Policy Design:

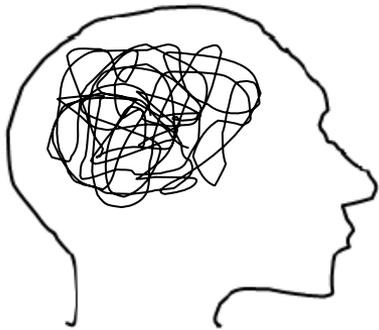# A New Area of Design Research and Practice

Jeffrey Johnson & Matthew Cook

The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK

6th December 2013

Complex Systems, Design & Management, 2013. Paris

Design is the vision & creation of new things

nothing   →   something

design

design

The system now   →   The system in the future

design

Design is the vision & creation of new things

Policy is the vision & creation of a new futures

Napolian III, Hausmann, ..

Paris 1850 ———————————————→

policy as
The system ————————————→ The system
now   design   in the future
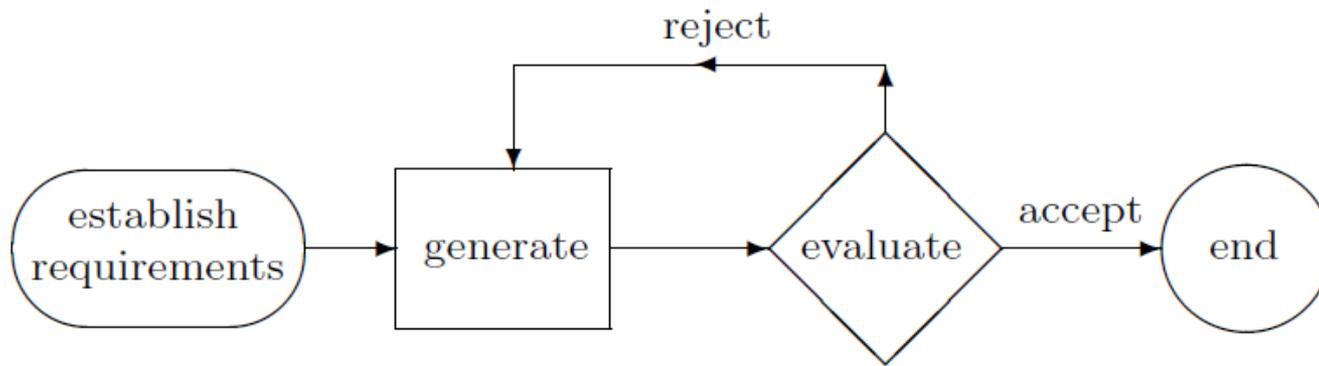
Models of design

Fig. 9.3   The fundamental generate-evaluate cycle of design
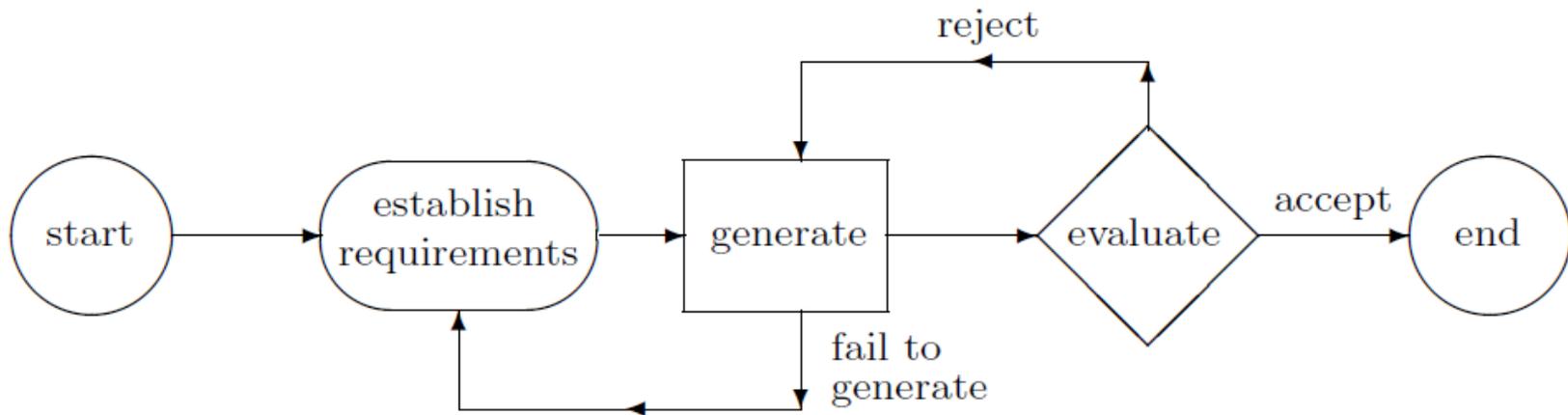
Models of design

