, p.26). Similarly, political responsibility can be sheeted home to the Executive, with Cabinet as the correlative “top table”. While there are analyses of various kinds of the “state of trust”, the broad agreement is that trust has been eroded in recent decades and needs action for repair. For example, *Edelman* who produce trust metrics and proclaim an implosion of trust, consider leadership from the commercial world in concert with the public sector, whereby all actors move beyond their traditional institutional roles to build faith in the system, is a critical issue to continue with market-based arrangements without “havoc” wreaking populism (Edelman, 2017).

As implicit in the AGF, trust and accountability structures that build engagement and progress through action and learning offer the way forward. This is not an anti-dynamic stasis favouring conservation, being deployed as various forms of regressivism and reasons not to advance from status quo seeking moral high-grounds. Nor is it a rigid commitment to the “Precautionary Principle”,<sup>215</sup> dulling risk-taking and erring towards inaction from this type of moral high-ground. Rather, it is moral responsibility to not escaping liability for long-term costs left for future

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<sup>214</sup> Iain Parker's discussion of “how to be good” in the construction industry in light of large project challenges, makes the point that seeing the whole system and gaining confidence and commitment to turn good ideas into action, is the type of leadership required for progress (Parker, 2019).

<sup>215</sup> For a recent discussion of the *Precautionary Principle* (PP), refer to Read and O'Riordan's briefing that captures the moral framing as they outline the principle's current status (Read and O'Riordan, 2017).

generations, a commitment to systems design principles as a guiding process<sup>216</sup>, a recognition of complex systems realities and the plurality of views that must be encouraged, encountered and processed to find the best way forward. This is a commitment to trust and key shared principles that moves from vague preambles about accounting for the future, to embedded systemic design and supporting procedures that can deliver action, building active progress and promulgate trust in the process of delivering greater transparency and stronger results. This will not eliminate policy disagreements, issues of political legitimacy, and values-based clashes. Dealing with deep disagreements about facts will at times be problematic (Keppel, 2017). What becomes paramount is a commitment to active dialogue and shared affirmation of the agreed territory, readings of terrain and commitment to trust-building through unwavering axiomatic commitment in public service.

Changing current socio-economic arrangements requires a sustained commitment to clear priorities, building the support of a constituency for a new style of “social contract”.<sup>217</sup> Leaning on the essence of human nature’s desire for continuance and preservation, we have to design systems to count on translating and enacting the positive aspects of human nature. While other attributes and associated technologies might fade or fail, ensuring solid institutional forms that dovetail with the best of the human ethos is the challenge to hand. To steer a responsible course through authentic, legitimate and responsive democratic institutions that value transparency and shared knowledge for advancing the greater good, leads to fundamental questions about values and ethics for achieving necessary moments of change and stability to navigate systems challenges. Cast as axiomatic principles, I have developed a set of inclusive ethical orientations that can be developed further. Applied application via embedding the principles in specific operating contexts can provide development opportunities to test and refine a working set of guiding ideals. Moving from the level of principle formation to the level of applied practice considerations, I traverse the issue of power and re-orienting for achieving civic potential further.

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<sup>216</sup> There will be general and specific design principles that have utility at an operational and delivery level for policies, programmes and projects. For example, Case (2017) flags principles like that “high-quality user experience counts for customers and citizens” and that “time counts for individuals and businesses” (Case in Goldsmith & Kleiman, 2017, p. x).

<sup>217</sup> The *social contract* as a concept dates back to Rousseau’s work in 1762, where he asserts that the “people” are sovereign and have rights e.g. see key extracts from Rousseau in Capaldi and Lloyd (2011). A key perspective he held was that the government must remain a separate institution from the sovereign body (the “general will” of the people). (Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Social\\_Contract](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Social_Contract)). In contemporary general usage and as I mean it, the concept signals the legitimacy of the relationship between civic society and government, expressed in a multitude of ways.

## 11.4 Arête: *Power, Pivoting and Potential*

Axiomatic practice for betterment requires the power to exercise principles to do so. I have introduced the idea that to enhance connecting the spheres of political activity to the systemic designs and methods of civic decision architecture, necessitates a new shared and inclusive family of acceptable axioms and principles to undergird democratic social landscapes. This has implications for power. Be it direct or indirectly exercising, testing the “use of”, or accepting the “loss of” power; proposed or actual changes generate consequences that need to be factored into governance impacts, intentions and interfaces (3Is). Finding stronger axiomatic common ground assists communication across divides to communicate about the nature of issues in potentially more constructive ways. Pivoting the political orientation and day-to-day narrative from – shallow to deep, from personality de-basing to professional consideration of, and from knowledge/emotion disconnected dualities – is a fundamental task of our times. The capacity to engage in new dimensions of understanding, thought and discursive practice evokes an awareness of power in practice.<sup>218</sup>

To accept a re-focussed decision architecture and associated techniques to support a democratic ensemble places the challenge of yielding to a new logical structure of arrangements when “doing the work” of, or “business” of, public governance. Where hitherto obfuscation has provided a handy smokescreen or futile terrain for employing disorientation tactics geared to retain the status quo in favour of existing beneficiaries of the current predicament, the “sunlight” of transparency washes away murkiness. While talking of issues when explicitly revealing the representable patterns of physical design, Christopher Alexander’s (1964) words lay bare the implication of the associated “intellectual loss of innocence” that come from insisting on the transparency of form:

*“The use of logical structures to represent design problems has an important consequence. It brings with it the loss of innocence. A logical picture is easier to criticize than a vague picture since the assumptions it is based on are brought out into the open. Its increased precision gives us the chance to sharpen our conception of what the design process involves. But once what we do intuitively can be described and compared with non-intuitive ways of doing the same things, we cannot go on accepting the intuitive method innocently. ...I wish to state my belief in this loss of innocence very clearly, because there are many designers who are apparently not willing to accept the loss.” (Alexander, 1964, p. 8).*

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<sup>218</sup> To acknowledge debates about power and its meaning, Bourdieu’s perspective is that power is constantly recreated and legitimised through an interplay of agency and structure – what he terms as being in “habitus” (Bourdieu, 1977). Habitus is neither a result of free will, nor determined by structures, but created by a kind of interplay between the two over time: dispositions that are both shaped by past events and structures, and that shape current practices and structures and also, importantly, that condition our very perceptions of these (Bourdieu 1984: 170). In this sense habitus is created and reproduced unconsciously, ‘without any deliberate pursuit of coherence... without any conscious concentration’ (ibid: 170). (Source: <https://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/bourdieu-and-habitus/>)

Similarly, for policy-makers as designers of systems and interventions (advisors) – and those guiding their work and making decisions (governors) – a loss of power with greater transparency providing more sunlight removing the shadows within which the performance of the “dark arts” is dependent for cover, is a loss to be overcome. Noting that a loss of innocence means that the prior state of mind cannot be regained, Alexander takes the view that such a loss demands attention, not denial (Alexander, 1964, p. 11). In the case of policy-making and politics, this translates to facing the consequences of more transparency in both principle and practice, alongside an acceptance or rising and falling on the merits of fair accountability. In concert with the automated reflexivities possible in algorithmic decision systems, this serves to accentuate the need for clear conceptual focus on the procedural design and a review of implications.

My view is that this approach is necessary within a consistent schematic high-level design monitoring a *systemic pivot*. Rather than a blanket highly-detailed consideration of the processes of change, the modus operandi is to provide the context and conditions for transformative acts to emerge and then orchestration of weaving the ensuing threads of development to sustain a coherent pattern of momentum. The four “layers” (as per Table 2.3.3) offer a guiding frame to work through change and power issues. Key to this is that specific *micro-interests*, generalizable *meta-ideologies* and mechanistic *meso-institutions* need to be in analytic scope, so as to facilitate the production of a holistic *macro-interactionist* viewpoint. This is where strategies, signals and structures are the subject of attention to amalgamate a synthesis or connected “360-degree view”.

I now turn to the political issue of communicating systemic change through intentional design over timeframes requiring patience. Finding our *civic potential* is an ongoing task that is embodied in actual, anticipatory and attainable modes of deliberation and decision making. Transformation takes time – acknowledging a pluralistic set of perceptions of time on any issue will exist. Political activity can channel a range of affective emotive responses or “moods” about various issues, the timeframes of change, and the “agency” or capacity to act of governors. It can promulgate retrenched nostalgia and fear about “what next”, euphoric unbounded optimism for the future, or a deadening apathy and general dis-interest. The populist left or right wing tactics can equally stoke reactionary shifts in civic mood, attention and temporal expectation. This is accentuated and spotlighted by sensationalist coverage and attention to the drama of clashes rather than an appreciation of what works and what could work.

Subsequently, part of the performative dimension of the political task is community explanatory work, normalising and calming narratives at times, and mobilising and activating narration to prompt change at other times. In rethinking political communication Findlayson (2019) makes the

point that: “our choice is not between acquiescence to elite authority on one hand, and acceptance of our cacophonous public sphere on the other” (Findlayson, 2019, p.77). Rather, careful thought about how we can work with contemporary digital technologies and their speed of dissemination to constructively expand politics, can improve content quality and democratic capacity. This requires working with the benefits as well as dealing with the ethical challenges – recognising the power issues being worked with and on – so as advance beyond intentional manipulation and distortions of rational analysis (ibid, p.78).

In concert, civic institutions and the bureaucratic entities employed to do the work of the State, by their nature play a part in moderating excesses and mediating practical steps, in the face of spirited demands, stubborn resistance and occasional turmoil. At times they provide a political foil if actions are too strong or weak, or too fast or slow for constituents and stakeholder interests. As such, they materialize as an excuse for a politician who blames the bureaucracy to defuse his or her level of agency and individual accountability. At other times they enforce legal requirements in the form of procedures, processes and positions of responsibility. Together, the domains of political and civic service co-produce and deliver activities in democracies to atone societal expectations, to varying degrees of success. Trust and integrity expands when fairness is predominant in an open culture, and when communication is transparent. When processes, decisions and results are perceived and experienced as fair and accessible, it makes a difference. Through consistent practice, a constructive and positive engagement for a trustworthy civic culture that is “just” is foundational for improving public governance and trust in decision making. To attain trust and pride to upholding high standards of systemic integrity brings into play the need for a cultural commitment to building shared values.

Finding common ground in pursuit of our wellbeing requires the “head and the heart” interact in people, organisations and procedural arrangements. An awareness of the need to navigate between thoughts and feelings to arrive at analytic (head) and emotionally (heart) resonating decisions about what to do in our shared best interests, is always essential. This is a key cultural ingredient in the quest for *arête*, to evoke the Greek tradition:

*“Philosophy, political theory, and common sense tend to view emotion and reason as two opposite forces that must somehow be reconciled so that people can function as informed citizens. What is at stake here is the ability of humans to balance thought and feeling so as to progress through civic life ably, in pursuit of what philosophers have used many words to describe, but the most fitting in the civic context is that of arête (ἀρετή)—defined by Aristotle as the act of living to one’s full potential and what we nowadays refer to as happiness and well-being in everyday life.” (Papacharissi, 2014, p. 7).*

To overcome both the intellectual fragmentation that is a by-product of necessary specialization, and the moral fracturing that is a by-product of pluralistic cultural identity constructs, prone to

highlight difference – subsequently amplified to divide and rule by distinctions of state, ethnicity and religion for example – it becomes paramount to find an “interoperable” discourse to developed shared understanding of actions to express directionality. In other words, the pathway forward for societies can be assisted by having a common set of concepts and principles to assist guiding a way into better addressing, understanding and talking action for headway. Overcoming “talking past each other”, institutional deadlocks, intractability and coordination failures to advance important issues for betterment, has become an acute challenge to remedy. Working in an engaged and participative sense in the domain of public policy-making in bureaucracies, respecting political difference, while searching for common ground as mainstream practice, is a key aspect to advancing a purposeful modularity at strategic and tactical levels for attainable governance. Embedding new narratives and shared discourse formation processes can effect change. This is not to say that the evidence-informed mode of rational decision-making is in any way over. Rather, it is to say that this activity needs to be carefully contextualised and placed within the contours of purpose, as one significant and important “factual” input in the plurality of forces that influence arriving at decisions. I now conclude the chapter with consideration of how this thinking can activate a culture of integrative anticipation.

