Chapter 2

POWER AND PRAXIS FOR SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

2.1   STRIVING FOR BALANCE

Holding in mind many issues, not just single issues is the challenge for a systemic approach.[1] This volume makes a plea for re-working the conceptual and spatial boundaries of governance and international relations.[2] It also makes a plea for re-working democracy and rescuing the enlightenment from itself.

The argument can be summarized in point form as follows:

1. The primary elements of life and living systems can be considered vital to all systems across Boulding's hierarchy, even of they are only used as analogies (in the sense used by Jackson, key note address, 2005, at International Systems Sciences Conference) to help us think about ourselves and the implications of open systems. Even so, Boulding's hierarchy needs to be reconsidered as a series of overlaps, not as hierarchical cut offs. Static structures form the skeletons of life, the joints are mechanical, basic cells are the basis of simple and complex life forms. Plant life and animal life connect in anomalies such as Venus fly trap. Animals such as mammals and primates are tool makers. Jane Goodall's

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[1]   Iterative thinking (see modified diagram from Checkland and Holwell, 1998) assists in this process. The process enables both thick description, in the sense used by Geertz (1975) and supports "thick democracy" (Edgar, 2001). This is very different from rationalist approaches of Rawls (1993) that distinguishes between "the rational individual" and "the reasonable" citizen. In developing a design for inquiring systems, the process is about exploring viewpoints in terms of many perspectives.

[2]   Systemic approaches (following West Churchman) require considering: Big and small picture, Logical relationships, Idealism, Empirical data, Dialectical relationships, Contextual considerations (McIntyre-Mills, 2005, adapted from Boulding, 1968, 1999, Delueze and Guattari in Bogue, 1984).

Table 2.1. Systemic governance and international relations based on communication for emergence

	Objective	Subjective Pluralist Many Perceptions and points of view	Communication for emergent, systemic approaches, based on co-created truth within context	Identity
	One viewpoint	Soft systems using paper based mapping and modelling	Emancipatory Systems	Molar and fixed — Simple ideographic patterns
Simple Nomo-thetic Statistics – either → or ↓	Hard systems			
	Clockwork mechanics			
	Closed loop communication			
	Open systems such as cells			
	Lower organisms such as plants			
	Animals with brains			
	Sentient beings and human beings who are self conscious			
	Social systems	Mapping many points of view using overlays of maps on a computer	Post modern to post positivist	
Complex Statistics – 'both and'	System dynamics, organisational cybernetics, complexity theory		Transcendental systems based on Ecosystemic approaches that take into consideration social and environmental systems	Molecular identity — Complex ideographic

primates are tool makers and this is commonly accepted today, but sea otters also have the ability to use their flippers to hold shells and use them as tools to crack open the other. Human neurosystem share much in common with the laboratory rat (Greenfield, 2000).

2. Communication is not the preserve of human beings.
3. All life is based on the communication of information across cells.
4. Animals can communicate by signaling.
5. Human communication developed from signaling.
6. Once a signal became used in a trustworthy way to indicate something it became an accepted connection.
7. Symbols are based on shared meanings associated with connections Human life depends on communication based on direct signals and indirect meaning laden symbols. 'Human systems are different' (Vickers, 1985) because we create social structure and processes that need to be harmonized through communication, based on achieving connection, based on respectful communication that can create meaning and resonance that builds trust.
8. All life depends on communication.
9. Animal signals can develop to symbols through human – animal connections, based on trust.
10. Paradoxically trust and distrust (or holding people accountable) form a 'strange loop' (Hofstadter, 1979), because we need trust for the development of society and for liberal democracy, but we also need healthy questioning and distrust. This is because the coin of possibility is not 'either or', it can be 'both and', depending on when and how it falls or spins.
11. Life and death can be seen as fixed points on a linear continuum or as portals to another energy state.
12. Identity and politics need to be seen in terms of both molar fixed state and molecular fluid state. Communication can enable us to transform from one point of view to another, or it can be used to draw boundaries. Communication provides the means to explore 'strange loops' in society, but choice remains a human decision, albeit increasingly limited by the environment that we have damaged through our own poor designs (Lovelock, 1979; Singer, 2002). We can consider options and move in one direction or another until we make so many decisions that limit our futures (Meadows and Meadows, 1979) that we become constrained by an environment that we have stripped of biodiversity.
13. Biodiversity and conceptual diversity is essential for generating options to the extent that it does not undermine the freedoms of others. In this sense social and natural systems are similar.

14. Communication is the process that leads to emergence from lower to higher levels and it is the means by which transcendence from the lower levels of Boulding's hierarchy could be achieved. Communication of qualitative and quantitative meanings and patterns is the basis for systemic governance. Thus the facilitators of systemic governance need to be mindful of task, process, structure and context. This is the point at which the dialectic enables hierarchies to transform into overlapping circles. Hierarchies and circles are not mutually exclusive. This is a radical shift in thinking and it helps the enlightenment to rescue itself through ongoing questioning. Human systems are different and instead of matter, we have social structure and processes that need to be harmonized through communication, based on achieving connection, based on respectful communication that can create meaning and resonance that builds trust. Boulding's last stage of the hierarchy listed transformation as the highest level of complexity. Nested systems of overlaps, connected by feedback loops, or paradoxes are recognized. These 'strange loops' help to explain the continuities of life across all systems. If paradoxes are portals across the boundaries, they are vital for understanding governance of society and for understanding life as we know it. The primary elements of life and living systems can be considered to be energy, matter and information, according to the Millers (1995) work on 'Living Systems'. Vickers (1985) however argued that "living systems are different" from natural systems. Boulding's hierarchy of natural and living systems and social and transformational systems are a useful starting point, however for addressing this debate, about whether human and natural systems are different or whether they are part of a continuum. Boulding stresses that complexity can be understood as a hierarchy, as do the Millers. Churchman and Vickers provide a greater understanding of the relationship between social and natural systems by arguing that perception and human consciousness play an important role in creating and transforming ourselves.[3]

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[3] This argument was also addressed by Greenfield in her discussion on consciousness, where she made the important point about how our thinking can help to create greater self awareness by seeing the connections. The more connections we are able to make the more conscious we can become. This is of great relevance to ethics and better governance for a peaceful and environmentally sustainable world. The primary elements of life and living systems, namely communication is vital to all systems across Boulding's hierarchy. The universe and the earth are fractals of repeated patterns. Energy is continuous flow inwards and outwards. Perhaps the universe is continuous energy flow. The analogies from physics help us think about ourselves and the implications of open systems. If the universe is energy flow in an open system, it is infinite and closure leads to entropy and the dissipation of energy. Energy flow is communicated across all life.

"...[K]nowledge management is still in its infancy, and it has neither sufficiently addressed the general political aspects of knowledge nor has it integrated the more specific question of gender" (Styhre *et al.*, 2001: 71). This is an understatement. Knowledge management is a phrase coined by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) based on the experience of the business organizational context. Communication across barriers of professionalism versus just ideas and opinions based on the experience of people becomes a necessity in a world where the maps and perceptions of people is a crucial consideration for democracy. In the wake of the suicide bombings in London by British insiders on the 7th of July 2005 'the enemy within' needs to be addressed. The way we think shapes our world and our world shapes the way we think and the way we feel. were not created in a vacuum.[4] The media environment, their personal beliefs, mental wellbeing, experiences as well as the influence and agendas of politico-religious leaders, need to be considered when developing policy responses. We can never find a total or absolute solution based on a total understanding of the system (see Churchman, 1982), but we need to try to see the wider horizons. Critical reflection[5] is the basis for testing out ideas, because the closest we can get to truth is through dialogue

Energy flow is continuous inwards and outwards, the unfolding and sweeping in make up the dialectic of the universe. We perceive the universe in terms of the number of connections we are able to make as large or small, finite or infinite. Boulding (1968: 89-93) outlines his 9 system levels. Level 8 in a hierarchy of complexity with 9 categories addresses communication. This is a useful heuristic device: "Static structures, Clockwork mechanics, Closed loop communication, Open systems such as cells, Lower organisms such as plants, Animals with brains. Human beings who possess self-conscious ability, Social systems; and then Transcendental systems, based on conceptual intuition."