Fig. 9.4   The co-evolutionary generate-evaluate fail-respecify double cycles of design
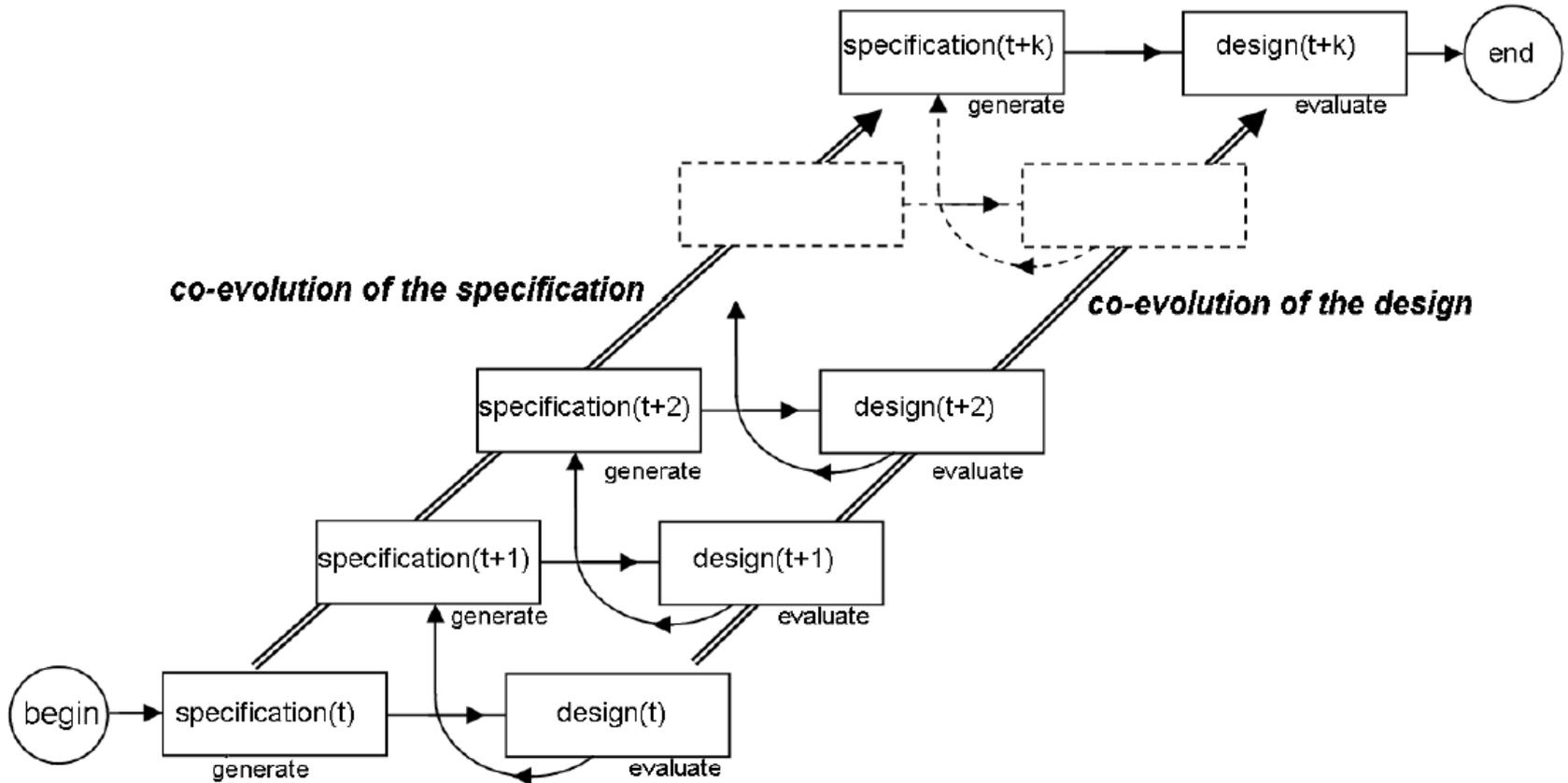
Models of design

Fig. 9.5   The co-evolution between specification and design through a generate-evaluate spiral

Co-evolution: what designers think is wanted and what designers think is possible

Policy Design

Herbert Simon: Design is the 'Sciences of the Artificial'

Policy involves

❖ creating a vision of the future and
❖ taking actions to make it into a reality
  i.e. creating an *artificial system*

Policy *is designing the future*.

imagining new social, economic and environmental structures . . .

