

In other cases, local governments have actually sold their buildings to property companies to lease them back. The UK government built up a commitment of £35.5bn to 563 PFI deals by 2004, while in Australia some A\$20bn was tied up in PFI around the same time (Hodge and Greve 2007: 546). While PFIs relate mostly to the built environment rather than design *per se*, they often have an indirect effect on design by locking buildings into specific patterns and hierarchies of use for the duration of a PFI contract. Conflicts between private contractors and public sector providers may emerge that contest what is considered the most efficient use of space and how a service should be designed (Gesler et al. 2004).

More directly to design, NPM provides opportunities for design consultancies to create money-saving systems. An example of this is the UK graphics company Corporate Document Services that provides print management services that helps local authorities reduce their costs and the efficiency of their publication processes (CDS 2008). If new roles for design have emerged here, then this hasn't necessarily been the result of any dramatic reorientation of its professional body towards public service; it is more the result of the public sector bringing itself closer to the commercially oriented practices and norms of design.

## PUBLIC SECTOR MARKETISATION AND CONSUMPTION

The marketisation of public services also creates a denser landscape of management and, indeed, design opportunities. Delivery of services may be developed and managed through the alliance of local authority social services, semi-public agencies and the voluntary sector. This forms part of what Whitfield (2001, 2006) calls 'agentification'. For example, Whitfield (2006) shows how, prior to agentification, the management of a school involved simply interacting with a local authority. It previously provided all ancillary services by subcontracting to a plethora of agencies including privatised school meal providers, buildings and facilities maintenance companies, after-school care voluntary groups, outsourced school transport, ICT, special educational needs resources and teacher supply agencies. In the NPM model, as shown in Figure 8.1, the school and the local authority are effectively working as agents to external suppliers, configuring and contracting their services to run things.

This marketisation of services calls for a much greater number of relationships with external bodies as well as more frequent decision making on the part of school managers. It also creates ever more numbers of subcontractee organisations that might represent themselves within this system: more logos, more corporate documents, more public sector oriented products, more relations. It is small wonder, therefore, that the public sector was of increasing significance to designers in this period. By 2006–07 in the UK, the public sector and non-government organisations (NGOs) provided work for around half of design agencies, making it the fourth or fifth most important client to them (British Design Innovation (BDI) 2006, 2007).

The shift from a welfare state model that predominated from 1945 to NPM from the 1980s does not only mean more job opportunities for designers, it fundamentally changes the relationship of citizens to state services. Apart from the greater emphasis on managerialist practices and terms in the public sector, NPM also involves the promotion of the notion of 'choice' in the provision of services. In this account of public services, there is an increased emphasis laid on focusing on the service 'user' and

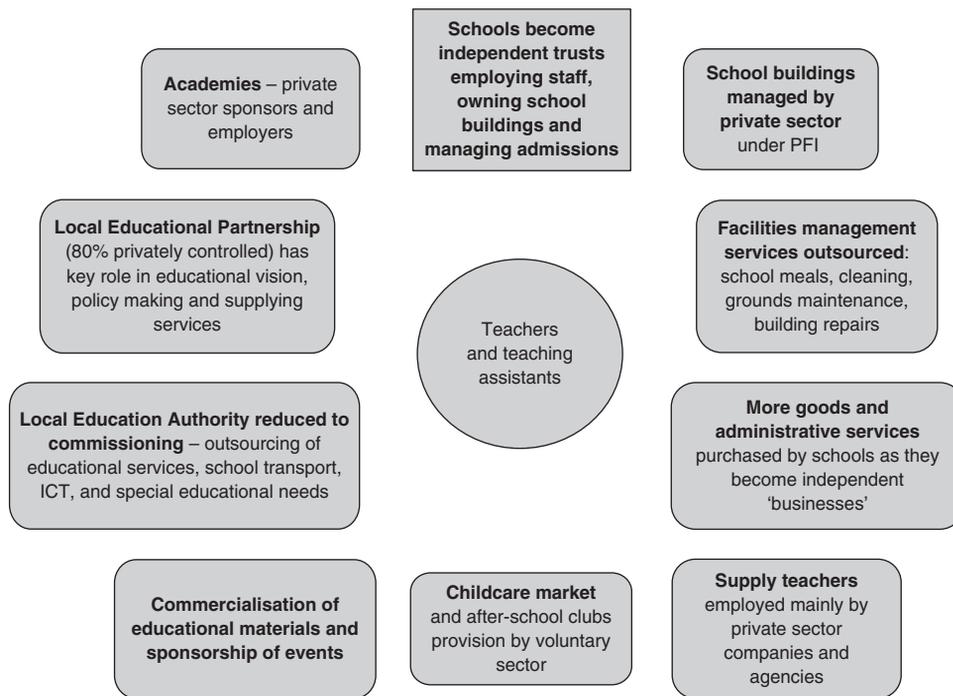


Figure 8.1 The marketisation of school education (Whitfield 2006)