[4] The ideology of suicide bombers may be perceived 'evil' or 'insane', but it is undeniable that the suicide bombers are responding to both their emotions and their perceived environment Female bombers associated with the siege in Russia and associated with bombings in Israel are often women without family networks, acting out of grief or pressured to act by others who use them, but Stewart (op cit) has argued that the majority of bombers are not isolated or marginalized.

[5] Critical reflection can help if we look both inwards and outwards. The appreciation of a system requires understanding the expanse of the system. The system of interest should in fact start with "unfolding" values and "sweeping in" (in the sense used by Churchman, 1979a, b, 1982, who drew on Singer) multiple variables (social, cultural, economic, political and environmental) within the context of the inquiry. Rescuing the enlightenment agenda from its failings through open debate to achieve transparency ought to be the ideal for democracy that will be based on working the conceptual and geographical boundaries. Moving from pragmatism to idealism is not difficult once we appreciate the "boomerang affect" (Beck, 1992) and realize that democracy needs be reconsidered as being about human and environmental rights – not merely about citizenship and nationalism. The UN Aarhus convention of 2001 makes a useful step according to Florini (2003) towards vigilance that spans borders of a nation state.

(McIntyre-Mills, 2000, 2003; McIntyre-Mills *et al*., 2006). Wilson (2005),[6] commenting on the inauguration of the new pope argues that fundamentalism is one of the greatest challenges for the future. In a world where the role of religion is discussed and no longer back stage, but centre stage in world events post September 11th, we need to be mindful that fundamentalism is a threat to art, science and democracy. The election of a new Pope in April 2005 has lead to debate about what is important. Are the "so-called magnificent seven abortion, contraception, euthanasia, divorce, homosexuality, married priests and the ordination of women[7]" a matter of one view point for all times and places?

Contemplation, forgiveness and spirituality are needed to maintain peace in the world. The challenge is to work with diversity and to embrace freedoms to the extent that it does not allow the rights of some to undermine the rights of others. Unfortunately Europe has become less liberal in recent months, for example according to Moynahan (2005).[8]

> "Unfortunately the Dutch have rejected liberalism in response to Islamic immigration. Some say they are now too hard-line. So what can the rest of Europe learn from their crisis?"

The proposed European constitution has received a no vote from France and the Netherlands in June 2005.[9] What this means for the future of systemic governance will be debated in the months, if not years to come. Can the fears be balanced by the benefits? Only months prior to the no vote, twenty five EU leaders agreed to open "accession negotiations" with Turkey.[10] The decision will be taken on the basis of the extent to which Turkey bows to EU bows pressure to become more democratic.[11]

At a time when openness to diversity has been increasingly rejected in some parts of Europe, paradoxically Europe stands on the brink of accepting Turkey into the EU (despite the religious reservations expressed by the new pope). Will interfaith and transboundary dialogue make a difference?

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[6]   Wilson, P., "Pivotal papacy", *Weekend Australian*.
[7]   Yallop, R., 2004, "A church of relative disquiet", *Weekend Australian*, 23-24 April, p. 29. Yallop stresses that: "For Benedict, leadership was not the application of a strict set of rules; it was reconciling people of different beliefs and personality", he said "the abbot's role in the monastery was to create unity out of that diversity".
[8]   Moynahan, B., 2005, *Continent in Convulsion: Europe's Religious Dilemma*.
[9]   http://newsbreak.com.au/related a219297.
[10] Turkey moves closer to EU http:www.heraldsun.news.com.au/common/story 4/05/2005.
[11] Gorvett in Istanbul Turkish media bows to EU pressure http:English.aljazeera.net/NR/ exeres/554FAF3A-B. . .5/05/2005.

Debate about the inclusion[12] or exclusion of Turkey on the basis of the extent to which Turkey meets the democratic reforms, but also on the basis of a veto for cultural and religious reasons is led by the Vatican:

> "Making two continents identical would be a mistake he said 'It would mean a loss of richness, the disappearance of the cultural to the benefit of economics.' "[13]

This means that the opportunity to address democratic reforms and produce more social justice for Kurds would be lost, even if at the time this was written providing a limited Kurdish broadcast was "window dressing" it needs to be regarded as the first step to more opportunities for participation.[14] Turkey a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2001),[15] is a signatory to the group that espouses the value of seeing citizens as partners. Also the comment ignores the reality of a very large Muslim population living within EU and that people no longer remain in conceptual and geographical spaces that overlap exactly. Nevertheless Ratzinger is reported in the same article as criticizing Europe's "aggressive secularism" in public schools, because of its denial of religious freedoms particularly to Muslim women. He argues:

> "the loss of the sense of the sacred and respect for others provokes a reaction of self defence in the Arab and Islamic world." (op. cit.).

> "The [New York] Times editorial said that the debate surrounding Turkey's possible accession would be better served if the Cardinal emphasized the positive potential in combining the best Christian tradition of charity and the best Muslim tradition of social justice."[16]

Since the 'no' vote about Turkey, the debate has moved on. The challenge will be for people and leaders to find a balance between individualism and collectivism. This book tries to develop an argument that openness to diversity (to the extent that it does not undermine the rights of others) is vital for a sustainable future. Democracy needs to be revitalised by means of processes that enable those at the receiving end of decisions to take part

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[12] "An influential European Parliament committee recommended today that the EU open membership talks with Turkey, but only if the country follows through on democratic reforms" EU considers Turkey membership. http://www.heraldsun.news.com.au/common/ story . . . 4/05/2005.

[13] Cardinal: No place for Turkey in EU, http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/ECEE591F-A 4ED-46BE-8784-1459F23710E2 . . . 4/05/2005.

[14] "Turkey: behind the EU window dressing". http://www.green left.org.au/back 2005.

[15] OECD, 2001, *Governance: Citizens as Partners: Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy Making.*

[16] Ratzinger asserts Vatican stand against Turkey EU membership. http://www.cathnews/ 408 4/05/2005.

in making their own futures. Case studies are explored in Africa, Australia, Asia and Europe. From these lessons it is argued that we need to be mindful of the threats posed by fear and bigotry by religious, political and economic fundamentalisms. The structure and process of democracy is in need not merely of renovation, but redesign by the participants. The shift needs to be from expert as architect to people as co-designers. Local government is the basis for participatory democracy and it needs to be the basic pattern repeated at the regional, national and international level. Working with multiple narratives is useful, in order to create contextual solutions. The case studies are used to explain systemic governance and to demonstrate what happens when open, systemic approaches are not used.

2.2   WORKING AND RE-WORKING THE BOUNDARIES OF KNOWLEDGE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND GOVERNANCE THROUGH QUESTIONING

An example of self interest that cannot lead to win-win solutions is the refusal to see sustainable policy on climate change as an international necessity, not a national choice. Subsidence[17] could be a factor in rising sea levels, but there are too many other indicators to make us ignore climate change:

> "Political negotiations are often brutal, but the lead up to Kyoto saw Australia behaving in particularly distasteful ways. Most reprehensible was the coercion of its Pacific Island neighbours into dropping their stance that the world should take 'firm measures' to combat climate change. 'being small, we depend on them so much we had to give in' said Tuvalu's Prime Minister Bikenibu Paeniu, following the South Pacific Congress in which Australia laid its demand on the table … Australian Government's chief economic advisor on climate change, Dr Brian Fisher, told a London conference that it would be 'more efficient' to evacuate small Pacific Island states that to require Australian industries to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide … with this chilling arrogance ringing in their ears, the Tuvaluans took the only course open to them: they negotiated migration rights to new Zealand for the entire population in the event of serious climate change impacts." (Flannery, 2005: 287-288)

2.2.1   Design and Transformation: Scanning the Policy and Governance Horizon

Knowledge narratives can be seen as a mandala. Each part is made up in relation to other parts.[18] The complementary nature of knowledge is cen-

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[17]   Pilmer (in "Rising tide of bad science", *Australian* 10-11 June, p. 28) makes this point, but it does not justify ignoring the need to lesson carbon emissions!

[18]   Through co-creation we unfold and sweep in the implications of our narratives and the thereby the closest we get to truth is through dialogue. This is not with a view to de-

tral. Testing is not so much falsification as holding up to the light multiple points of view and multiple meanings. Through openness we avoid limiting out ability to understand and to solve problems. Systemic governance rather than political self interest goes beyond drawing boundaries to working and re-working boundaries contextually. It fosters openness and the conditions for an ideal praxis community (to adapt Habermas, 1984) by being the change and making a difference through wise judgments and interventions[19] (see Flyvbjerg, 2001: 57).