### **11.5 Activation: *Integrative Anticipation***

In summary, the position developed in support of the *Attainable Governance Framework* (AGF) in this chapter equates to: (i) a challenge to the outcomes-oriented dominant strategic practice that washes over the Civil Service from an NPM (New Public Management) era gripped by a rational evidence-based policy paradigm, (ii) a call for the formulation of high-level axiomatic terrain upon which to build shared strategic traction, and (iii) a transparent design and communications process to find our common civic potential. These three elements clearly interact together in concert with the AGF, establishing and bolstering a new logic and narrative structure to uphold exemplary practice and improved applied activity to deliver civic results.

I contend axioms and principles offer the scaffolding for value development to be practiced and tailored to specific jurisdictions and entities to guide practice to reach our potential. The rationale being that without a high-level expression of the style of strategic technique, it is more difficult to act as energy has to be burned to “get to the start-line” and often we do not make it in a way that can ensure adequate participation, focus, and odds for successful decisions. These decisions are the ones that can determine intervening activity, or a conscious choice to “wait and see” for example. Without a series of “scores” it is hard to orchestrate, empower self-organisation, or give individuals and collective entities (e.g. communities) an overarching sweep within which they can studiously self-learn and be free to adapt.



To this end, I advocate practicing *Integrative Anticipation* for “orderly” transformation. By this I mean – the melding of the integrative viewpoint and the anticipatory viewpoint – for well organized and systematic change processes. This connection seeking and forward looking mode of governance implies as Pasty Healy puts it: “...grasping the fine grain of the interactive dynamics between situational specificities and broader dynamics is critically important.” (Healy, 2003, p.117). From an analytic point of view, keeping both the *micro* “fine grain” “interactive dynamics” and the *meta* “broader dynamics” in a critical learning frame, is necessary for getting the breadth of picture and depth of horizon to conduct fit-for-purpose contemporary analysis.

## Summary of Part 3: *Orchestrating the Preferable*

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*“... a system cannot rely on mechanisms and procedures to maintain it, if there is no integrity at its core and nothing to provide stability and determine orientation.”* – Alison L. Dempsey (2013, p.27).

### **3:i) Synthesis**

High quality and fit-for-purpose procedures are necessary, but not sufficient in and of themselves. The character of the human agency at play – i.e. the professional commitment of people in entities to pursue the public good – is a key underlying determinant of the quality of human decision-making processes. As Dempsey (2013) reminds us, people are “fallible and subject to biases and interests not necessary coincident or aligned with the interests of organisations, their shareholders and stakeholders, or society in general” (ibid). Therefore, the cultural conditions and leadership tone set has consequences for practice and performance. This places responsibilities squarely in the political domain to provide exemplary standards, as well as in all levels of the Civil Service to contribute, support and deliver. I have made the case for application of processes, practices and praxis to this end, complimenting it with a proposal for re-alignment of goals, axioms for shared guidance principles, and a better focus on arête to active practice improvements to realise civic potential.

I claim the procedures inform a materially substantial systemic re-orientation from an old paradigmatic state to a new state, reframed and applied to deliver a proposition for refreshing democracy. The implicit argument layered-up is that the type of practices, principles and processes employed and drawn together, or harmonised, are in sum the necessary formative elements to operationalise and enliven contemporary democracy to develop and enhance our ability to improve – and at times regain – governance system legitimacy. By its very nature in constructing possibilities for future action, this Part is promulgating the underpinnings of a new culture of governance, public policy practice and societal engagement with public decision-making. Thus it is seeking to advance in a logically consistent fashion the consequences of the *proposition* so as to bring it to life in applied contexts. In doing so, the concepts, discourse and language that suits the proposition in an applied sense, are elaborated upon to make the framework operationally fit-for-purpose.

In applied terms, I also consider the current Whitehall operating context and the practicalities of implementation. Noting that it may require a crises-induced temporary “pause” in political conflict to produce the conditions, I contend this is achievable in the contemporary environment. Transformation will require some form of agreement or “pact” be facilitated between the politics of the day (i.e. the governors in power and “governors-in-waiting”) and the Civil Service (Whitehall

senior leadership). These conditions will enable the introduction of an Attainable Governance transition with the necessary proposed “pivot” in strategic policy-making practice.

### **3:ii) The Preferable**

The *preferable*, as proposed in the *Future Opportunities Viewfinder* (refer diagram 4.4.3.A) is the solution and resolution timespace between the “possible” and the “plausible”. Hence in the “preferable” I reference “a grounding solutions focus” getting to findings as actionable system changes for making transformation “doable” in an attainable mode. That is, what is preferable for the public good when all known considerations are taken into account. After linking this concept to that of “orchestration”, as has been worked up through the chapters, as an overarching response I see procedures as guiding the “orchestration of the preferable”.

### **3:iii) The Orchestration of Purposeful Modularity**

I draw on the idea of *orchestration* and in doing so, acknowledge the functional imperatives of continuous adaptation and more short-run flexibility interacting with long-run purposefulness. I introduce the evolutionary-styled concept of modularity as a building block to think about framing – that is “right-sizing” and “right-timing” the components of strategy (as situational direction), purpose (as motivational intent) and delivery (as operational activity). Part 3 therefore provided an exploration of procedures as active, aligned and “orchestratable” practices for applied governance. In theoretical terms, it brought into play the strategic framing of public administration and management activity. I advance that contemporary expectations about participative democratic methods and the role of the State in legitimately leading purposeful advancement in the face of challenges, comes into sharper focus with more analytic activity and greater civic transparency. I develop a case for *purposeful modularity* as the strategic orientation to deal with complex decision-flows and the associated workflows.

## **ENDING: *Attainable Governance***

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### **Closing Thoughts and Reflections:**

#### **12. Conclusion: *Revitalising Democratic Governance***

12.1 Outline

12.2 Interaction: *Reset, Rethink and Reframe*

12.3 Introspection: *Reflect, Reform and Research*

12.4 Intermediation: *Essence, Ethos, Experimentation*

12.5 Revitalising: *Facing the Democratic Challenge*

### **Appendices and Bibliography:**

#### **Appendices**

##### **Appendix 1: *Countering Presentist Logics***

#### **Bibliography**

## 12. Conclusion: *Revitalising Democratic Governance*

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### 12.1 Outline

*"With our better understanding of how thinking occurs, and how a thinking mind both utilizes and engineers its technologies and environment as a cognitive aid, we can... 'build designer learning environments tailored to install and support better habits of thought'... Nowhere are 'better habits of thought' needed than in our current systems of government." – J. Dunagan (2012, p. 843).*

The aim of this work was to forge a new way of seeing and doing democracy so as to keep it functionally salient, relevant and competently practiced whereby operational functionality, civic trust and modular purposefulness can improve together. This has been advanced by proposing moving forward existing institutional arrangements and practices in ways that are both ambitious for the future yet *and* conservatively nurturing of the past's hard-won experience. I have looked to retain the value of learning and the advantages gained and "baked into arrangements" with the support of new thinking, systemic design and supportive heuristic treatments. Recognising the need for a new blend of progressivism and conservatism to be advanced in concert with each other for attaining improvements has been central. The "hardware" design of decision architecture (framework), the associated "operating system" (methods and mechanisms) and the requisite "software" (cultural practice) for high quality decision-making, needs to be refreshed.

In building a case for a "decisive reset" to produce a public governance platform for transformation, the shortcomings of the current state have been established. I note existing arrangements and assumptions as enduring expressions of the neoliberal phase, often short in explanatory power, theories of change and methods for management that recognise complexity. Overall, the nature of many "messes" calls for strategies that do not restrict modular experimentalism due to simplistic market-based assumptions, alongside a constructive view with regard to the role of public sector in producing (and co-producing) value (progress and improvements) with a wide range of interests (i.e. civic society and for-profit interests).

Rather than placing an emphasis on dissecting the nature of current problems in the *predicament* deeply, I cue-off a well documented generalised condition to place an emphasis on constructing a *proposition* and supporting *procedures* to establishing a conceptual framework for future testing. The underlying importance of theories of integration, temporality and integrality are explored, recognising the need to re-specify the foundations of contemporary participative democracy. The nature of functionality and compositions to maximise capacity and capability to orchestrate strategic alignments across timespace, has been shown to be critical for democratic evolution. Building capacity for generative solutions to emerge that have a proactive edge in a fast-moving

context, has to move from being counter-intuitive in bureaucratic culture to mainstream practice. Implicit in my case is the need for both political and Civil Service evolution for a better quality of governance aligned to contemporary demands. This requires new “habits of thought”, in Dunagan’s terms, where design-based “learning environments” update the nature of interaction between the political and bureaucratic spheres. These environments will need to embrace an awareness of the *reflective next* and the *reflexive now*, the *conceptual* and the *concrete*, and the moderation of *open* and *closed* resolutions.

In this concluding chapter I first consider the key elements of the work under the thematic heading of “interaction” (12.2), signifying the centrality of the need to “reset” the arrangements of doing democratic practice. To pursue a new level of amalgamation for coherent, transformative and energising advancement also requires a culture practice “re-think”. An integrated and integral mindset demands a connected and actionable practice. The challenge is to move beyond “muddling through” or circumnavigating “wicked” problems as the best response to the predicament. This is resignation to a distorted status quo. My position implies that given the seriousness of the predicament – broadly for humanity and future progress – “shoulder shrugging” is civic negligence. Acquiescing to presentism, accepting dysfunction and replicating power imbalances will be increasingly unacceptable as transparency increases and knowledge is more widely available.

Second, I provide an “introspective” section for the purposes of reflecting on the thesis process, the associated learning and to signal potential ways forward (12.3). Third, I gather threads in a discussion of “intermediation” as the focal work-zone for mediating timespace, whereby practice will demand a higher form of design intentionality, meta-theorising and operational psychology for effective civic progress. The proposal’s essence is synthesized into the conceptual notion of an Attainable Governance “ethos”, with an experimental reality highlighting the need for a different approach to oversight and management (12.4). To close, I round out with a call to revitalise democracy (12.5). I echo the warning of others, pinpointing the significance of the Civil Service and our civic discourse as unavoidable in making change that can emanate from the heart of Westminster outwards. Recognising that the circumstance of the era is beyond a “political fix” alone, a “pact” to pivot arrangements between politics and the Civil Service is needed.

## **12.2 Interaction: *Reset, Rethink and Reframe***

*“What kind of economic system is most conducive to human wellbeing? That question has come to define the current era, because, after 40 years of neoliberalism in ... advanced economies, we know what doesn't work.” – Joseph E. Stiglitz (2019).*

Closely connected to this sentiment, is the fact that we know what does not work when it comes to democratic progress. A developing economy in a resilient society pursuing constructive objectives, guided by genuine democratic participation with robust processes to factor in the future potentials, will feature an integrated, agile and adaptive approach to decision framing and making. To move beyond our current economic and political “malaise” as Stiglitz (ibid) labels it, requires a new comprehensive agenda with enough coherence to lead governing a mainstream advanced society. This has yet to materialise anywhere. My perspective is that what is lacking is not simply a new economic theory or an inability to agree on a future vision. Many of the elements of economic understanding are developing in academic spheres, with renderings of better futures (or “mission” details) not entirely defunct in the governance sphere. Rather, while the need for new economic thought and applied goals is ongoing, what is lacking is the “social theory of change” to reset the way-finding method to learn our way forward through action. This opens up a new category of progressivism, as we have yet to see arrangements and the type of resolution-making decision framing required to go beyond neoliberalism.