. . . to make the world as it *ought* to be (Simon, 1969).
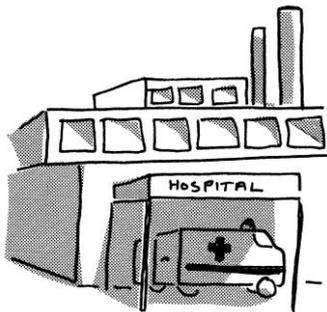
Policy Design

e.g. City planning is policy-as-design for built environment

cities constantly designed but never finished

The same applies to the social and economic
sub-systems that function within infrastructure

Policy Design

E.g.: polices for an aging population

"More people > 60 than children under 16 in the UK …

… public services focus on intensive services for most vulnerable in crisis.

We need a fundamental shift in the way we think about older people, from dependency and deficit towards independence and well-being. …

The challenge of the needs of a growing community is not marginal

Much is straightforward and expectations are unexceptional, but

comprehensive, systematic approaches to older people still relatively rare.

In future, local councils will be judged on their ability to build communities that support older people to live active, fulfilling lives."

(UK Audit Commission, 2004).

Policy Design

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(UK Audit Commission, 2004). **New systems must be *designed***

Policy Design

E.g.: polices for an aging population

Today old people are admitted into hospital due to illness or injury, recover and continue to occupy those hospital beds

No system has yet been designed and implemented delivering 'joined up' care from a combination of providers including the National Health Services, local welfare services, and members of the community including family and friends, and volunteers.

Conservative Party's 2013 **Big Society** initiative:

"*The Big Society puts more power in people's hands* –

massive transfer of power from Central Government to local communities.

We want to see people encouraged and enabled to play a more active role in society."

Policy Design

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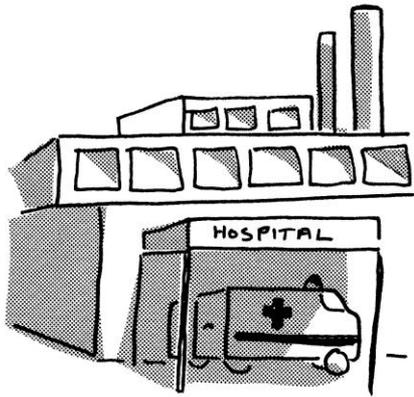massive transfer of power from Central Government to local communities.

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How can this ideal system be designed ?