2.2.2 Considering Bonds, Boundaries and Norms

The first goal is to convince the reader that the marginalized and voiceless should not remain so. Why is silencing not a good idea? Why should species dominance be raised as an issue? Singer (2002) despite (not because of his controversial arguments about euthanasia and suffering) has added to the list of isms, namely sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, the concept of "species ism" and as far as disabled lobby groups are concerned he is more interested in discrimination against animals than against disabled people. The debate about rights without alienating others is part of the challenge of good governance. Grand narratives about the nature of knowledge and the nature of knowledge management will be avoided, but the normative basis of ecological approaches (McIntyre-Mills, 2000) provides a basis from which to operate. The roots of the argument are transdiciplinary and transcultural, not in the sense of advocating one approach, but in the sense of creating a shared set of ecohumanistic norms to guide a "rational ideal praxis community" rather than speech community in the sense used by Habermas (1984). The basis of the argument is that although human beings are one species they share the planet with other sentient beings. A biologically diverse organic and inorganic life make up the web of life. Peter Singer (2002) argues that all sentient beings need to be given the right to live "free from pain" and to have a life worth living whether they are part of the human species or not. Sentient rights are considered in the EU legislation on intensive farming practices which prohibit cruelty to farm animals (op. cit.). The right to a life free of pain is satisfactory in an ethical sense, but it can be too easily dismissed by ruthless decision-makers. Physical pain is a message in response to a detrimental condition that has been biologically programmed to ensure survival; by encouraging the avoidance of risk and the pursuit of safety and

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veloping a grand narrative, but a more comprehensive understanding within a particular context.

[19] People are constructivist knowledge makers and people need to be given the space to translate their learnings and to be creative thinkers and practitioners from which new knowledge can be created.

then pleasure. Desire for pleasure or love is a primary driver (in the sense used by Deleuze and Guattari, 1989). The reason for pursuing this goal is personal survival and to sustain the web of life or the ecosystem.[20]

Respect for the so-called balance of nature or the creation of harmony in art and religion, by thinking and communicating beyond the self to encompass self, other and the environment- has been the basis of holiness and holistic thinking. Aboriginal Australians use oral history that is supported by reading the reminders of the history of one's ancestors in the landscape. So the landscape is a library and the features are the books where the past, present and future are recorded and the landscape reminds the story teller of ancestral history. The features are memoes. "The land is our mother" is thus redolent with meaning.

The Arrernte systemic metaphor for explaining the world is worth exploring. When a fetus moves – the part of the landscape (organic rock lizard or inorganic rock) the mother sees is the totem of the child. This is the animal they may not eat and it is part of the landscape that is sacred to their birth. It is a connection between each individual and the land. It is useful for a number of reasons. Firstly, it ensured biodiversity of the food chain, because people would eat different species based on totem avoidance, because one cannot eat one's own totem. The point of these examples is not to conflate a discussion of knowledge and ethics with religion, but to argue that religious myths and metaphors provide a rich basis for understanding that cultural knowledge can be the basis for survival and ensuring that harmony and balance is maintained, but it can also be the basis for repression of women and children.

The role of women in this identification of sacred places and totems is also not unimportant. In an apparently patriarchal society misrepresented by the many white male ethnographers (with the power of gender, class and

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[20]   It is a biologically inbuilt cybernetic system for survival of all sentient beings. The leap that is required is a sense of compassion for the other person or species member by a human being. This requires the ability to think as members of Homo sapiens sapiens – the wise and reflective human being (Marx Hubbard, 2003), without the expectation of direct reciprocity in a human political sense. It is absurd to think that because dolphins have been known to rescue drowning people, (because it fits their natural behavior) that they are more human (and worthy) than other mammals not that it has helped much as the fishing industry and taste for dolphin meat clearly testifies. This leap of cross species compassion and respect for all life has not been a topic of conversation except by religious thinkers and animal rights activists. Anthropomorphizing animals does not help, but compassion and respect across species should be developed (not for merely for personal reasons) but because the web of diverse life is important. A dog mourning the death of a close human companion is closest to our understanding, but we need to go beyond the notion of reciprocal emotion associated with pets to encompass a sense that all sentient beings have rights.

culture to decide what is important) did not highlight this role of women-certainly Strehlow[21] (as far as I can tell from my reading of his work) missed the political significance of this role for women.

Once again in this old culture – a balance between genders was created in this story. The symbolism of the mother and unborn child as creators of a part of the landscape with which they would identify and their choice of animal is important in this creation myth. The caretaker and nurturing role extended beyond the unborn child to the landscape of which they are part. The symbolism of the harmony and unity of mother and child with the landscape is considered sacred by the Arrernte women in Central Australia. This cultural belief does not imply that violence does not play a role in the lives of men, women and children of all ages in the past or in the present – or that cultural compassion was shown to sentient beings – but all cultures have scope for change and we can learn from one another.[22]

Policies at the global and local level impact on the conceptualisation of policy and practice. Internationally, globalisation has been translated into the era of the Post Welfare State (Jamrozik, 2001). Strategies to address systemic and sustainable models stress that social, political, economic and environmental variables need to be considered when making and implementing policy decisions. Social, economic and environmental capital needs to be addressed if sustainable and socially just local development is to be achieved. Working across these domains requires governance informed by diverse knowledges.[23] The works of Foucault on power, knowledge and san-

[21] Strehlow Research Centre, 1999, Occasional Paper No 2, Strehlow Centre Board, Alice Springs. Strehlow, T., 1958, *Dark and White Australians*, Riall Bros Pty Ltd., Melbourne. Strehlow, T., 1978, Central Australian religion: personal monototemism in a polytotemic community, Australian Association for the Study of Religions.

[22] Sutton, P., 2001, The Politics of Suffering: Indigenous Policy in Australia Since the Seventies. Revised version of the Inaugural Berndt Foundation Biennial Lecture given at the annual conference of the Australian Anthropological Society, University of Western Australia, on 23 September 2000. It is under consideration by the journal *Anthropological Forum*, 10 April 2001. Sutton highlights that archeological evidence shows violent deaths were common in Aboriginal societies in the past and that culturally male children are encouraged to be strong from a young age, whilst females are encouraged to be stoical when abused. He also stresses that there has been a veil of silence over violence, out of fear of retribution and or playing into the hands of political bigots, political correctness and a sense of loyalty.

[23] "...knowledge management is still in its infancy, and it has neither sufficiently addressed the general political aspects of knowledge nor has it integrated the more specific question of gender" (Styhre *et al.*, 2001: 71). This is an understatement. Knowledge management is a phrase coined by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) based on the experience of the business organizational context. Communication across barriers of professionalism versus just ideas and opinions based on experience becomes the challenge, but also a necessity. The contributions made by Polanyi (1962) are important in that he stressed that personal

ity, discipline and punishment (Foucault 1967, 1979; Foucault, M. and Gordan, C. (eds.), 1980) and who decides what constitutes knowledge and why is also central to knowledge management, if a mandala of knowledge narratives is to be achieved contextually. The work of Habermas provides and important contribution for policy making processes. He argues that knowledge is made up of domains: the subjective, the objective and the intersubjective. The rational western world has favoured the objective domain. The subjective, perceptual domain is relegated to the private world of women or perhaps the domain of artists and poets or first nations. Stanley and Wise (1993) and Reinharz (1992) talk about ontology and epistemology from the point of view of women. They stressed that the way we see the world and the way we ask questions about the nature of the world depends on our assumptions and values. These in turn influence the way we do research and they way we think we know about the world.

Indigenous standpoint theory (Foley, 2002) and postcolonial studies (Young, 2001; Ashcroft, 1995) applies this argument to indigenous groups who have been oppressed. From this viewpoint it is argued that knowledge is constructed in the interests of the powerful. I argue following Deleuze and Guattari (1989) that power is only one aspect. Desire is the most important prompt for communication that closes the gaps across self and other. It is also important for closing the gap between us and the environment, which is well known in Australian Aboriginal culture. We communicate through respecting the land. It has become all too easy for people to blame the past and colonization, the state and the market for problems (quite rightly in many cases) but without taking on the responsibility they have as private individuals to do something about it.[24] Discursive and participatory democracy need to be driven by people who live the change they want to see and who make constructive changes through rethinking and re-working their worlds.[25] But

lived experience is as important as professional expertise. The professional, expert or elected official has often been the powerful decision-maker. Even the Greek and Roman citizens who discussed issues of concern in the public agora had more power than the slaves or women, so their knowledge was considered more important than others. The work of West Churchman (1979a, b, 1982) is important because he stresses that knowledge is created through "unfolding" and "sweeping in" ideas and when we make decisions that cut off areas of knowledge we can limit our thinking and our practice.