### **12.2.1. Reset – A Decisive Reset**

Current UK democratic practice features the hallmarks of a system that reverts or “flops back” into default settings. This state features divisive, siloed, short-term settings, hindering dynamic emergence of self-managing solutions. A closed and resistant operating system results in uneven, disrupted and fragile societal headway that depowers its potential. The requirement for proposed *decisive reset* is in short, the pursuit of an open and adaptive operating system seeking dynamic progress, overall long-run societal stability and ongoing adaptation resolve issues. This would feature phased systemic resolutions to ensure purposeful modularity, helping to find expansive development opportunities. It would require reaching a practical agreement about a practice “pivot”. I have suggested that the necessary conditions to achieve this are an inclusive public sector intervention, where a new “pact” is formed to reset strategic policy advice practice and associated decision-making expectations. This is where the Civil Service (as the official advisors) and the Cabinet (as the sitting government in power) arrive at a point of shared agreement of the need for performance improvements. Often change of this nature will be triggered by poor performance and a mutually undermining crisis (or series of interconnected crises) that highlight the shortcomings encountered with what I characterise as the “residual default”. It is advantageous if the Opposition as the “government in waiting”, is involved in constructive dialogue during this phase so changes can be bedded in that endure.

In summary: (Table 12.2.1 over)

Table 12.2.1: *Transformational Features in the New Democratic Challenge – From Default to Reset for Attainable Governance*

From: “The Residual Default”	To: “The Decisive Reset”	Transformation featuring:
<p><b><i>Closed, resistant and tumultuous</i></b>                      Divisive negative and angular forces with a culture of inconsistent and interrupted governance practice</p>	<p><b><i>Open, adaptive and peace-seeking</i></b>                      Combined positive and rounded forces for a culture of continuous governance improvements</p>	<p><b><i>Phased systemic reordering and purposeful modularity</i></b>                      Interactive and evolutionary governance and leadership recognising incomplete oversight, the need to see and accommodate contradictions, and the importance of higher purpose for modular change</p>
<p>Fragmentary, siloed and divisive plans with sub-optimal whole-of-system consideration and awareness</p>	<p><i>Integration of the systemic mess</i> – tighter integration of the systemic mess in the policy-making habitus<sup>219</sup></p>	<p>Rising systems practice paying attending to the edges (boundaries) and their permeability (porosity) so as to find the optimal form and function (ensemble”) to orchestrate issues for a progressive future</p>
<p>Presentist and short-run mono-vision imagined futures with a restrictive array of possibilities</p>	<p><i>The timespace window</i> – sharper resolution on temporality through the timespace window in analytics and decision-making</p>	<p>New applications for expanded conceptions of timespace to frame possibilities in more ambitious and achievable terms, with an expanded and extending conception of opportunities</p>
<p>Regressive misaligned and misleading political orientations and arrangements hindering connectivity and emergent adaptation</p>	<p><i>A responsive leadership</i> – transparent and dynamically responsive style in political, public sector and civic leadership for effective governance practice</p>	<p>Recognition of the psychological impact of immediacies, stress and impact for <i>timespace window</i> that causes alienation (including from political participation) and new support for more ethical deepening of engagement augmented by technological methods (e.g. digital democratic possibilities for enhanced input, feedback and voting).</p>

<sup>219</sup> I follow Bourdieu’s definition of habitus here, in the sense of it being composed of: “[s]ystems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them” (Bourdieu, 1990, p.53).



A *decisive reset* evokes the need for a clear “pivot point” to transition to a new way of doing governance practice. A more decentralized and non-hierarchical operating environment can help with key societal issues so new objectives and incentive structures can be developed. The way forward can be adaptively made with a series of “proof of concept” experiments to advance learning and evidence-informed development. This requires reconsideration of the relationship to power taken, as well as the underpinning axioms (as detailed in 11.3) guiding practice.

### **12.2.2. Rethink – Conceptual Interplay**

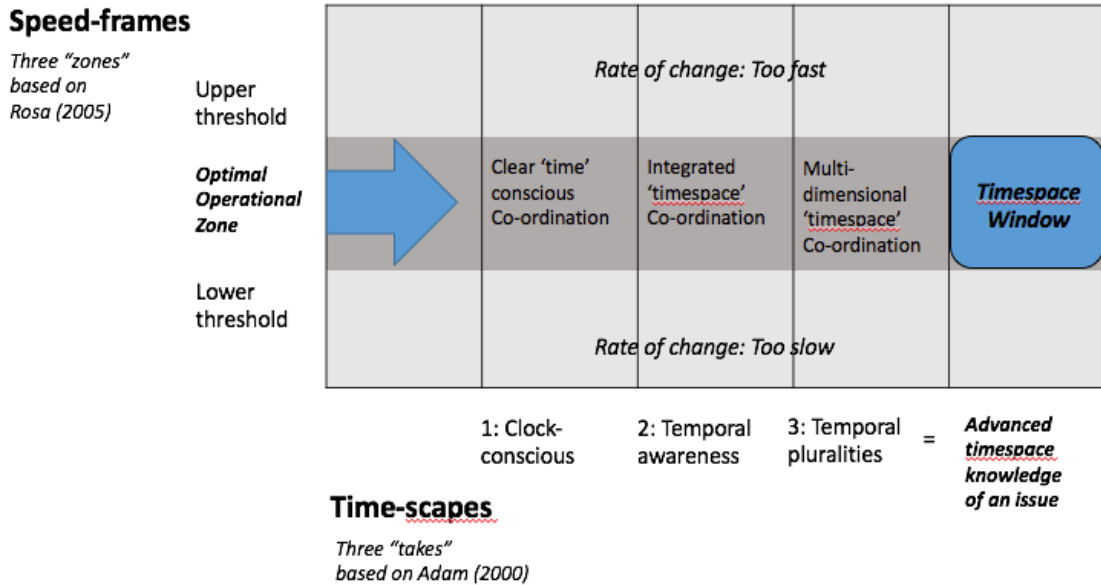
A decisive reset to *Attainable Governance* assists democratic progress with fresh ways of seeing the interactions between policy framing, democratic values and decision-making processes. My strategy was threefold, starting with (1) galvanising key concepts of theoretical inquiry to form a series of viewpoints about issue articulation, expanded temporality and anticipatory governability. The synthesis of these for a more functional system became the meta-lens through which to conceive of and design practice to address the *New Democratic Challenge* (Part 1). I viewed problems as more than “wicked”, conceiving of issues as either *problems*, *messes* or *systemic messes*:

Table 12.2.2A: *Issue Inquiry Approach – Problems, Messes and Systemic Messes*  
(Summary from Table 6.5.0)

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Messes</b>	<b>Systemic Messes</b>
as “wicked problem” or “mini-messes” <i>Q: What is the problem to be “solved”?</i>	as “system of problems” <i>Q: What is the mess to be “resolved”?</i>	as “system of sub-systems” <i>Q: What is the systemic mess to be “undertaken”?</i>

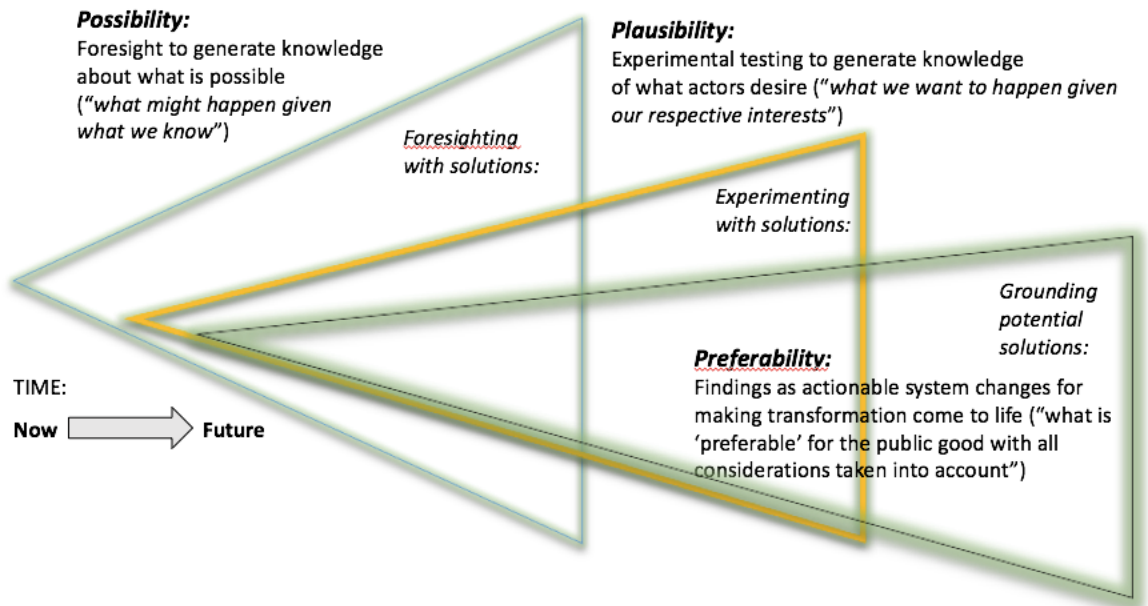
Often underplayed in theorising and practice, I expanding temporality or *timespace* (2) as a critical dimension for opening-up transformative analysis, understanding and action. I formulated the *Timespace Window*:

Table 12.2.2B: *Temporal Inquiry Approach – Timespace Window*



With respect to anticipatory governability, I underscore the significance of being forward-looking for integrated solutions and resolutions (3). This brings into play the anticipative *Future Opportunities Viewfinder*, driving at the need for “preferable” futures to be rendered from an exploration of the “possible” and the “plausible”.

Table 12.2.2C: *Anticipatory Inquiry Approach – Future Opportunities Viewfinder*



**12.2.3. Reframe: Governing with Janusian Simultaneity**

In proposing the *Attainable Governance Framework* and practice methods, I have made the case for a systemic pivot in the Civil Service alongside the structure and form of political activity to

deliver progress. Adaptive guidance and oversight with a supporting decision architecture, rather than a desire to control and “spin” what is often not fully understood, requires confidence in strong frameworks, procedures and management. At times this will mean “letting go” power. To orchestrate progress that builds functional performance, democratic legitimacy and establishes a new purposeful oversight “repertoire”, produces a significant political, public sector and civic society opportunity to “reframe” how we activate and achieve doing the work of public deliberation and deciding. Like *Janus* who was the two-faced Roman god of “departures and returns” – represented by two faces over doorways observed the interior and exterior at the same time – there is the need to simultaneously conceive of and utilise at least two contradictory ideas or concepts (Rothenberg, 1971, p. 197).<sup>220</sup> To hold oversight with a Janusian simultaneity means working for and on the *attainable*, conscious of and informed by the *actual* and the *anticipated* together. The central finding emerging from the research process (the *AGF*), is a policy framing and decision architecture that supports acts of Janusian simultaneity to make reflexive, reflective and “both together at once” acts of orchestrative governance. In compact summary form, the *AGF* is:

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<sup>220</sup> This is the creative process Rothenberg termed “oppositional thinking” or *Janusian Thinking* (ibid), emphasising the immediate temporal attribute (holding different perspectives together at the same time) compared to Hegelian dialectical thinking of sequential thesis and counter-thesis. For a detailed discussion of the difference between Janusian Thinking, Dialectical Thinking, Conflict and Ambivalence, refer to Rothenberg, (1971, p.202-3).