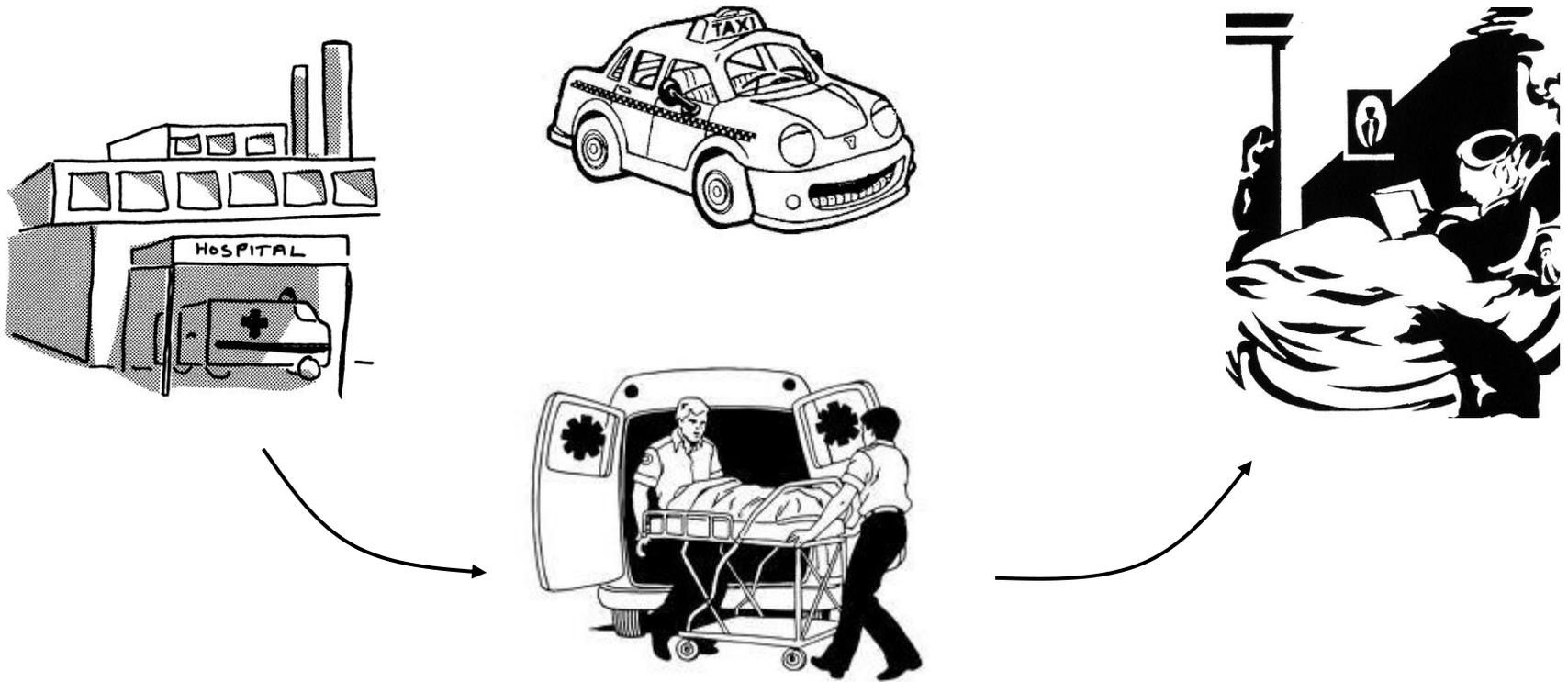# Policy Design

E.g.: polices for an aging population

This is a systems of systems of systems problem

Policy Design

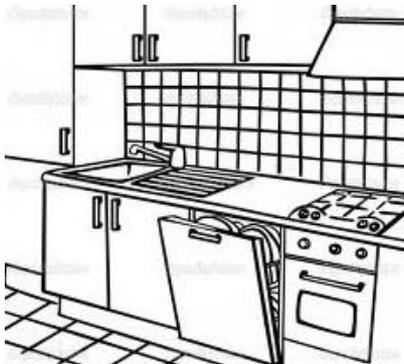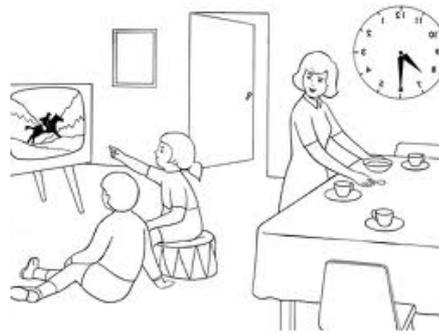## E.g.: polices for an aging population

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Policy Design

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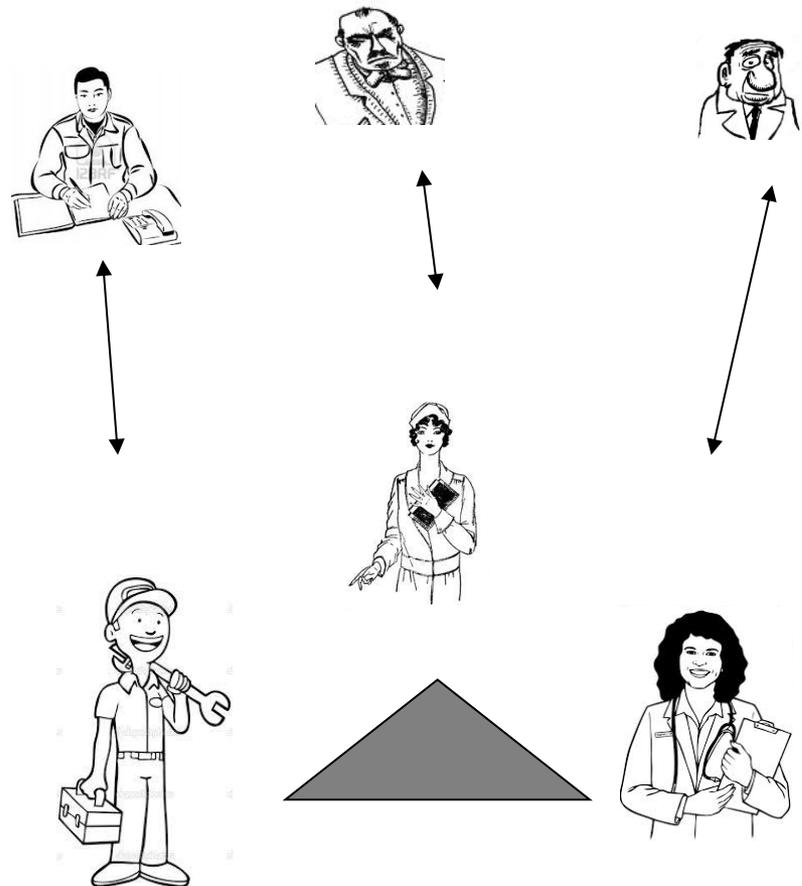This is a systems of systems of systems problem – **at many levels**

All the systems and subsystems must be designed

Policy Design

E.g.: polices for an aging population

This is a systems of systems of systems problem – **at many levels**

Conclusions

Policy involves (is?) designing the future

Design involves generate-evaluate cycles

Design - a coevolution between what wanted and what is possible

Policy makers must stay in design loop – or get others' solution

Design takes time – policy making may take time

Policy makers should expect to change their premises

Policy conducted as design would give:

       more creative solutions to social problems

       enable co-creation of solutions between stakeholders

       allow politician to change their minds (it's normal)

       create better futures for all stakeholders