[24]   In the ideal world of Rawls, the state is replaced by people working in harmony to ensure social and environmental justice. Rawls is talking about the ideal and so does not need to engage in a discussion of the way strong states override weaker states or the way that they use the market to their advantage. But as Singer (2002: 192-7) stresses Rawls does not argue why people in a utopian context should worry about individuals who are suffering as a result of globalisation.

[25]   Rawls talks of the need to move away from the notion of "a veil of ignorance", even a thick veil of ignorance, because he says that contextual situations need to be considered,

appreciation of complexity is vital if rules to support social and environmental justice are to be respected in terms of transnational and transcultural boundaries.

Morality based on respect or tolerance based on rights is expressed in public and social terms, not individual terms. What about the rights of sentient beings who do not have power? The boundaries of citizen/non citizen and species with and without rights need to be redrawn on the basis of right to life of dignity free of suffering (see Singer, 2002). The compassionate decision needs to be as inclusive as possible, so that freedom and dignity is extended to the extent that the freedom and dignity of the other are not constrained in the short or long term. What of people living in other places without rights, like asylum seekers? Transboundary governance beyond the nation state faces the challenge of balancing universal acceptance of human rights or with a denial of the notion of human rights[26] based on extreme versions of nihilism by means of a participatory democracy.[27] Transformation is possible through discursive dialogue. The goal is not to establish one truth, but instead a socially and environmentally appropriate truth that accommodates all the stakeholders within a particular context. Right and wrong in an international context needs to be determined by means of governance that

not just one rule. This is an important shift in the thinking that underpins governance. It is the start of a recognition that we need principles and scenarios, rather than fixed one size fits all rules (Rawls, 1999: 121). "Democracy has a long history ... Here I am concerned only with well-ordered constitutional democracy ... understood as deliberative democracy. The definitive ideal for deliberative democracy is the idea of deliberation itself. When citizens deliberate, they exchange views and debate their supporting reasons concerning public political questions. They suppose that their political opinions may be revised by discussion with other citizens; and therefore these opinions are not simply a fixed outcome of their existing private or non political interests..." (op. cit.). "Meaning of toleration. A main task in extending the Law of peoples to nonliberal peoples is to specify how far liberal people are to tolerate nonliberal peoples. Here, to tolerate means not only to refrain from exercising political sanctions – military, economic, or diplomatic – to make a people change its ways. To tolerate also means not only to refrain from exercising political sanctions – military, economic, or diplomatic- to make a people change its ways. To tolerate also means to recognize these non liberal societies as equal participating members in good standing of the Society of Peoples, with certain rights and obligations, including the duty of civility requiring that they offer other people s public reasons appropriate to the Society of Peoples for their actions" (Rawls, 1999: 59).

[26] Otto, D., 1999, "Everything is dangerous: some post structural tools for rethinking the universal knowledge claims of human rights law", *Australian Journal of Human Rights*, accessed 9/22/2004.

[27] Participatory democracy recognizes that: a) The closest we can get to truth is through dialogue and that b) hose at the receiving end of a decision must be party to making the decision and the law. This approach attempts to recognize the importance of the dialectic in balancing the extremes of one truth or no truth through a process of co-creation within context.

takes into account both broad concerns for social and environmental sustainability and the need for discursive and participatory democracy. The tools of critical and systemic thinking and practice discussed in this book provide a means to work with differences and to encourage diversity to the extent that it does not undermine the rights of the other. Diversity needs to be fostered to the extent that it is supportive of sustainable social and environmental futures.[28] Di Girolamo and McGarry (2004) argue

> "...whilst despising JI's terrorist tactics against Australia's illegal involvement in the US-led war in Iraq, Mr Deegan said there were always 'two sides to every argument'. ...But John Bruni, lecturer in strategic studies at the Centre for Asian Studies at Adelaide University, said "that there is a limit to the amount of negotiation that could be conducted with groups such as JI, describing their world view as 'nihilistic'. 'These people don't 'really care for their own lives'," he said."[29]

By characterizing "the other" or "those people" as a unified group of nihilists, not much can be gained, except more conflict. Throughout history conflict has escalated through lack of dialogue, intransigence and a lack of trust.

Pape (2005) has argued that suicide bombing is a message from the powerless to democracies that are not listening. Devji (2005) supports the notion that Islamic Jihad has become a social movement and that the landscape of the jihad has become global.

Creating shared understanding is essential with those who can and are willing to engage in respectful dialogue and advocacy. The other, should not be stereotyped as 'beyond the pale' as this leads either to more difficult short-term solutions through conflict or even more difficult longer-term solutions through re-engagement in dialogue.

Only massive obliteration of enemies through mass destruction such as the atomic bomb leads to silencing. The "boomerang affect" of the pollution and poverty would make a victory a defeat for all. Thus idealism and expanded pragmatism are one. Dialogue makes sense, not armed conflict or conflict by proxy through an economic war of underdevelopment.

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[28] "Derrida argues, we need a critique of laws those results in 'a disorientation of the superstructures of law that both hide and reflect the economic and political interest of the dominant forces of society'" (Otto, 1999: 128). See Otto, D., 1999, "Everything is dangerous: some post structural tools for rethinking the universal knowledge claims of human rights law", *Australian Journal of Human Rights*, accessed 9/22/2004.

[29] Di Girolamo, R. and McGarry, A., 2004, "Deegan advocated talks with JI", *Weekend Australian*, September 11-12.

We can choose to distrust or to take a step towards trusting the other and constructing a shared future, based on respect for differences and human rights. According to Fukuyama[30] (2004: 111-112):

> "It is of course undeniable that small, weak countries that are acted on rather than influencing others naturally prefer to live in a world of norms, laws, and institutions, in which more powerful nations are constrained. Conversely, a sole superpower like the United States would obviously like to see its freedom of action is as unencumbered as possible. But to point to differences in power is to beg the question of why these differentials exist. The EU collectively encompasses a population of 375 million people and has a GDP of $9.7 trillion, compared to a US population of 280 million and GDP of $10.1 trillion. Europe could certainly spend money on defense at a level that would put it on a par with the United States, but it chooses not to. Europe spends barely 130 billion, which is due to rise sharply. Despite Europe's turn in a more conservative direction in 2002, not one rightist or centre – right candidate is campaigning on a platform of significantly raising defense spending. Europe's ability to deploy its power is of course greatly weakened by the collective action problems posed by the current system of EU decision making, but the failure to create more useable military power is clearly a political and normative issue ... the continent that invented the very idea of the modern state built around centralized power and the ability to deploy military force has eliminated the very core of stateness from its identity. This was the case above all in Germany ... [where] the kind of patriotism Americans displayed in the aftermath of September 11 is thus quite foreign and, indeed, distasteful to them – and would, if displayed by the Germans themselves, be distasteful to everyone else."

Football hooligans are one thing, even if we accept non-German thugs at football matches, international hooliganism is another and it is not the preserve of the Nazis or fascists in World War 11. Although Fukuyama stresses the problems of both weak states and strong states, by arguing that the former are able to apply hegemonic power and the latter are unable to resist intervention or maintain local governance structures, he develops an apology for America's political hegemony by arguing that America was developed on the basis of a "political idea". "There was no American people or nation prior to the founding of the country. National identity is civic then religious, cultural, racial or ethnic..." (Fukuyama, 2004: 113). He does not begin to engage in a critique of America's economic hegemony. Instead he argues that the European idea of legitimacy and democracy is based on abstract concepts of human rights and goes beyond the nation state, but then he lapses into an argument that it is America, the strong state that supports

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[30] Fukuyama (2004) as a leading public intellectual points out that America concentrates on acting as a powerful state, but not as a nation builder. He needs to avoid acting not only as an apologist for the United States, but also assuming the superiority of the United States as a strong state that has to intervene, because Europe chooses not to do so and instead chooses to rely on international law, not state force.

world order. He does not consider that perhaps the American nation state can be seen quite differently, through a polar opposite set of lenses by for instance McLaren and Martin (2004: 282) who argue:

> "Especially since September the 11 2001, the United States has been behaving more and more like a nation state pushed to the limits of imperial expansion, where fascism and war have become the preferred methods of choice to stave off economic collapse and to relieve the agonizing tension of its underlying contradictions. Operating under an official philosophy that maintains its military power should remain 'beyond challenge' and that asserts the impeachable right to act unilaterally by means of 'preventative' military strikes when feeling threatened, the United States is busy looking for proof to justify its punishment of Iraq while at the same time seeking out every nook and cranny of the globe for surplus value extraction..."