Table 12.2.3A: Summary of Framework – Attainable Governance Framework (AGF)

Framework Summary:	<b>A. THE ACTUAL – “Now” governing</b>	<b>B. THE ANTICIPATED – “Next” governing</b>	<b>C. THE ATTAINABLE – “Nexus” governing</b>
	<i>A focus on understanding the current state</i>	<i>A focus on seeing the larger and longer system</i>	<i>A focus on co-creating a timespace window for change and resolving/dissolving different perspectives between the “reflexive now” and the “reflective next”</i>
PRACTICE SCOPE:	Governance for the <i>Actual</i> with a relentless focus on the “current situation” for maintaining operational stabilities and relevant contingencies to averting negative crises and disruptions and upgrade and renew systems so they are “fit-for-adaptation.”	Governance for the <i>Anticipated</i> with a relentless focus on the “generative situation” for projecting operational shifts, relevant contingencies and sustaining positive continuities for designing systems so they are “ready-for-absorption.”	Governance for the <i>Attainable</i> with a relentless focus on the “transformative situation” for the resolution of operational stabilities and shifts, along with the associated contingencies when resolving contradictions between the “fitness of” and “readiness for” adaptation and absorption.
HORIZON:	Key timeframe horizons are short-run e.g. elections, years to daily live developments.	Key timeframe horizons are long-run e.g. multi-election cycles, decadal to ecosystem epochs.	Key timeframe synchronicities are working together the short and the long, while identifying short immediacies and long indeterminacies out of scope
MINDSET:	An “ <i>admissible gaze</i> ” in a relatively “concrete” state with selective <i>sceptical diagnostics</i> to gauge operational value	An “ <i>adjacent gaze</i> ” in a relatively “conceptual” state for strategy making for <i>ambitious innovating</i> to expand exploratory value	An actionable “ <i>amalgamating gaze</i> ” in an absolutely “connected” state to combine the admissible and adjacent perspectives for resolutions and decisions to achieve <i>judicious practice</i> and decision-making.

If the AGF itself is one “face” of the proposal, the other face is the *procedural* aspects of “doing” *Attainable Governance* and its operational culture. The key practice dimensions developed and proposed are in short-form summary:

Table 12.2.3B: Summary of Practice – Attainable Governance Practice

<i><b>Dimension Practice</b></i>	<i><b>Dimension Purpose</b></i>	<i><b>Dimension Précis</b></i>
<b>Scope of activity</b>	<b>Optics</b> determining the field of vision and focus	<p><i>“Seeing change” as a process of building optimal transformation optics and testing the scope and scale of activity:</i></p> <p>A/ Actual: <i>Admissive lens</i> for limited strategic optics on the “now”            B/ Anticipated: <i>Adjacency lens</i> for generative adaptive optics on the “next”            C/ Attainable: <i>Actionable lens</i> for optimal transformative optics on the “nexus”</p>
<b>Degrees of linkage</b>	<b>Connectivity</b> determining the degrees of network linkage	<p><i>“Getting resolution” on linkages as formulating governance connections and test the degrees of strategic connectivity</i></p> <p>A/ Actual: <i>Admissive links</i> for “now” currency with immediate connectivities            B/ Anticipated: <i>Adjacency links</i> for “next” currency with deep generative connectivities            C/ Attainable: <i>Actionable links</i> for “nexus” currency with transformative connectivity agreements</p>
<b>Rate of change</b>	<b>Cycles</b> determining the scope and rate of change	<p><i>“Iterating strategies” as understanding systems to determine the best approach to issue scope and rate of change handling methods</i></p> <p>A/ Actual: <i>Admissive loops</i> for fast and rapid learning cycles for the “now”            B/ Anticipated: <i>Adjacency loops</i> for slow exploratory learning cycles for the “next”            C/ Attainable: <i>Actionable loops</i> for optimal transformative cycles at the “nexus”</p>

Along with the *axioms* summarised next (Table 12.2.3C), taken as a package of concepts, frameworks, practices and principles, the *Attainable Governance proposition* provides the groundwork of a new democratic platform for enhanced functional practice that improves democratic legitimacy with a more fit-for-purpose interplay between the Civil Service and the politics of the day. In combination, this package offers a new direction that could gain cross-party buy-in. There is first-mover advantage at a number of levels to those prepared to take change seriously and address contemporary democratic dysfunctionality. There is scope to stop the erosion of democratic legitimacy and sub-par results on a multitude of issues where performance is causing discernable economic, environmental and social rifts having negative consequences. Refer Table 12.2.3C over:

Table 12.2.3C: *Summary of Principles – Attainable Governance Axioms*

<p><b>(1) Axiom of Flexibility</b></p>	<p><i>Improving Precision in the Present</i></p>
<p><b><i>Facilitating a “nearer and distributed now”</i></b></p>	<p>– Optimising the “latitude of action” of an actor in the moment (i.e. the reflexive movement of an individual), advancing the ability of an agent to respond with precision when in the best position to act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Principle of Shortness: “Go Shorter”</i> – a commitment to temporal treatments that go to the smallest relevant unit of time measurement possible</li> <li>• <i>Principle of Flow: “Max. Flex”</i> – a commitment to enabling maximal adaptation</li> <li>• <i>Principle of Plurality: “Many Ways”</i> – a commitment to reducing absolutist mindsets, with their associated intolerances and monolithic domination, in favour of operating to respect a varied and relativistic set of ideas and delivery mechanisms.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(2) Axiom of Freedom</b></p>	<p><i>Cultivating Ambition for the Future</i></p>
<p><b><i>Finding an “open and ambitious next”</i></b></p>	<p>– A maximal belief in betterment and avidly cultivating higher-order aspirations and abundant possibilities for genuine testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Principle of Long-ness: “Go Longer”</i> – pressing for the longer view with a commitment to temporal treatments that go to the “largest” relevant unit of time possible</li> <li>• <i>Principle of Fix-ability: “Min. Fix”</i> – a commitment to directing momentum while recognising the need to be indeterminate where evidence is inconclusive by staying more widely focused and “un-fixed”</li> <li>• <i>Principle of Transferability: “Many links”</i> – a commitment to design for maximal interoperability, maximising linkages and connectivity to aid feedback with systems; and enabling learning between systems, to build inherent “anti-fragility” for continuity and adaptation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(3) Axiom of Fortitude:</b></p>	<p><i>Forging Open and Courageous Commitments</i></p>
<p><b><i>Forging a “direct and fearless” nexus</i></b></p>	<p>– Proactively exercising “considered belief” in a commitment for substantive civic betterment, with an underlying resolve to open engagement and knowledge-sharing for courageously transparent decision framing and making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Principle of Transparency: “Visible methods”</i> – driving for full and frank openness – as much as is possible and practical – in assumptions, framing and decision-making content, timeframes and processes for honest and straightforward practice</li> <li>• <i>Principle of Decisiveness: “Swift action”</i> – a commitment to clear, concise and timely advice with unambiguous expectations and processes for an alacrity in decision-making, supported by timely and prompt reviews of progress to incentivize results and minimize inaction and “drift”</li> <li>• <i>Principle of Accountability: “We are in it together”</i> – a commitment to taking positions and live with the consequences, with a focus oriented to the issues of collective responsibility, not individualized blame and punishment.</li> </ul>

## 12.3 Introspection: *Reflect, Reform and Research*

This section covers a three-fold “introspection” to do the reflective processing commensurate with the research. First, I conduct a methodological reflection about thesis production. Second, I consider the meaning-making and applied consequences of the work, before outlining a potential research agenda going forward.

### 12.3.1. *Reflect: Methodological Reflections*

*“Progress in handling messes... derives at least as much from creative reorganization of the way we pursue knowledge and the knowledge we already have as it does from new discoveries.” – Ackoff (1979, p.102).*

Ackoff’s (1979) sentiment encapsulates the personal learning, offering an affirmation of the focus on how to “handle” reorganising issues as a progressive orientation. Starting out to “solve” “wicked problems” of urban affordability and development, I quickly tracked into the need to consider the reform of ideas, theories and concepts about how to manage change and do governance more effectively. This led into systems thinking and the design of civic processes to deal with inherent complexity and uncertainty. I realized that the open space to work in was that of “creative reorganization” to build the core concepts, underpinning language and practice heuristics to reframe public governance. This presented wider opportunities compared to a narrower empirically derived focus. Subsequently, I came to see my work as meta-theoretical in nature, sitting within the transdisciplinary tradition. My role has emerged as that of what now think of as a design methodologist in public governance decision architecture.

The challenge to produce an authentic and relevant thesis, with an eye to the future at a civic and personal level, forced some big and many small calculations made without knowing the equation to be solved or the consequences of the potential application of the findings. This type of journey is only well conducted with a license granted for curiosity and an appetite for calculating risk. What was missing based on stage 1 work (*issue investigation*) some form of connected, adaptive governance that could initiate, deal with and oversee the necessary systemic transformation. That is, the objective of developing to go beyond ideologically motivated binaries for higher entity functionality and humane results, could only become viable if the approach to policy and decision making changed. This led me into exploring the policy and decision “mindset” that could facilitate better advice and more attuned and useful political “value-add” to guide achieving results and lifting whole-of-system performance. The empirical predicament and theoretical elements of the proposition and procedural developments pursued in the work, are a “first response” reckoning with the nature of contemporary governance. Accordingly, stages 2 and 3 (*issue directionality* and *optionality*) are not closed-off from further development, rather remain as “opening”



interpretations, conceptualisations and frameworks that can be advanced theoretically and in applied terms.

When developing schemas that propose new ensembles and techniques of governance, the analyses involve charting the “adjacent possible”.<sup>221</sup> By sketching out or planning the unknown future, they are not what already exists, hence prospective and contingent. They are indeed proposals and can only be a conception of what is possible in the future. Clearly a “testable hypotheses” evades this level of analysis, rather a case for constructivist exploration and arriving at a positional declaration, or “stance”, was a more realistic expectation. At once this is a potential strength – the openness to rethinking afresh from first principles – and a potential weakness as “imaginaries” could in time be shown as decoupled from the dominant “reality”. In this regard, I have taken a cue from Rosa (2010) who asks social researchers to move beyond Kuhnian “paradigmatic riddle-solving” (Rosa, 2010, p.1) whereby: “I feel that we are in danger of running out of claims, hypotheses and theories that are inspiring and challenging for late-modern culture....” (ibid). As we look to the horizon and anticipate, we do so appreciating what we actually experience and do when we arrive at a point in the distance may be different than what we image. How something looks close-up on arrival is usual different from what we might imagine is part of the human condition and experience. When considering all theoretical proposals, we must remain open to revisit and rethink with the benefit of practice as it unfolds so we can adjust. This means being open to changing our perspectives and positions as we update by learning. Imagination, guided by experience in the form of intentional research (theoretical and empirical) and the consequent learning (conceptual or applied) is a central pursuit in knowledge generation. It is in essence a creative process, assisted by information filtering, sorting and testing methods to help weigh the voracity and viability of claims.

The associated judgment involved, rests upon a combined rendering of historical knowledge (what has gone before) and a situational awareness of the present (what is happening now). I weighted the later quality by diagnostically anchoring in the present, so as to establish propositions and supporting procedures. It is that which, by its virtue, embodies the most subjectivity. As such, the schematic form does inevitably rest on its perceived internal coherence and perceived external viability. This reality also respects that the concepts and principles advanced would undergo modifications in any applied context to optimise coherent progress. This acknowledgement of the necessary operational agility (more so than theoretical fluidity) when implementing a conceptual framework pivot, is aligned with the axioms proposed. Thus it remains inevitable that the intellectual enterprise remains unfinished. As Basu (2018) reflects about his work in law and

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<sup>221</sup> Unger (e.g. 2004) uses this term to indicate exercising the freedom to explore beyond incremental immediacies.

economics: “You simply have to call it a day at some point, and write it up, if you are so inclined. It is then available to others to discover its weaknesses and loose ends, and carry the agenda forward, if they are so inclined.” (Basu, 2018, p. 205).

### **12.3.2. Reform: Making-meaning from the Process**

To make meaning of the context sensitive, yet theoretical and conceptual design journey undertaken, I make some observations to acknowledge potential weaknesses in the work. A key limitation has been, unsurprisingly, time. From an applied perspective, I chose to not undertake direct Civil Service engagement and testing in the current Brexit-strained environment, instead focusing on theoretical development to maximise the academic exploration. In part this was because I could (a) draw on direct background experience working in the public sector for over a decade, and (b) there was public information accessible making “glimpses in” to the current context easy at the level required. With interviews of key public officials reported in online sector publications, much interviewing to understand the context and current issues was effectively done. A limitation has been the pragmatic choice not to conduct practitioner engagement to test, further evolve and expand the propositional and procedural elements. There is engagement and potentially fruitful conversations that could be undertaken now this work is completed.