Then after discussion that does not engage with the cultural dimensions of the economic problem of inequality caused by underdevelopment they make the vital point:

> "In our contemporary urban world, a world that is 'rushing backwards to the age of Dickens', that has approximately 921 million slum dwellers, nearly equal to the population of the world when the young Engels first ventured onto the mean streets of Manchester, 'and where in 2020' urban poverty in the world could reach 45-50% of the total population living in cities (Davis, 2004), how can we move forward?..." (McLaren and Martin, 2004: 297).

Fukuyama argues that Western development has been used to achieve particular outcomes and it is measured in terms of performance measures that do not take into account the need to build people skills in the public and private sector. He could argue that these people skills are needed in the West as much as they are in the East, but he is too busy projecting problems on the other to see the lack of capacity in the West! Capacity building has become a catch cry, but not the understanding that we need it as much in the West as in the East!

Is trust, the basis of social capital eroding in America as Putnam (1995) argues or are people choosing, quite rationally to place their trust in other forms of governance such as social movements, non government organisations? I argue that the latter is the case. Shadolt (2004)[31] quotes a survey by the Anglican charity Anglicare:

> "that two thirds of Australians have little or no confidence in any level of government and that 60% expect a terrorist attack on Australia ... in the next five years and 61% are uneasy about global warming... The lowest levels of trust were toward people from different races, trust was highest among those with a high level of formal education and ... lowest amongst those in public housing."

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[31]   Shadbolt, P., 2004, "We live in fear and distrust", *The Australian*, 22 September.

Despite the reported lack of confidence in formal government institu-tions or in formal religious organizations, non government organizations were considered highly at percentages above 70%. The sort of responses to surveys of this nature need to be regarded cautiously as they are often an artifact of the design of the research and the construction of the sample. Low participation rates in USA can be attributed to the fact that it is vol-untary. But the high turnout against all odds in the recent election in Iraq (amongst the Shiite majority who had previously been marginalized under Saddam Hussein) indicates that people will use the ballot box if they are desperate to be heard and believe that the vote will make a difference. The low turnout amongst the Sunni minority could be argued to be the result of a) not wanting a democracy that would lead to a change in the status quo; or b) cynicism about the results.[32] The cynicism about liberal democracies is well founded, as voting, whist necessary is insufficient to create an open society.

Internationally although non Government organisations can play a role, the state (both strong and weak) needs to be held accountable and the ca-pacity to be accountable needs to be developed. I disagree with Fukuyama's (2004) emphasis only on capacity building for so-called weak states. Amer-ica is a strong state with little capacity to enable engaged deliberations. The George Bush mantra "if you are not with us, you are against us" is problem-atic, because it silences debate. Democracy in America is under threat. This brand of democracy is neither discursive nor participatory.

What is needed is capacity building to enable compassionate, systemic and sustainable governance across conceptual boundaries.[33] If we would not like to be at the receiving end of a decision, why should we impose it on others? The answer can only be, because the powerful think it is in their interests. A systemic analysis can show that it is not in their interests. This is the low road to achieving the political will to be compassionate.

Social movements can also help to make the public sector and the private sector (to which it is increasingly linked) more accountable. For example Mandela lobbied at a public rally in London with musician and social ac-tivist Bob Geldorf. He made a plea for the G7 wealthiest nations to "double aid to the poorest nations". "Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not nat-

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[32] *The Australian*, 2005, "Iraqis defy terror to cast votes", 31 January, pp. 11-12.
[33] Nussbaum makes distinction between human and animals about consciousness and abil-ity to think about the past and ability to make judgments (Nussbaum, 1978: 263). A Systemic Governance approach differs from Nussbaum and follows the notion that con-sciousness is a continuum across all life. If we accept that laboratory rats share more than 90% of their neural system with human beings (Greenfield, 2000) a neuroscientist what implications does this have for public policy?

ural."[34] Social movements are not fixed to specific contexts or organisations or groups.

Fukuyama (2004) discusses accountability in the public sector to the principal stakeholders, namely the public. The public servants and the members of the government ought to be their agents. Unlike Fukuyama, I do not agree that the private sector accountability of managers needs to be to the principals, namely the shareholders. Accountability needs to take into consideration the implications of actions today and in the future. Triple bottom line accounting is essential (Elkington, 1997). The distinction between principal and agents needs to be reconsidered from a critical and systemic point of view. Governments are agents for people who are the principles (or ought to be – in democratic society). The challenge will always be to balance democracy and human rights. If as Fukuyama (2004) argues, the European view is to be concerned about human rights, which is a transboundary concern, and the American view is to be concerned about citizenship rights which is a bounded national view, it is because as Fukuyama stressed they have the power (at the moment) to act as a powerful state. Perhaps if:

- nation states were not based on power and might and instead were based on justice and
- there was a realization that justice is preferable to power and not merely a sign of weakness this could be a step forward.

A world where justice rules is preferable to a world where might rules. Unfortunately implementing justice requires some power. Legislative soft power based on trust would be preferable to the threat or use of violence. Dialogue across interest groups is essential at a local, national and international level. Public administration and leadership in building capacity to work across multiple maps of the world is vital for more democratic governance. According to Kerin (2004):

> "The hardline foreign policies of the US and Australia, as much as terrorist disdain for Western Culture, were contributing to the spread of Islamic terrorism, a radical paper by the countries leading defense tank argues. The paper, by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute analyst Aldo Borgu argues that the Howard government's white paper on terrorism and its approach to combating terrorism is flawed on several fronts. Mr Borgu said that despite the emotive language of the war on terror, Islamic terrorist had a 'political agenda' and government might need to negotiate with at least their 'political arms' . . . A popular myth being propagated by government worldwide – and not least our won – is that terrorists target us primarily because of our culture and what we represent, rather than the conduct of our foreign and domestic policies, he said. 'The truth

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[34] Parker, E., 2005, "No poor excuses: Mandela's plea to help ailing nations", *Sunday Mail*, February 6, www.sundaymail.com.

is its because of both'... History teaches us that we should not be so naïve or idealistic as to assume that the people we are currently trying to hunt down and eliminate won't be the sort of people we end up negotiating with in 10 years time..."[35]

2.3   ENHANCING PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Enhancing participatory processes is essential if the new European Union is to have a chance of succeeding.

"It is not a question of "selling Europe through some well rounded argument or PR gimmick. It is a question of creating a dream and keeping it alive. Because Europe has remained so much of a top down technocratic exercise, there is not a European dream. The American Dream is alive and Kicking, A Chinese Dream is emerging, and an Indian Dream. But a European dream? An abiding sense that an individual can shape his future, that tomorrow will be better than today that opportunities are opening up rather than closings? I do not hear this from young people in Europe today..."[36]

Smadja argues for cultural change, based on democratic involvement in remaining Europe. This argument was made in June. Within four weeks another terrorist attack, this time in London, underlines the need for unity and for the development of a shared future. The challenge will be to resist the temptation to distrust and undermine civil liberties. "As English journalist George Parkers put it: "The EU has a serious existentialist question when its citizens cannot remember why it was created, do not like what it has become and are frightened of what it will be in the future".[37] Trust develops further networks of co-operation (ABS, 2002; Putnam, 1995).[38] The case studies in the following chapters support the State of the Regions Reports and help to

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[35] Kerin, J., 2004, "Hardline policies 'encouraging' militants", *Weekend Australian*, September 11-12.

[36] Smadja, C., "A Last Chance for Europe: Forget the breast-beating. All the EU needs is a dream," *Newsweek*, June 21, 2005 (4), 44-45.

[37] Walsh, M., "Continental Divide," *Newsweek*, June 21, 2005.

[38] But as Edgar (2001) stresses that governance in Australia needs space for difference and space for cooperation. Molar or fixed identity politics and molecular fluid politics and identity can be useful in different political contexts. Conceptual diversity is vital. This means that it could be important to have different social spaces and different networks. As Bourdieu (1986) stressed in his work on cultural and social capital some networks are in the interest of some rather than others. Networks per se do not build social capital for everyone. They can establish 'in groups' and 'out groups'. It is the role of governance, particularly local governance to address the representation of everyone. Better opportunities for communication are conducive to sustainable democracy and to economic development. This can require separate as well as joint meetings within local communities hosted by local government and non-government organizations. But governments need to help to make places and regions competitive and cannot rely on the

provide in depth details of processes and explain why systemic approaches are sensible (irrespective of ideological assumptions and values).[39] Governance in Australia, for example, tends to work on partisan or party lines at state and commonwealth level. This means that the party line is followed.[40] This is what is needed in a fast changing globalised world, where not only international competition for resources prevails, but also regional competition for resources. The Australian Research Council (2002 website cited the work of Gibbons *et al.*, 1994, on the new nature of knowledge) and National Economics and ALGA (2002, 2003) have stressed the importance of enabling regions to draw on the tacit (non-codified) knowledge of participants, by enabling networks of creative people to develop the region. This is a bottom up approach to development.

Don Edgar (2001) takes this further and argues that diversity at the local level needs to be fostered. He stresses the risk of "tribalism", the negative aspect of decentralization.[41]

The so-called "bohemian" and "cultural diversity index" (State of the Regions Reports, 2002) is important in this regard. His argument is borne out in the extensive benchmarking exercise undertaken for these reports. By ensuring that quality of life is addressed, the mobile knowledge creating class of designers and innovators is attracted to places, according to ALGA (2002). It does, however have a downside as the regional disparities show. Living costs and house prices rise. This makes it more and more difficult for people to move from the regions that have been left behind. Thus the people

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market alone. Local government and non-government organisations need to build civil society. The market has in fact created enormous divides between high priced areas with expensive properties and so-called "regional gulags" where technology, talent and tolerance are more limited. Supporting local communities to learn from one another and to support one another in practical projects enables people to draw on their experiences whilst trying out new projects. Action learning as individuals, groups and communities is important (Reason, 1994; Senge, 1990, 1999) in this respect. In terms of this argument the idealistic notion of social, economic and environmental justice makes sense. Thus idealism and pragmatism form part of one sustainable cycle.

[39]   These include Participatory Action Research approaches to planning and development that draw on diverse ideas.

[40]   Dean Jaensch, December 4, 2003, public lecture. Other options are for elected representatives to act as trustees who decide what will be done once elected, or to act as delegates or conduits for public participation. Local Governance can choose amongst these options and consider the situational context. It allows more flexibility.

[41]   He does not mean it quite literally, albeit the potential for more splinter groups to develop exists in Australia and elsewhere. This is a real danger in some kinds of diversity, but one that must be faced by all democracies. The challenge for democracy as far as Edgar (2001) is concerned is to provide space to be difference and for co-operation. These are the drivers for a creative nation.

with good ideas, but without the skills to make them members of the so-called "mobile knowledge class" are left behind. The gaps between regions in Australia are not caused by differences in the number of employed, but in the size of the salaries paid and the differences in the cost of living (ALGA, 2003). Younger people who wish to move to regional centres are affected by property prices. The so-called intergenerational disparities have been highlighted as an area of concern that could best be addressed through developing the lagging regions through capacity building. The notion that market forces will solve all the problems has been criticized (State of the Regions Report, 2003). Participatory democracy has been given the big tick, alongside the importance of sustainable development. This research by National Economics also shows that economic development has shifted from primary industry (fishing and forestry and mining) to secondary service industry and now knowledge creation, indicated by patent development, tolerance, technology and talent. All these factors go hand-in-hand.

An open society where people have choices and freedom to express themselves and to make policy provides the context for the new age of designers who are future oriented and not hide-bound by tradition. People these days can participate in governance in many ways in multiple arenas such as local neighbourhood networks, work networks, social and environmental networks, voting in formal government elections and taking part in social movements. We need to see the patterns of what constitutes good and bad governance locally and to apply these insights more widely. If people are excluded and marginalized it leads to low socio-economic outcomes and they are unable to move easily from areas of low development within a nation state. Policy and governance implications at the local level should be considered at the international level, from which they are not isolated.

Managed diversity has been argued as being 'good' for development. Good governance from the point of elected representatives, corporate governance (institutional governance) and citizen representation needs to address the point of view of multiple stakeholders. This requires an ability to communicate appropriately in a range of arenas. Nevertheless, the grass roots arena remains important. People operate conceptually in a range of contexts and travel widely geographically, but the majority still live in one place. The more mobile knowledge workers[42] are those with wider options.

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[42] The mobile groups can live in higher density places and holiday elsewhere (Stretton, 2001). It is important to have different density options for different age groups and those with limited income. For example young children and young families need space (Stretton, 2001) and the argument that cost saving, in terms of saving for infrastructure costs can be enhanced by high density living needs to be approached carefully. The long-term implications for quality of life need to be considered in terms of triple bottom line ac-

From Ashby's Law (1956, see Lewis and Stuart, 2003) we can infer that good decision making and good governance can only be achieved if the sort of diversity amongst the decision makers matches the diversity of the population. Nevertheless decisions have to be made by governments. Sometimes extreme diversity is positive, sometimes it can have negative implications and these have to be weighed up by governments. What is clear, however is that the greater the level of participation in lobbying and the greater the level of representation, the better the quality of decisions and the quality of life.[43]

2.4   APPRECIATING COMPLEXITY WHEN MAKING PUBLIC POLICY THROUGH SYSTEMIC LEARNING AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

The argument addresses:[44]

- The central paradoxes, namely that: trust is a risk for people who make themselves vulnerable to others (Warren, 1999). But without trust that is developed through respectful communication (in the sense used by Habermas, 1984), democracy is unsustainable. West Churchman's work contributes to helping us to address the above paradox by means of a number of tools for better thinking and practice. West Churchman and Van Gigch (2003) and Midgley (2000) make the link between knowing and caring, because the links between our identity as researchers, practitioners and responsible human beings cannot be denied from a systemic approach.
- Diversity is essential, but it also contains a threat, decisions have to be made to ensure that democratic norms prevail. The cultural value of creativity and participatory democracy – irrespective of age, gender, or any

counting. It is important to note that the kinds of environments that the highest paid knowledge workers and the super rich capitalists choose are unspoiled and unpolluted, green and leafy – or if the inner city life is chosen – then regular breaks away are affordable (Stretton, 2001). He is scathing about systems modellers who think that they can solve all the problems. Insider knowledge is as important as outsider or expert knowledge and openness remains essential at all times as a means to find out whether ideas can stand up to testing.

[43] Hugh Stretton (2001), for example makes a comparison between Green Valley in Sydney, Australia and Elizabeth in Adelaide, Australia. Both are planned cities, but Elizabeth is more diverse in that it has both public and private housing and a high level of public participation in local government. Also and most importantly the council members live in Elizabeth.

[44] Part 2 provides the basis for the argument based on case studies, autoethography, qualitative and quantitative date on, life chances, communication, social and environmental justice and governance.

other sociodemographic or economic category (see Banathy, 2000) support sustainable social, economic and environmental futures. The use of categories does not imply that they are used in any essentialist manner (Beck, 1998: 137).

- Being is a complex interaction of conceptual, biological, ecological and social variables and is not static. Although identity can be rooted in categories, it can also be emergent if our thinking is able to be mindful of the fluidity of life.
- Developing the will to value systemic praxis based on systemic understanding.
- Spaces for shared and diverse goals (within some limits) decided by democratic governance.
- Idealism (as appreciating the connections and relationships that make up social and environmental systems) and the practical and pragmatic implications for sustainable futures.
- Pragmatic risk management based on appreciating multiple viewpoints goes hand in hand with participatory design and democracy.
- Thinking and practice to support social and environmental justice.

2.5   CHALLENGES FOR PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

One of the greatest challenges for governance at the local level is to find ways to undertake better communication to enable the creative ideas of people to be translated into practice that improves the social, economic and environmental context in which they live.