My key theoretical reflection is that there is scope for new types of analysis in the social sciences that open out greater understanding of temporality across an array of contemporary issues. To work from the theoretical to the applied spheres of research of governance, politics and public policy and administration with time more centrally in mind, is something I see as under-explored. The potential of temporally proximate analytics, where the amplification of temporal as well as spatial terms offers insight, is wide open. Additionally, politics as histories of power in timespace, locating the locus of and application of power as equally about temporal management as it is about spatial control, offers scope for new work and re-interpretations. My primary reflection is that the spatial emphasis hitherto needs to be counter-balanced with the value of the temporal in theoretical and empirical analysis.

I turn briefly to the timing and nature of “releasing” *Attainable Governance*. The potential application of this theory and the evolution of the conceptual tool-making that adds to the stream of thought about better policy-making methods, is necessarily “released” for working its way into the evolving perspectives and emerging actions of governance operatives and governmental practitioners. Edwards (2010) reminds us that Giddens refers to this process – with a Polanyian nod – as an iterative “double hermeneutic” where the co-creation of big ideas and tangible social realities develop to interpret and progress surrounding practical complexities, then activities create and recreate recursive learning and further theorising in iterative and adaptive sense

(Edwards, 2010, p.10). While there is a sequential logic to the cycle proposed for *Attainable Governance*, the reality in practice has been, and is, that the research process has seen parallel developments and ongoing resolution and refinement of the phases in the first period of finding conceptual traction. It is envisaged this natural non-linear “form-finding” will be mirrored, to some extent further as learning emerges, only to fold back into further conceptual thinking and empirical undertakings. Some summary thoughts about doing future complexity governance research are now outlined.

### **12.3.3. Research: Extending a Research Agenda**

*"Our advanced universities are replete with specialized schools and disciplines that focus either on public administration or corporate governance. The focus on new forms of networked governance is not as prevalent or well structured; it is more the domain of for-profit consultancies which tend, not surprisingly, to keep their discoveries to themselves for competitive advantage. We need a new framework, set of methodologies and even language to capture institutions that reside in interstitial space."* – Bruce Katz (2019).

The frameworks, methods and language of *Attainable Governance* are the fulcrum of “interstitial”<sup>222</sup> timespace – that is the “in-between” as the functional nexus. Focusing on the challenge of urban governance in the USA, Katz (2019) zeroes in on the importance of new kinds of networked governance entities that can leverage collaboration, and creatively deliver opportunities by packaging public and private capital. This is one example of an area where attainable thought, decision architecture and practice can be applied to facilitate immediate action in fluid ways where the long-run is held in creative tension with the present to orchestrate action. There are many others. Katz’s recognition of the need for new approaches to open-up, reframe and re-describe governance theory and practice is the essence of the challenge I have worked on. He speaks to the demand for new ideas and practice to permeate throughout public, not-for-profit and for-profit leadership and governance. From endeavouring to pioneer on a new frontier of integral metatheory, there is a wide array of potential ongoing research opportunities. I signal preliminary overlapping bundles with an action research leaning to indicate potential directions of further inquiry:

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<sup>222</sup> An *interstitial space* refers to an intervening space (usually small) or the *interstice* which “intervenes between things”. Source: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/interstice>

Table 12.3.3: *Research Agenda: Advancing Attainable Governance*

<p><b>1. Furthering Applied, Contextual and Operational development (“micro” layering)</b></p>
<p>Orienting to how to “<i>make it happen</i>” via specific strategies, given interests e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would an orderly transition of a systemic pivot best be conducted? Can a piecemeal approach be taken, or is a whole of system shift necessary to optimise gaining benefits and neutralising externalities/costs?</li> <li>• What conditions trigger effective transformation and what pre-conditioning improves uptake?</li> <li>• What contextual and operational objectives need to be overcome when the AGF is applied to a particular context or issue?</li> <li>• What public value methodologies and tools need to be re-cast and re-tooled? What would these need to look like to support and work with the pivot?</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Furthering Conceptual, Theoretical and Methodological development (“meta” layering)</b></p>
<p>Orienting to signalling “<i>implications for existing thought</i>”, approaches to intellectual schemas or constellations of ideas (1.e. ideologies) e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What elements require further philosophical underpinning and grounding base on learning in various jurisdictions?</li> <li>• Does a structural and cultural pivot as proposed, compress and/or de-compress timespace in ways that are functional at individual human psychological, collective social group and institutional levels of “being”?</li> <li>• When establishing a <i>timespace window</i> (i.e. an analytic lens in the chronological period) to arrange or order events to be governed, when is this a productive endeavour and are there conditions when it would become counter-productive?</li> <li>• What conditions would need to be monitored and commensurate decision-making acting upon to retain a constructive mode of activity whereby the benefits of this approach are maximised?</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Furthering Political, Cultural and Constitutional development (“meso” layering)</b></p>
<p>Pertaining to the architecture of the democratic sphere and the “<i>implications for democratic practice</i>”, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under what political leadership and conditions do what elements become viable “moments of change”?</li> <li>• What could the application of AGF mean for Ministries, government agencies and Parliament?</li> <li>• What “Machinery of Government” changes would need to occur and when?</li> <li>• What would “real-world” testing of country-specific constitutional and legislative development look like?</li> <li>• What type of Civil Service culture pivot is required and how would that change work in the current environment?</li> </ul>

#### **4. Furthering Amalgamative and Holistic development of the three prior layers (“macro” layering)**

Pertaining to the interactions with the democratic sphere and the *“implications for coherent progress”*, e.g.

- What integrative governmental and wider civic conditions could trigger transformative moments?
- How would the “social contract” need to be explained, renegotiated or modified?
- What material impacts could be projected or predicted to make the “civic case” for investment?
- What general theories or paradigmatic developments would help international update in different regime forms?
- What temporal, complexity and integral conceptions are most valuable to transformation in different contexts and jurisdictions?

## 12.4 Intermediation: *Essence, Ethos, Experimentation*

*"To get real about purpose, we need to recognize that value is created collectively and build more symbiotic partnerships between public and private institutions... A more purposeful capitalism requires more than just letters, speeches, and goodwill gestures. Business, government, and civil society must act together, courageously..."* – Mariana Mazzucato (2019).

Intermediating between imaginative anticipation and seemingly inflexible “actuals”, is the work of inflecting transformation at the nexus. “Intermediation” means mediating “timespace” at the nexus which demands a higher form of practice including: (i) *design intentionality* (with structured blueprints and unstructured imaginative ideas), (ii) *meta-theorising* (deep thought and reflection about the “state of” and potential “future state”), combining with (iii) *agile management practice* (individual and organisational psychologies to handle interfaces). It is where a course of practice, accounting for overarching purpose, is resolved and agreed. My argument is that while we need to “get real” about “purpose” in Mazzucato’s terms, we cannot get real about establishing and finding it without the system design, institutional architecture and decision mechanisms that facilitate systematically *pursuing attainable purposes*.

In saying this, I make a three-part contention: (a) the “attainable” as I have argued does not signify a lack of ambition, rather a deeply ambitious and thoroughly researched anticipatory “next”, accounted for against the present “actual”, (b) “purposes” are plural not singular, consistent with the diversity of solution-seeking and resolution-making missions required to address the contemporary social, environmental and economic predicament of late neoliberalism; and (c), “pursing” is a dynamic moving process of oversight to understand, guide and orchestrate (versus an overriding emphasis on control and discipline).

In more detail, a rallying focal point, be it called a vision, mission or purpose, is necessary but not sufficient. “Power with” in some form of democratic participatory arrangement is only an aspect of leading transformation. Similarly, “power over” in some form of democratic representative arrangement is also a part of leading effective change. Therefore, as I have contended, the *form* and *function* of civic policy and decision practice (the *ensemble* to be “orchestrated”), will in its architecture and culture, reveal the degree of societal commitment to and flair in generating a prosperous future. This section makes concluding remarks based on distilling the “essence” of the research, synthesized by reflecting on what an *Attainable Governance* “ethos” can mean. I finish by consider the experimental operating reality required for an attainable approach.

### 12.4.1. *Essence – Synthesis of Parts*

I introduced that with democracy distressed and the public or civic governance system not fit-for-purpose in its current state, a case for change requires new thinking and the formulation of ways

to remedy the types of problems now commonly experienced. I establish that my argument centers on the reality that to evolve in these circumstances requires not only political change, but fundamental system change in the public sector. Contemporary democracy is bedevilled by lags and challenges to synchronize complex systems. When a shift in political leadership occurs there is a lag in the supporting apparatus's reorganisation to respond to the new agenda. Without wholesale bureaucratic restructuring, how to reconfigure for adaptation, where both system stability and a state of flux can be handled for a rate change commensurate with the nature of issues needing attention, is established as the primary governance challenge under investigation. In summary:

*Part 1* unpacked the contemporary governance *predicament*, with reference to the example of urban development and affordability in the context of the United Kingdom. The orientation was twofold:

- (1) to depict the current system of policy issues entailed in urban development and governance to empirically ground the analysis; and
- (2) to traverse theorising about dealing with governance systems and complexity to see what literatures may help illuminate how to deal with the challenge.

Focussing on complexity and temporality as under-developed concepts used for inquiry, the principal task was the synthesis of theoretical lenses to illuminate the nature of current governance deficiencies, along with the diagnoses of an empirical situation threaded into this development extending from key literatures. The essence of the predicament is that significant challenges across a range of fronts, showing-up as an array of symptoms including democratic disengagement and particular discontents, present the need for governance improvements. That is, governing coherently has become highly difficult given:

- (1) *functional arrangements* such as coordination within and between public entities and private markets in specific localities;
- (2) respective entity's awareness of and *(mis)treatment of time* in fragmented systems; and
- (3) the analytic and operational processes of *framing, informing and making decisions* in organisational contexts.

The knitting together of: *complexity theorising*, of which (a) the *systemic mess* is a condition and (b) *integrative design* is a focus, with (c) *temporality theorising* of which *timespace* is conceived of as the core conceptual devise given the socially constructed and contextually contingent "nature of time", highlighted through social theorising that these

concepts have value and can sit beneath doing time-sensitive governance in complex systems. It is evident that “getting around” a problem or “across” a mess is often hard given its shifting nature and contested specification of issues and the existing schemas of oversight. Getting around and leading in a “system of problems” or “systemic mess” for many issues is consistently highly problematic. This is the case across a range of complex issues featuring a contested framing and treatment given the nature of prevalent thinking and organisational arrangements.

The challenge becomes one of how we can (a) move beyond the debates that fixate and constrain democratic responsiveness and intelligent decision-making where the present outweighs regard for the future, (b) land on actionable decisions that will at times require deep participation and (c) at times require stronger direction and leadership from the centre. It may be that many issues are better served by decentralisation or devolution, by greater local engagement and empowerment, and by framing and making interventions at the level of particular solutions. However, without a means by which to better frame and inform such considerations, the capacity to work on these issues and arrive at good judgement about what to do, is constrained in the current operating environment. We can fix the governance problematic, but it requires a shift due to lack of:

- (i) structures and mechanisms (institutional design)
- (ii) purpose (necessary to drive change)
- (iii) strategy (incentives alignment), and
- (iv) a lack of political courage (leadership originality).

The consequence of this line of thinking, opened the way for **Part 2** to establish a different approach. I explored a new approach to governance as the undergirding philosophies and design determine impact and outcomes. I proposed a novel systemic arrangement that can refresh public governance and move towards restoring trust in government. The central task was to develop a new theory and conceptual framework of public governance that aligns form and context for improved democratic functionality. Given that wholesale reorganization would add further destabilization and lags into a system already under acute stress, the case was made to require a reset that is not wholly spatially-focused or contingent on shifting organisational boundaries. Traditional decentralization or re-centralization of control is not going to deliver timely results. This leaves taking a temporally-oriented reset as the main route to premise systemic reform upon. I drew on a range of disciplinary studies of time and change, including work that is predominantly philosophical, political and sociological.