Formal participation in democracy (if measured by voting) has fallen in Western democracies. Putnam (1995) argues that this is because people are more mobile and less engaged in service in their communities in a face-to-face (community-based) manner and more involved in more abstract social issues, through their membership in electronic networks. This has the potential to enable people to think beyond the local context, provided they feel sufficiently connected to the places they live in for a few years, as opposed to a life time's sense of place that is traced back generations and which can be considered for future generations. Mobility has advantages and disadvantages that need to be addressed through local governance that encourages the participation of all who are living within an area.

Bentley (2003), Skidmore and Hakim (2003) argue that some people are disenchanted with the political categories or parties that are available. Disengagement is prevalent in politics today. According to Bentley (2003):

> "The clearest illustration of the problem is the steady decline, across the industrialized world, of people's engagement with formal politics. In eighteen of the

world's twenty most industrialized countries election turnout has declined since the 1950s, on average by 10 percent. At the same time and with the same consistency, people have become far less likely to identify strongly with a political party."

This is not necessarily a problem, because people are engaged in political activity in many fluid and non-formal contexts. Social movements are not fixed to specific contexts or organizations or groups and can provide useful ways to bring about change to political institutions that are no longer in touch with people's values. Participatory democracy needs to go beyond voting and good governance needs to go beyond the organizational context. Voting for a candidate or following sound guidelines for good corporate governance, although important is insufficient to ensure social and environmental justice (Elkington, 1997; Beck, 1992; Chomsky, 2003; Pilger, 2002; McIntyre-Mills, 2000; Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999).

2.6   ACCOUNTABILITY, SELF INTEREST AND THE WILL TO PARTICIPATE

Stretton (2001) makes the point that any one model may make a contribution, but it cannot provide all the answers. This has implications for the way we govern and design options for the future. One-way communication undermines the potential of education and of democracy (albeit always a compromise at best) to pool ideas and to be accountable to citizens on the basis of critical praxis[45] and dialogue, which is by definition at least two-way communication.

What could our policy and management decisions be like if we were able to hold in mind multiple meanings drawn from international relations, psychology, ethics, spirituality law, human rights, public policy, management process and ecological, biological considerations and cybernetics at the same moment?

No one mind could achieve this – but a hyperlink mentality[46] that is open to many others through matrix teams engaged in experiential learning and supported by data bases that facilitate knowledge making. Cross-

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[45] Critical systemic thinking practice *unfolds* the values of the stakeholders and *sweeps in* the social, political, economic and environmental aspects (to use the phrases from West Churchman's work, 1971, 1979a, b, and 1982). Open, not closed communication is needed and appropriate communication techniques for participatory design are needed (Chambers, 1997; McIntyre-Mills, 2003).

[46] Drawing on a modified version of the knowledge management work of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) and extending it by reading Gao, F. and Nakamori, Y. (2001) and Gao, F., Li, M., Nakamori, Y. (2002) and considering the work of Tsoukas (2003), Orr (2004), who I read as I completed the manuscript.

fertilization and cross referencing and the implications of many ideas for decision making[47] that is sensitive to both ontology (by asking what is the nature of reality?) and epistemology (by asking how do we know what we know?). Critical questioning could help improve our ability to move in this direction. Groups at the local level, networks, teams, and social movements could strive to model the sort of ongoing iterative dialogue that is vital for problem appreciation and contextual resolutions by and for the stakeholders who will need to live with the decisions. Democracy is a process supported by norms and structures that enable striving for the ideal of "frank and fearless" participation. This is the mantra of the public service – that is currently being ignored in many Western democracies today. Dialogue helps to identify the paradoxes, which in turn provide portals for transformation. The enlightenment and democracy need to be seen not so much as a static universal law, but as a dynamic structure and process for balancing the eternal paradox that:

- *On the one hand*, openness to debate and to other ideas and possibilities is the basis for both the enlightenment process of testing and for democracy and

- *On the other hand*, for openness to occur there has to be some trust that voicing new ideas will not lead to subtle or overt marginalisation of oneself or one's associates. The West faces the challenge of preserving this openness and trust and redressing the imbalances in wealth and power caused by centuries of colonization, modernization and globalization that is based on the single bottom line (see Elkington's 1997 critique) of profits for competitiveness in markets, that support hegemony, rather than on a multiple dynamic awareness of socio-cultural, political, economic and environmental factors that when considered together support a sustainable future.

Knowing is based on a range of contextual experiences, senses, on communication and iterative feedback, so knowing is a process. To know is transformative and recursive. Thus knowing (as a result of asking questions or observing or participating) can lead to our making changes in the world and to our being changed in the process of knowing. Knowing is a potentially transformative experience. Systemic Governance is constructivist, not based on objective, external rationality, but instead on a relationship and it is not merely about representation, but about change. Governance is constructivist in nature and is not about cause and effect, but about networks of

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[47] For example the cogniscope software of Aleco Christakis and Ken Bausch (2001) based on the Interactive Management work of Warfield (see for example Christakis and Brahms, 2003).

feedback loops and the implications these have for us as researchers, prac-
titioners and human beings. Appreciation of the many domains of knowl-
edge that can be addressed through an inquiring system that takes the objec-
tive, the subjective and the intersubjective into account when attempting to
understand the nature of governance and international relations challenges.
Knowing can transform our identity and the identity of others. The process
of knowing, consciousness and will are systemically connected, but we can
choose to deny these connections. Van Gigch (2003: 235) draws on the work
of Mitroff and Churchman (1992)[48] to develop a design of inquiring systems
that enables a systemic connection to be made across knowing and respon-
sibility to act with compassion to others. The design of inquiring systems a)
enhances theoretical and methodological literacy and b), assists understand-
ing the nature of governance and international relations c) provides a means
to support constructivist dialogue across diverse stakeholders.

Critical systems thinkers (CST) such as Jackson (2000) and Flood and
Jackson (1991) have developed a practical process for management that sup-
ports working with diversity, learning and decision making (called TSI) that
emphasizes emergence, but with the progressive, iterative process of creativ-
ity, decision making, implementation and then re-consideration of decisions.
The process provides more direction for management and is certainly more
appropriate in a governance context, where decisions have to be taken. CSP
however takes into account cultural values and their influence on the devel-
opment of maps and processes of interaction.[49]

Even being prepared to admit multiple viewpoints existing simultane-
ously and the role we can play (in constructing and transforming our own
futures) is a good starting point and one that requires openness to ideas.[50]
Escher's image of two hands drawing each other has been interpreted in
many ways by systems thinkers. For some it is about the importance of hu-
man constructions of meaning, rather than ultimate meanings imposed by
one god, for some it is about co-creation of meaning for others such as Hof-
stadter (1979). It is about the 'strange loops' or paradoxes that human beings
have to address. To be conscious of one's own thinking is to enter an eternal
iteration.

The history of conflict is of "either or" thinking. The history of peace
making is of "both and" thinking (McIntyre-Mills 2000; Pierre 2000). The

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[48]   Mitroff, I.I and Churchman, C.W., 1992, "A manifesto for the systems sciences: outrage
       over the state of science", *General Systems Bulletin*, 22(1): 7-10.
[49]   In this sense the work of Habermas is extended by the contributions of Derrida who is
       sensitive to cultural lenses.
[50]   Romm, N., 2002, "A trusting constructivist view of systems thinking in a knowledge
       age", in: *Systems Theory and Practice in a Knowledge Age*, Ragsdell *et al.* (eds), Plenum,
       New York.

systemic interrelations help to address the divides across researcher – researched, facilitator/learner. Once we also acknowledge the connections across theory and practice then it will be possible to address the criticism made by bell hooks (Anyon, 1994: 126, cites hooks)[51] that talking about difference and giving a voice to diverse others, does nothing but entrench divisions and the way things are. Instead the divides across thinking, speaking and acting need to be acknowledged and the divides across life forms healed. Praxis is what matters. Praxis can make a difference – for better or worse!

2.7   METHODOLOGY

"Culture in interaction" (Elias and Lichterman, 2003) is based on ethnographic case studies in community projects – and I cite their key concepts of "bonds, boundaries and norms" as a starting point for understanding communication, but the concepts don't help with the notion of transformation in personal identity and politics. This work develops communication through:

- Stressing that the viability of democracy should not be undermined, despite its current limitations and the cynical rhetoric of some (not all) third way initiatives, because of its association with globalization and harsh forms of economic rationalism, without the redress of welfarism or sincere social democratic initiatives (McDonald and Marston, 2003).
- Open dialogue for transformation and emergence (that appreciates diverse values, emotions, ideas and life experiences).
- Conceptual tools/or heuristic devices for co-creative thinking to assist a shift from categorical to systemic design and practice. Emergence in a personal and a public sense can be understood if we return to using the tadpole analogy of seeing the world one way when one swims in a pond, but quite differently when one "leaps beyond" the limits of a paradigm. Banathy (1996) talks of abduction and leaping out of paradigm limitations. Being and vision can change over time through cultural transformation.[52]

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[51]   Anyon, J., 1994, "The retreat of Marxism and socialist feminism: post-modern and post structural theories in education", *Curriculum Inquiry*, 24(2).