The ensuing *proposition* was the logical proposal building element of the thesis with temporality theorising at the centre, where *timespace* is conceived of as the core conceptual devise for the re-construction of government contingent on taking seriously the nature of time as an underpinning element of transformation. The governance theory and conceptual framework proposed and called *Attainable Governance* was based on cross-disciplinary theoretical foundation development, advancing an open, adaptive and peace-seeking form of revitalised governance and renewed civic democracy. The institutional design advocated oriented to amalgamating positive forces for a culture of continuous improvement that is (a) integrative and “resolutionary”, (b) anticipatory and aligning, and (c) responsive and dynamic.

The role of the anticipatory or the next to provide the capacity to pivot between the *actual* and the *anticipated* to find the *attainable* is the heart of the mechanism proposed to better “sense-make” our activities now for the future. Methodologically I framed this as meaning the rendering of micro-tasks with as much intellectual adventure as the meta-tasks, ultimately interacting with the meso-arrangements for new macro-theories. Facing the fundamental issue of resolving the *systemic mess* adequately, I made the case for what can be conceived of as a “systemic bridge” between *what has been*, *what is*, and *what can be*. In closing down the discord between between aspirations and agency, or finding functional alignments between form and context, I sought to advance a pathway forward with an agenda encompassing the necessary twinning of structural intentionality (the architectures of the ensemble) and cultural transformation (the techniques of decision-making). Imagination and creativity was posited as important attributes as modern democratic practice needs a restorative boost to regain legitimacy and trust.

As incumbent power-brokers can erode the “capacity to get things done”, what it takes to effect change is focussed on in **Part 3**. The proposals orbit around the notion that a new systemic design *and* culture must be at the heart of realistic and authentic adaptation. I continue to build the case that a temporal systemic “pivot” with the support of heuristic tools, offers a new pathway for democratic reform beyond deepening participative engagement to rebuild trust or voting system reform. The case is for institutional alignment with the nature of today’s challenges so that genuine progress to meet our potential is made. Having a shared set of “neutral” ethics (*axioms* and *principles*) is necessary to lead towards increasing functionality with systems design and education “out front”.

As frameworks and mechanisms in and of themselves are not enough, I sought to establish a procedural “ensemble” for the supporting the decision architecture with cultural “operating software”. High quality and fit-for-purpose procedures need to be enacted with a professional commitment of people in entities to pursue the public good. The cultural conditions and leadership tone set have consequences for practice and performance. This places responsibilities squarely in the political domain to provide exemplary standards, as well as in all levels of the Civil Service to contribute, support and deliver. I have made the case for application of exemplary processes, practices and praxis, complimented with a re-alignment of goals, axioms for shared guidance principles, and a better focus on *arête* to realise civic potential.

I see procedures as guiding the “orchestration of the preferable”, acknowledge the functional imperatives of continuous adaptation and more short-run flexibility interacting with long-run purposefulness. I developed a case for *purposeful modularity* as the strategic orientation to deal with complex decision and work-flows. I claim the procedures inform a materially substantial systemic re-orientation from an old paradigmatic state to a new state, reframed and applied to deliver a proposition for refreshing democracy. I promulgate the underpinnings of a new culture of governance, public policy practice and societal engagement with public decision-making. The concepts, discourse and language that suits the proposition in an applied sense, are elaborated upon to make the framework operationally fit-for-purpose. The implicit argument layered-up is that the type of practices, principles and processes employed and drawn together, or harmonised, are in sum the necessary formative elements to operationalise and enliven contemporary democracy to develop and enhance our ability to improve – and at times regain – governance system legitimacy.

Therefore, the *predicament*, *proposition* and *procedures* as a whole serve to promulgate a call for action that is independent of voting system reform, constitutional change and organisational restructuring of the network of public service entities. It is also a fundamental change in form and function that can stand apart from debates about centralized or decentralized governance arrangements in terms of the spatial contests for geographic area “control”. The consequence of this is not insignificant to change and uptake prospects. In the UK context, to gain cross-party traction and the favour of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, any proposition will require operational acceptance through a process of engagement, adaptation and development.

Likewise, adaptation to meet the contours of opportunity and constraint in any other Westminster-based jurisdictions, will pose particularities requiring a degree of harmony for successful navigation be found between political and bureaucratic interests. More broadly, in the global contest to redefine liberal democracy and its relationship to capitalism, there is scope to consider the implications of thinking anew in the terms established. Strategies to counteract illiberal, autocratic and dictatorial regimes that seek to erode fundamentals including civic accountability and transparency, share the need for new ways to advance the practice of democracy. Refocus expectations for increased functionality and attainable oversight offers a fundamental “reset” opportunity.

#### **12.4.2. Ethos – A Progressive Democratic Ethos**

A democratic mind working beyond a self-generational interest embracing broader responsibilities, striving for higher purpose with a progressive attitude, suggests a new governance temperament. An enhanced attainable governance system and culture with a clearer purpose stands a greater chance of successfully guiding the emergence of improved societal functionality, or as some thought leaders are not putting it, a more “progressive capitalism” beyond neoliberalism (e.g. Stiglitz, 2019). A blend of design concepts, governance frameworks and ethical axioms, in concert, can generate a new *ethos*.<sup>223</sup> As Ashkenas (2009) summarizes:

*“... good government is Ethos Management... Perhaps the modern democratic state needs to be redesigned around these precepts if vision, policies, values and multiple motivations are to be captured in a distinctive ethos, enacted by a Viable System and coupled with the effective governance that leads to optimized citizen engagement and satisfaction for the majority, without alienating too many minorities. Then we could hope that we have at last created an organisation and operating culture, that is best suited, to carry out the ruling values, derived from the distinctive ethos, which summates the critical policies that citizens voted for.” (Ashkenas, 2009).*

The focus required for transformation, as flagged by reference to Janusian thought,<sup>224</sup> requires an ability to psychologically and institutionally handle contradictions for “real-time” governance work to creatively occur. Or in management terms, it “requires successive utilization of divergent and convergent multi-disciplinary thinking, together with abstraction, transduction and learning skills, if change is to be managed successfully” (Ashkenas, 2009). This depends upon political actors, the Civil Service and citizens in an inclusive sense, playing an active role to enhance democratic engagement, promulgating axioms and practice for a better balance between long-term performance and adaptive immediacies to work to mend frayed societal trust. My key point is that

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<sup>223</sup> By *ethos* I mean, following (Ashkenas, 2009), what we stand for now with regard for the future, expressed in words and actions as today’s characteristic spirit and genius of an amalgam of ideas, policies, systems and culture.

<sup>224</sup> Refer 12.2.3.

the *Attainable Governance* proposition provides part of the foundation work upon which further exploration for the development of a new *ethos* can occur.

### **12.4.3. Experimentation – with an Intermediating Imagination**

At the nucleus of an *Attainable Governance* ethos is the requirement for an agile, experimentally-spirited and adaptive state of mind, civic culture and operational practice. This will require a shared comfort with indeterminacy (6.2.1), the capacity to “innovate at the fulcrum” (6.6.3) and not fully “knowing” at the *nexus*; so as to be able to make decisions about where to head, where to position decision-making and how to best understand, oversee and evaluate progress in distributed complex systems. Competing and contradictory forces will inevitably pull the focus of the analytic gaze around, making “seeing and doing” demanding. The process of production is always a “live” contest between the empirical circumstances of development with the present and future in equally in mind. When the political apparatus veers off-course, speaking “truth to power” for the public sector to perform its role cannot be diminished without negative consequences. Instead, it must offer objective and full advice in ways that deal with the “torque” on the issues in question. More broadly, the theorising and commentary on particular conditions and specific activities will continue, at times helping to deepen understanding. An experimental approach to navigating progress invokes the importance of a civic creativity, as previously discussed with reference in particular to contributions coming from Ackoff, Bohm and Unger’s thinking (see 6.3).

Handling the *nexus* requires the development of an “intermediating imagination” in governance practice. In support of an experimental mind, it is the prerequisite of originality for resolving messes (and systemic messes) to advance actions and learning. The ethos will need to be the lived expression of an integrative and temporal mindset that can exercise creativity, imagination and innovation about both “what to do” and “how to govern”. To “imagine the attainable” brings to the fore the goal for governance as being to seek the continuous and automatic consideration of a “deeper present”, where the past and future are connected to the understanding of the present. In doing so, the “purposeful aspiration” in mission development (as in 8.2.2) is advanced. Bringing into play the significance of institutions as the realm where experimental governance is conducted, finding decision positions within the critical mind, the constructive mind and the ambivalent one, is the work of governing. Ultimately, finding resolution at the *nexus* calls for creative responses to improve long-run democratic health.

If we are to realise an improving “democratic dividend” from an experimental *Attainable Governance* ethos, I have proposed we must upgrade decision processing to deal with short and long-run dynamics in the “here and now”. If we are to create systems and governments capable

of addressing fundamental questions about the nature of value creation and destruction, alongside the impact and distribution of costs and benefits, we need both new discursive ideas (refreshed concepts and narratives for democracy and governance) and processes for lifting decision optimality (described in 7.3.2 as a refreshed *ensemble* of form and function). Moreover, a shift from reactive catch-up activities triggered by disruption cannot be the primary agenda setting driver of governmental engagement. Government's will be by virtue of their function, combining a human desire for stability and consistency, often from a position of being legacy-burdened incumbents. This requires all the more focus to constructively and progressively generate and manage change, respectful of existing powers inherent in government's apparatus. In large part, proactive governance requires a capability to engage in adequate *anticipation* to reduce flat-footedness for the forthcoming. This folds the experimental mindset back onto the temporally sensitive mindset to instigate better quality analysis and decision making.

Blank (2019) refers to the *Three Horizons* taxonomy in planning for innovation in large organisations. Premised on the central idea that for the mission and delivery of an organisation to remain competitive in the long-run, you have to allocate resources across three horizons, namely the short, medium and long-terms.<sup>225</sup> Blank argues the three horizons are no longer bound by time in the same way as in the past e.g. the rate of serious disruption commonly viewed as a longer term transition may come rapidly and be faster than the journey of hard fought incremental gains pertaining to existing commodities or methods. Consequently, the governance challenge of orchestrating rates of change and working in dynamic ways for strategic alignment in shifting conditions, highlights the need for anticipation and getting ahead of challenges where possible.

This underlines the need for both foresight and real-time action to be modes of activity that are in motion, as well as able to be bought together at specific points for decisions given circumstances. Everything cannot regularly switch from "BAU" (Business as Usual) to an "emergency" mode. The operational instability from switching and the inherent over-riding of democratic practice that occurs in a "state of emergency" can undermine civic authority and erode democratic engagement where the reservoir of trust and faith in democracy is already relatively weak. Rather than overriding democratic processes when disasters occur, or when order is lost

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<sup>225</sup> With *McKinsey's Three Horizons Model*, the "pace to disrupt" for a market or system matters most in adaptation. The advantage of speed has become synonymous with success on the commercial frontier. For example, *AirBnB* and *Uber* depended on speed of deployment and asymmetry over traditional high priority characteristics such as serviceability, maintainability and completeness. The three periods (H1, H2 and H3) are: (1) Continuous improvement to core capabilities in the short run – often interpreted as the three to 12-month horizon (H1), (2) Extend the scope and range of core capabilities – typical conceived of as the extending activity 2 to 3 years out (H2), and (3) Creation of new capabilities responding to disruption – commonly considered to be the new commodities in the pipeline 3 to 6 years out (H3) (Blank, 2019).

that de-powers political legitimacy, the attainable modalities reframe the doing of governance in pursuit of better results. Through a stable and robust decision architecture that is proactively incentivising looking ahead, the stresses of events will increasingly be able to be handled more democratically.

## **12.5 Revitalising: Facing the Democratic Challenge**

*“By now we should understand that liberal democracy is an enormously complex and flexible political form. It has ably withstood many significant challenges in the past, and its fundamental core should be able to survive future ones as well. Only if we pay careful attention to the manner in which the high-speed tempo of contemporary society negatively affects liberal democracy, however, can we hope successfully to refurbish it.” – William E. Scheuerman, (2004, p. xiv-xv).*

I have contended democracy in advanced economies such as the UK needs to be revitalised. The chance to consider others, what is fair in an inclusive society and what to do about it, has heightened preciousness in liberal democracies today. Illiberal rhetoric and political backsliding has become a real spectre. To help citizens not withdraw, retreat and be allured by the “fool’s gold” of regressive agendas, a mainstream option remains to seriously rethink democracy and its institutions. I have outline the conditions that can be identified to give cause for reflection (governance crisis and crises) and the engagement pathway where “governors” (as political actors) and “officials” (as advisors to governors) can work together (supported by trusted neutral facilitation) to act in the short and long-run public good. If a “pact” can be forged for a *systemic pivot*, I have contributed a proposition that can achieve a great deal by refreshing the nature of the policy and decision-making enterprise at the core of government. A new decision architecture and orchestration methodology can progress democratic effectiveness, efficiency and the spirit of a high-performing system for building a confident “future-facing” culture. The creative, the simultaneous and the considered “states of mind”, supported by a discursive and procedural scaffolding to forge a more strategically coherent and aligned culture, can open-up a new era of possibilities. Success can mean that democracy as a Western ideal is not de-powered or deposed by regimes looking to exact more centralised control for the benefit of the few over the fearful.

Addressing the *New Governance Challenge* in the face of democratic duress is central to finding our way forward. With a revitalised shared “purpose” motivating improvements in our predicament, the courage to advance and test new propositions can unfold. Supported by a commitment to adapt procedures that re-align system frameworks towards higher purposes, progress can be made. An openness with an emphasis on transparency in the quest for improved arrangements, requires a clarity of thought for a workable consensus. Finding this requires an understanding of the importance of time and the criticality of timing by policy advisors and

decision-makers. Liberal democracy's resilience is a strength to be respected and worked with in making change and seeking transformation. Democracy does not, as either a representative or direct form of civic engagement, render challenges insurmountable. Indeed, the current system is to be worked from to augment the evolution of institutional arrangements and precedents honed over past centuries. The inherent strength of this starting situation does not diminish the task we face. Given the nature of the grand challenges and societal stresses that are symptoms of late neoliberalism, at once we are confronted by large scale problems, messes and systemic messes. Supported by new ways to rapidly communicate, visibly act and intentionally behave, great advances can become attainable in an unprecedented fashion.

Poised in our contemporary circumstances, herein lies the deep problem of lack of motivation in representative democracies: how do we orchestrate effective "post-apathy" political change in a weary, dispirited and speed-tired citizenry? The requirement is to facilitate the discussions, debates and dialogues – in a multitude of civic ways – that sees a plethora of civic value "uplifts" unfolding in the bustle of genuine new economic and cultural activity. There is great deal to be done and much we have not yet imagined. Rather than stumble, losing ground in a significant transitional juncture of human history, we must seize the openings that are tantalisingly near to open-up transformative possibilities. The political and bureaucratic supporting *ensembles* for government must not let opportunities to make genuine progress go to waste. For people to move away from emotive fear of change, to embrace with courage the unknown over the horizon, we share a responsibility to face our anticipated future more keenly. With cool heads and compassion hearts, we must search for the attainable.

John Dewey thought that democracy as the "task before us", implied an *ethos* that "extends to matters of the mind, heart, and spirit" (Rogers, 2010, p.4, 5). He observed in his era that the institutional features most conducive to democratic life were often discussed, but not exhaustively so. Rogers (2010) comments that democratic legitimacy, partly derives in Dewey's perspective from "the extent to which it allows the widest application of inquiry to the problems that confront collective organization" (ibid, p.3). A reductionist view of democracy simply as the realm of adversarial politics, primarily about voting, expert advice and elite decision-making is too constraining: "He resists all such accounts as primary descriptions of democracy" (Rogers, 2010, p.3). Likewise, I have set-out a wider account of public governance, but nonetheless have zeroed in on the central fulcrum of existing arrangements as the arena for change to have effect as the scale and pace the concerns of the day generate.

### **12.5.1. Getting to a Better Governed World**

The UK and advanced Western democracies face a multitude of challenges that can be re-thought and acted upon in an *Attainable Governance* mode of operation. The jagged-pieced jigsaw of social expectations and diverse sub-cultures, with legal frameworks and the oversight of politics, is contributed to an unclear – and at times relatively polarised and unstable – phase of contemporary history. This necessitates new thinking and a decidedly cross-disciplinary approach to understand issues, spawn new thinking, and activate change to orchestrate new opportunities. While traditionally it is a powerful and coherent set of ideas that can change the world, today the ability to generate, disseminate and re-enforce a reasoned set of ideas is not the same as it was even a decade ago. In part the traditional conservative media conglomerates are waging a war for survival and influence. The dilemma they face is real. A fall from grace and influence does not sit well with those who have wielded substantial power through a dominant formula, accumulating fortunes from media machinery.

What is at stake with governance for effective civic oversight? Some would say we are in a race against time to restore the honour of democracy. Some would say we are in a race against time to dampening social polarization from the new version of a “haves and have-nots” society. Some would say we are in a race against time to avert catastrophic changes to the biosphere that materially impacts our future quality of life and economic conditions. What can be unequivocally said is that a functional democratic governance system is a fundamental “oversight mechanism” for all of these conditions. How we conduct public governance is material to our collective condition now and looking ahead. In an intra and inter-generational sense, how much time it will take for the world to be better governed, is taking on a particularly keen edge. *Timing* is critical to facilitate opportunities, to attend to imbalances and avoid at its worst, lost opportunities, destruction of progress, and value. Likewise, *integration* is critical to facilitate opportunities, to attend to imbalances and avoid at its worst, lost opportunities and the destruction of value. If we can only progress as fast as the weakest “link”, we are in a not in as stronger position as we could be on many fronts. If we can only receive and transmit as clearly as the best designed “node” (organisation) in a social system, we are in a sub-optimal state. And if we can only function as coherent as the weakest “network”, we are in a critical condition more-often then we would wish to be.

The *Industrial Age* was spawned in the United Kingdom. Today we are in the mists of the stages of development that see computational and communications power continuing to connect and change our reach and culture at an accelerating rate. While demographically the rate of populate growth may be subsiding (Dorling, 2019), we are suffering from the speed wobbles due to the rapid rate of change and the impacts of technological acceleration straining institutions (Rosa, 2013; Friedman, 2016). The mechanization of productive activity has change the globe. The



Westminster political system was spawned in the UK and has served as a governmental blueprint to change the way we guide the planet. A great deal has been achieved worthy of our acknowledgement, respect and wonder. Now we are seeing the acceleration of the late Industrial Age, turbo-charged by information technologies, rendering the previously innovative governance technologies obsolete in contemporary terms. In short, government is not adequately fit-for-purpose given the nature of the challenges we face now and “next”.

Therefore, to establish genuine twenty-first century leadership and assert a legitimate claim on cutting edge innovation, a new approach to governance is required as a prerequisite. It is required to unlock the potential of people and place. It will require a commitment to a set of principles and processes that have implications for the institutional arrangements and practices of government, the laws of the lands, seas, and space we must interdependently coexist within. Charles Clarke (2014) rightly highlights the attitude that needs to be swept aside. Rather than avoiding issues perceived as political difficult that can be pushed out for someone else to deal with (Clark, 2014), the system and culture has to support making timely continuous adjustments rather than letting issues building up to the point of, in Ackoff’s (1994) terms, “discontinuous improvement”, or in Unger (2013) terms, “crisis”.

### **12.5.2. Communicating for Change**

*“Even the smallest increments of time produce change. ...considering what to preserve, what to destroy, and what to create—on a daily basis, you are inventing a new future as a steady process over time.” – Vijay Govindaragan (2016).*

Resolving what to do requires consideration and judgment, but also the support of arrangements and shared ways of understanding issues. Communication style and substance matters in the pursuit of change. Telling the story of why we need to change and “fix” governance is something that requires attention. I offer an analogy as a starter to explore how we need to think and communicate to make the case for a governance pivot. To work to resolve the systemic mess, I draw upon the analogy of constructing a “systemic bridge” between what has been, what is, and what can be. In seeking to open-up the way forward to produce a new theory and framework of governance, I have been driven by the need to boost modern democratic practice so it may build greater civic trust. My proposition has been that nothing less that a new systemic design must be at the heart of adapting structural intentionality and cultural transformation.

Using the metaphor of a bridge, I contend we must exhibit the courage to build a bridge forward towards the mirage of the future, fully cognizant that the the “other side” is not every fully knowable or reachable. Instead, this virtual bridge is best thought of as having the qualities of a floating escalator that you are walking-up while it is trying to deliver you downward. You do not want to stand still, or you will drop off the bottom and freefall. Likewise, you do not want to run

too fast and burn-up all your energy up so you collapse and eventually fall of the bottom. Rather, you need to try and optimize the the rate of headway you make so it is sustainable in the long-run and you can stay onboard. Now imagine the floating escalator is immensely wide and has millions people on it, starting at different places, with access to differing levels of resource, capable of travelling at different speeds. The oversight challenge is to try and hold together the collective rate of progress in a way that is optimizing human progress for everyone. Particular groups will have opportunities to move ahead alone or lift others up as well to stop them falling off. The objective to to get to most constructively ambitious and positive position in the noblest and most inclusive way. At a UK and global level, we are falling far short of the standards we know are possible.

Governance reform alone is not a singular solution to automatically reset and resolve the nature of our predicament. We must also be prepared to attend to the significant challenge of bridging between our heads and our hearts for intelligently empathetic governance. Governmental institutions in democracy have retained their power, yet have in many cases become distorted and paralyzed nodes of guidance that are sub-optimally serving the human condition. Elected governments are patterning the higher order of emergence and rate of fusion possible to solve and dissolve messes and their associated nests of problems. It is where we have to focus our most honest and creative energy to make the future exceed our expectations. This brings to the fore the need to orchestrate a new pact between the politics of the present and the public service for a revitalised approach that can gain traction on the critical issues, build credible responses and operationalise resolutions. It is the new democratic deal needed, recognising that the symptoms of this era are beyond a political-side set of fixes without reforming Civil Service arrangements. With advisory “flexes and fixes” supported by a mindset shift and a culture driving a new attainable public policy decision architecture, transformation is within grasp.

### **12.5.3. Closing Thoughts**

*“We are at an inflection point: a moment in history where it’s time to stop trying to fix the old model and instead make the leap to the next one. It will be better suited to the complexity and challenges of our times, and to the yearning in our hearts.” – Frédéric LaLoux (2016).*

I end with global level reflections. People and systems under duress struggle to “leap”. Despite the analysis and intuitive recognition pointing out the inadequacies of how we frame and make decisions given our current predicament, the conditions for a strategic “pivot” towards a culture of continuous governance improvement, as proposed and developed, have yet to manifest. A *decisive reset* to address the *New Democratic Challenge* has not occurred. Much like Conzen’s

“morphological periods”<sup>226</sup> during which political, financial, and social forces are aligned and oriented towards transformation, a period of alignment has yet to occur for democratic transformation. We have not “flipped forward” to a new era of adaptation like the *decisive reset* outlined. If anything, advancement has “flopped back” in the absence of a clear direction away from the *residual default*.