[52]   The analogy of a coin falling in different ways at different times or perhaps both sides being seen simultaneously if held up – makes the point that the standpoint of a moving observer could be "swept in" to our understanding of the way things appear to be. The coin could melt in a bush fire or it could be swallowed in some circumstances by a pet dog! In other circumstances the coin as currency could be rejected if the "heroic" designer in the sense used by West Churchman (1979) were to rethink the way things could be in a sustainable world – where the narrow financial market does not limit hu-

● Knowledge, knowledge making and management processes that are inclusive and reflexive.[53]

Collected case studies[54] are drawn from the co-created experiences of a journey of two-way learning with a wide range of people and within many contexts. The issue of power is central and explored by placing myself within the frame of the research (see Ellis and Bochner, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Participation[55] ensures that the design stands up to testing.[56] This is the basis of rigorous science and it is also the basis for inclusive design.

Multiple readings within context are needed, rather than fixed patterns. Thick description (Geertz, 1973) provides a sound basis for what Edgar (2000) calls "thick democracy". Developing multidimensional and multilayered pictures of the domains of reality can help to extend our understanding to encompass many ways of knowing.[57] I do not argue that there is a completely blank slate on which we draw, our humanity and our environment provides a starting point, but that there are many viewpoints and life

man options to rethink their world. This is supported by systemic (as in sustainable socially and environmentally just) governance. See Frijof Capra on holism and systemic praxis.

[53] Auto ethnography is informed by Ellis and Bochner (2000) and demonstrated by Behar (1993) in her work *Translated Woman* based on her work in Cuba and as a Cuban Jewess living in America. She addresses the role of the researcher and the other acknowledges the fluidity and slippage in knowledge creation which is not "either or", but "both and". Like Derrida her lived experiences have traversed many boundaries. Slippage in identity and categories of being is addressed through the work of Haraway (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*, Deleuze and Guattari (in Bogue, 1989; Buchanan and Colebrook, 2000).

[54] Case studies of PAR using qualitative and quantitative methods provide the basis for abductive reasoning which is reflexive, iterative and constructivist, in so far as I reflect on the stories and case studies and perceptions of the many participants.

[55] Participatory action research approaches to design is based on our everyday experiences and on transdisciplianry professional knowledge. Multiple stakeholders and multiple viewpoints can improve design by ensuring that it is based on dialogue and debate.

[56] The starting point of my argument is not merely the value of trust and the value of building social capital, because this is meaningless. Why should we trust others until they earn trust? Why are networks necessarily a good thing? Social networks can be in the interests of social justice or they can be in the interest of specific interest groups who do not have the wider social interests (Bourdieu, 1986) let alone environmental interests at heart.

[57] Romm, N., 2002, "A trusting constructivist view of systems thinking in a knowledge age", in *Systems Theory and Practice in a Knowledge Age*, Ragsdell *et al.* (eds), Plenum, New York. Romm (2002) develops an argument for "trusting constructivism". She cites Fuenmayor (1991) who in turn draws on Escher's image of two hands drawing each other, a metaphor for the potential we have to define and co-create reality, rather than impose our own constructions and representations.

experiences based on different life chances. What it means to be human and what the world looks like from different points of view and different experiences need to be explored.[58] The history of conflict is of "either or" thinking. Praxis[59] is what matters. Praxis can make a difference – for better or worse![60] Accountable policy decisions are made contextually[61] and when all the potential standpoints social, economic and environmental have been considered then a co-created governance decision can be considered "right" for that context and that time. There is no one formula for good governance, other than linking the choice of management approach (based on technical, strategic and communicative knowledge) with context. Systemic approaches reflect on the range of approaches available and to be able to work out (through the ability to think critically and to ask questions) which

[58] Contextual and collaborative governance needs to be based on respectful communication (as per Habermas, 1984) that is (hopefully) appropriate and mindful of present and future generations (Banathy, 2000). Power does come into play when desires are thwarted or when there is no respect for others. But if we believe that power is not necessarily a primary driving factor and that instead desire underpins the will to communicate (see Deleuze and Guattari, in Bogue, 1989) then it is possible.

[59] Critical Systemic thinking and practice (CSP) as applied to governance theory has evolved from working with, rather than within disciplines. Questions are possibly more important for democracy than answers, which always need to be contextual and open to negotiation, based on the need and desire to work together with others. Conceptual boundaries can be drawn and redrawn on the basis of iterative dialogue that includes those who are to be affected by the decisions. If people refuse to participate, or if they undermine the process of respectful dialogue, then modeling respect remains important, whilst refusing to abandon the values that support a liberated version of the Enlightenment Agenda that is mindful of its own limitations and is open to the ideas of others in the interests of social and environmental justice.

[60] Critical systemic thinking and practice uses a complementary approach to theory and methodology and is open to many ideas. At the heart of CSP (Critical Systemic Praxis) is the belief that research is not merely about observation, but also about intervention (Midgley, 2001). CSP is based on the premise that reality is best understood as comprising domains of knowledge and following Habermas (1984) these can be called: the subjective, objective and intersubjective domains. Knowledge is not so much a truth as multiple, multisemic (McClung Lee, 1988), hyperlinked layers and dimensions of reality. The more we are able to hold in mind diverse viewpoints (West Churchman, 1979a, b, 1982) the closer we are able to appreciate complexity.

[61] Truth is dialogue. It is a process. Policymaking needs to be mindful of this and needs to be based on ongoing processes for participation in civil, elected and corporate governance (Local Government Association, 2003). Context is all-important to understanding that needs to go beyond frameworks to unfold and sweep in a range of considerations (in the sense used by Churchman, 1979a, b, 1982). Action learning (Argyris and Schon, 1991), participatory action research (Reason and Bradbury, 2000; Reason, in Denzin and Lincoln, 1993) and generative communication (in the sense used by Banathy, 1996) is possible only if there is a will to co-create.

approach will work and why. Working with diversity, understanding the implications of both drawing and redrawing boundaries in our decisions is the core of accountable governance (see also Scott, 1998).

Good ideas can stand up to testing. If they are not good ideas then they need to be revised. Good management and governance is based on asking questions and ensuring that people feel confident to ask questions as part of a process of "continuous review".[62]

The realization that idealism and risk management go hand in hand needs to be more widely appreciated. Environmental and social constraints/risks and disparities in life chances are real and will have practical implications that need to be addressed through governance choices at the local, national, international and regional level.

Why do we need to think about self-others and the environment? Why is this both an idealistic and pragmatic (if not a merely utilitarian) approach? Without respect for the systemic web of life we will feel the systemic effect sooner or later, because we are part of the web! Ecohumanistic praxis (McIntyre-Mills, 2000) is based on a sense of reciprocity across living systems. This reciprocity can be considered as pragmatism and idealism. Compassion thus makes sense systemically, because human beings will indeed be at the receiving end of their decisions which will eventually they will have a "boomerang effect", to quote Beck (1992). Even if they are delayed by attempts at insulating the powerful classes and nations against the ramifications of pollution and exploitation.

Participatory action research aims to: a) Create and earn trust[63] through better communication and better praxis (thinking and practice) in practical projects that help to prefigure or try out new ways of designing and doing things (transformation) on a small scale; b) Make better decisions based, according to Capra (2003) not on the "power to command", but instead on a "firm basis for knowing and acting" (Skidmore and Harkin, 2003: 15).

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[62] Ongoing evaluation to find 'the glitches' requires listening to the ideas of people who a) experience what it is like to be on the receiving end of management decisions and policies or b) can draw on the day-to-day working life at the coal face. It requires the ability to think critically and permission to ask questions openly, without being labeled subversive.

[63] Skidmore, P. and Harkin, J., 2003, "Grown up trust: a scene setting paper for the Demos/Nationwide seminar series on trust", Demos, Open Access, London.