Yet many issues are concurrently “biting” at the “middle”, spoiling the status quo’s veil of “control”, confirmed by ideologically-driven party politics across the spectrum with elements of regressive populism emerging. If the political realm cannot lead some aspects of change well, caught instead trying to reflect back immediate opinions – even in the face of civic society’s expressions of protest, resistance and outrage – what can be a moderating and rational pathway for ensuring peaceful progress? The proposition advanced is contingent on a “new agreement”. The strategic alignment for a *decisive reset* is in the common interests of the public, their representatives and the Civil Service to “relieve” themselves of unrealistic expectations. To act for all, to act for the future, and to act for the best of now – without the knowledge and the means of making good decisions to do so – is a shared illusion that can be dispatched. The way to think about, solve and resolve issues requires an intentional mental model and supporting processes and procedures. I have sought to describe and detail a transition to *Attainable Governance* that would see a phase marked by a better quality handling of the combined forces of tighter *integration of the systemic mess* in policy-making, the sharper resolution on temporality through the *timespace window* in analytics and decision-making; and *a responsive leadership* as a new dominant style of transparent governance practice. The “leap” presented is not inconceivable.

I have positioned the “meta” challenge as being to find the political and institutional terms to face the consequences of the profound lags to handle resolutions for progress with democratic oversight. In our era, human and planetary wellbeing require more than the uneven gradualism currently happening to ensure the long-run welfare of organised human life. That a democratically diverse leadership should speak of and for its time and place in the present, is unquestioned. What is advanced, is the notion that civic leadership is at its most authentic when it recognises and honours both the past and the future in the here and “now”. This means the present should be oriented to action with high temporal and spatial awareness for “timespace” connectivity and transformative coherence. I argue there is a cultural and spatial skew to short-termism in the current systems of governance and practices of government. To ensure appropriate movement forward, temporality as a critical dimension of change must be skilfully leveraged with adept intentionality. It should elevate the values and actions that carry forward our potential for

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<sup>226</sup> Refer to Weber (2015, p.7) or to Whitehand (2001) for description’s of Conzen’s work on urban morphology in Geography.

adaptation and alignment to the conditions and circumstances faced. This means a simple shared vision is all that is required at a high-level: ensuring species continuity and peace without undermining critical life support systems.

Change requires courage, bravery and exposure to criticism. The fearful can and will attack as a defence mechanism. This fear cannot extinguish getting practical things done. Cross-partisan political agreement and action for change is necessary. Likewise, Civil Service humility and responsiveness to change is vital. To get humanity's trajectory of evolution back on a feasible long-run track for continuity and gradual change, we require a phase of significant realignment. With foresight and humility, a "course correction" can be proactively managed, or the alternative is negative feedback in systems bite humanity increasingly hard. I have advanced a proposition and procedures for a systemic approach to design so we can better exercise our collective intelligence towards the preventative. The objective is simply to help mitigate downside risks and avoid catastrophic events. If we can avoid flicking the switch into emergency management mode, where governments have to override democratic principles to regain "order" so as to stabilise and proceed in a "new normal" state, we will have achieved a great deal by evading the immeasurable costs of socio-economic disaster and ecological instability.

At stake is the future of rate of progress towards overall societal improvement. Securing cooperation from the international level downward will be paramount to minimize human suffering and conflict and to maximize peace and prosperity in the coming decades. Regressive periods erode improvements. They are in part a failure to recognize the importance of continuously upgrading "the rules" and the form of the "game". The time it takes to rebuild compounds negatively each time we slip into mis-conceived problem-solving, siloed and divisive plans; and short-run mono-futures curtailing a richer plurality of possibilities. Genuine progress requires us to allow for change to evolve with a commitment beyond the immediate. This requires a significant shift in democratic practice. Our stage of history is suspended at a point where we can recover. Recovery requires (a) a majoritarian understanding the the nature of the predicament (b) acknowledgement of the seriousness of the situation; and (c) the intergenerational motivation to propel new approaches to democracy. Pressure is building-up over these three aspects. Whether we can channel the necessary change through the existing political and bureaucratic apparatus in a way to drive enlivening and non-violent transformation, remains to be seen. The prospects for humanity – and whether humanity's trajectory of ascent can continue further – is squarely on the line.

## Appendices

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### Appendix 1: *Countering Presentist Logics (from 5.3)*

One theorist who has made a case for the primacy of the present as an appropriate focus in democracy, is Beckerman (1999). I seek to understand, then counter this philosophical logic as learning exercise to sharpen being able to articulate why countering presentism is necessary today. Taking an intra-generational rights and equity improvement view as central – therefore casting intergenerational egalitarianism and the “doctrine” of sustainable development aside – Beckerman (1999) advocates the notion of removing any moral obligations associated with these concepts to aid progress. He considered this is in part because a focus on current violations of human rights can help to future-proof humanity to deal with challenges, and in part because of confidence in markets to price and allocate resources effectively before they can become exhausted (ibid, pp. 90-91).

This position advocates that concern for future generations should be oriented to and guided by positions of contemporary ‘entitlement’ with respect to: (i) minimum levels of personal and public goods and services, (ii) human rights and liberties; and (iii) minimum standards of institutional and personal behaviour towards other sentient beings (Beckerman, 1999, p.90). In arguing for this angle, Beckerman accords priority to the current treatment of human beings as:

*“...a valuable antidote to the danger than excessive concern with the environment leads to opposition to scientific and technical progress and to the rational and humanist tradition that has made such progress over the last century... Societies that have confidence in the ability of their own institutions to resolve fairly their own internal conflicts in a peaceful and democratic manner do not have to conjure up melodramatic apocalyptic environmental scenarios involving artificial conflicts between generations in order to escape their problems.”* (Beckerman, 1999, p.92).

The core premise Beckerman advances is that there is no discernable conflict between the interests of the present and the interests of the future. It is simply a case of operating with high “just” and exemplary “decent” moral standards now. While this has theoretical appeal due to its simplicity, reintroducing contemporary political and economic conditions renders this position abjectly unrealistic. In reality the functionality of and confidence in democratic institutions is under fractious degrees of duress in various jurisdictions. Advanced Western democracies have proved unable to meet the basic entitlement positions he proposed. Further, in economic terms, it is widely appreciated fact that the optimal functioning of markets is tethered to the ability of governments to enact “fair” exchange playing fields that effectively can internalise externalities. On the latter count in particular, there is a catalogue of long-run comprehensive failures to seriously treat externalities, and the combined effect of inequity and pollution (to simply label broad categories of externalities) are presently co-existing in a corrosive way.

Put directly, suffering is concentrated on those without access to strong and enduring institutions and economies at a global level, and differences in life prospects endure with poverties of resources and culture in advanced Western economies. I contend that while a key part of the way forward is improving current human rights and the morality of institutions, we do not have the luxury to not also have an eye to the future anymore. The scientific assemblages of evidence generated today, along with our widely accepted diagnosis of the shortcomings of democratic, bureaucratic and market functionality, in combination overwhelm a retreat from looking ahead and factoring in our best knowledge. In activating a mixed strategy i.e. working to improve the now in concert with awareness of our best estimates of the next; as in the consequentialist position I take, may not result in radically dissimilar pathways of policy pursuit in some areas. My perspective is that we must pivot to factoring concerns (and the opportunities available) in the

medium to long-term future explicitly into decision-making, precisely because the distributional, developmental and democratic issues of today cannot be practically attending to within the existing moral and organisational frameworks.

With mainstreamed Western morality having justified self-interest as the core modus operandi, and with an institutional system designed to support the constellation of arrangements that make the status quo functional, survivable and morally acceptable; we are not within the orbit of the necessary checks and balances to navigate well. Global negative feedback loops and local feedback mechanisms are failing to lead to systemic adjustment to seek to remedy problems at the necessary voracity and rate of change. In short, our collective failings to fairly treat each other at the standard most would aspire to in principle (e.g. intra-generational resource distribution to eliminate poverty) is a bearable privilege on a day-to-day basis. To accelerate undermining planetary viability is not. Further, a temporal institutional pivot also offers new hope to intervene more effectively at the near-term equity level, presenting a useful addendum of benefits that may enhance wider progressive agendas.

Turning to the argumentation of the choices available, the following positions outline the relative logic structures faced in decision-making:

Table A1.1: *Intervention logic positions for making change in the present*

<b>Positions/Scenarios:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Response comments:</b>
<i>Position 1:</i> <b>Future Neutral</b>	What is preferable or best for <i>now</i> at T(a) [T for time, period (a) to indicate the present or decided moment e.g. in 2019], is <u>no better or worse condition</u> , as far as can be understood at T(a), for the <i>next</i> point at T(b) [where (b) indicates a future moment e.g. in 30 years]	All things remaining equal in theory (unrealistic in practice), the <u>status quo</u> trajectory can remain the logical track in the absence of clear better alternatives.  Response can be status quo baseline focussing on <u>integration</u> (rather than temporal) concerns and ensuring transparency improvements.
<i>Position 2:</i> <b>Future Positive</b>	What is preferable or best for <i>now</i> at T(a) is <u>projected as a better condition</u> , as far as can be understood at T(a), for the <i>next</i> at T(b)	All things remaining equal in theory (unrealistic in practice), the <u>status quo</u> trajectory can remain the logical track in the absence of clear better alternatives.  Response can be status quo baseline focussing on <u>integration</u> (rather than temporal) concerns and ensuring transparency improvements.
<i>Position 3:</i> <b>Future Negative</b>	What is preferable or best for <i>now</i> at T(a) is <u>projected as worse condition</u> , as far as can be understood at T(a), for the <i>next</i> at T(b)	All things remaining equal in theory (unrealistic in practice), a <u>new best estimate change intervention</u> trajectory can remain the logical track given agreed understandings.  Response can be focussing on transformative results in temporal period (alongside integration) concerns, while ensuring transparency improvements.
<i>Position 4:</i> <b>Future Uncertain</b>	What is preferable or best for <i>now</i> at T(a) is <u>projected as an</u>	All things remaining equal in theory (unrealistic in practice), the <u>status quo</u>

	<u>unknown condition</u> , as far as can be understood at T(a), for the <i>next</i> at T(b)	trajectory can remain the logical track in the absence of clear better alternatives.  Response can be status quo baseline focussing on <u>integration</u> (rather than temporal) concerns and ensuring transparency improvements.
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On this basis, the theoretically sound logic for a strong corrective intervention becomes viable and desirable in only one scenario, namely, when current actions are clearly eroding future possibilities (position 3). This is assuming that the other positions receive some form of moderate adaptive treatment, with the key objective being to maintain and continue to hold the approximate position attained, given no better options are clearly agreed upon. Therefore, it is more likely than not that actions in the *Future Negative* category (i.e. position 3) is hardest to achieve. This favours generally a positional conservatism in decision-making, further exacerbated by the tendency to “compromise” in the search for the “middle-path” resulting in compromised or “watered down” position 3 interventions.

Therefore, the question of “what is to be done?” due to presentist realities in democratic life, produce real challenges for the Civil Service and for politics. Boston’s (2016b) summation of the ways to counter the *presentist bias* in policy policy, provides a helpful checklist and priorities:

Table A1.2: *Intervention logic positions for making change in the present*

1) Change the <i>motives</i> of policy-makers (i.e. values, norms, preferences, and priorities) and activate future-oriented interests and concerns – internal drivers).
2) <i>Incentivize</i> policy-makers to give greater weight to long-term considerations (e.g. via changes to public opinion/preferences, political culture, the balance of political forces, accountability mechanisms, outcome-based performance measures, etc.) – external drivers.
3) Enhance the <i>capacity</i> of policy-makers to plan for the long-term and exercise foresight (e.g. using better information, analytical resources, horizon scanning, and more holistic policy frameworks).
4) <i>Constrain</i> the formal decision-rights and discretionary powers of policy-makers, especially in relation to issues with significant long-term impacts (e.g. through constitutional rules, procedural rules, and substantive policy rules).
5) <i>Insulate</i> policy-makers from short-term political pressures; and
6) Establish new <i>coordinating</i> mechanisms to enable decisions that would otherwise not be possible (e.g. via new and/or stronger international agencies and instruments).

Source: Boston (2016b, p.188).

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