Public sector innovation is not only focused on the redesign of its services but also on the reconstitution of publics. It has involved the fashioning of varying forms of relationships between provider and user. The latter has been recast as ‘consumer’, ‘partner’ and active citizen through successive attempts to redesign the processes and functions of the public sector.

their needs. Marketisation sees to the creation of a competitive field at the supply end as providers vie with one another for contractors. At the user end, citizens are remade as consumers of those services (Clarke 2007; Clarke and Newman 2007; Moor 2009).

This turn towards the consumption of public services – as opposed to their mere use – also involves the *making* of their consumers. Going to the doctor, getting the streets cleaned or putting children through schooling may involve making choices (which clinic? which school?) or, at least, the monitoring of service quality (how clean are the streets?). Here, there is an idea of exchange, in that taxes are paid and

a level of service is expected. But this also involves a disciplining of citizens into taking responsibility for the choices they make (Malpass et al. 2007). They are active in shaping their everyday lives through the choices they make, and this includes welfare services, education or their local environments. Along with this, therefore, getting the right information and knowing what the choices are become part of this undertaking of citizen responsibility.

## RESPONSES TO NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Criticisms of NPM are not difficult to raise. For example, NPM may be read as the needless application of private, commercial processes and interests to what is essentially a public asset. In this

view, all the goodwill and sense of service that is seen as a necessary but unmeasurable aspect of the public sector is relegated. At the same time, therefore, the propensity towards the outsourcing of state functions gives its responsibilities over to companies whose first accountabilities are to their investors, not the public. Within state functions, managers expend more energy on sourcing and coordinating services than they could on ensuring the quality of outcomes. NPM also rests on the assumption that the outsourcing of services results in their being of better value, better quality and more innovative – an assumption that is partly drawn from a stereotype of state functionaries being the opposite.

In terms of design, there are three specific drawbacks of NPM. First, as we have seen, NPM recasts public sector service users as consumers with the attendant notions of choice and responsibility for making choices. This may result in different registers of presentation of services as they are rendered ‘attractive’ through various means either to citizens or commissioners. At the same time, one has to ask whether or not service users actually *want* to be treated as ‘consumers’. Would they rather that design and other inputs be entirely focused on optimising the core of the service (Clarke and Newman 2007; Moor 2009)?

A second criticism of NPM in terms of design is that it may have the effect of making managers focus more on delivery improvement at the expense of thinking about the quality of the service itself at the point-of-use (Christensen 2013). Focusing on procurement, logistics or getting best value from suppliers is all very well, but this may detract from ensuring that the service being delivered is itself not poorly conceived and designed. This emphasis may not be particularly human-centred in that it is mostly concerned with the management of systems that are already configured rather than on what best functions *in use* and working back from there.

Third, the heavy requirement for demonstrating value creates a regime of constant measurement and audit of processes and outcomes. This results in a performative fix, whereby services are arranged in such a way to satisfy measurement criteria rather than thinking about their design as best serving citizens. A contradiction is constantly at play where public servants are pressured to be creative, innovative and agile while performing to centrally driven targets and being fully accountable (Gallop 2007; Parker and Bartlett 2008; Hill and Julier 2009). Risk-taking, trying out new ideas or prototyping new possibilities – core to design – do not find easy homes in this NPM environment.

In respect of these issues, from around 2010, some government organisational discourses have moved to thinking about public service delivery being reconfigured around outcome-based budgeting (OBB) or outcome based commissioning (OBC) (KPMG 2011; Law 2013). This takes the pragmatic ordering of services beyond NPM. Here, instead of thinking organisationally and financially in terms of the operations of a system of delivery, OBB looks to what one wants to achieve at the user end. As such, it is very user-centred in its emphasis on the desired results of services (healthier citizens, cared-for elderly, literate children, for instance) and ‘reverse engineering’ from there in thinking about how best to achieve these in terms of what combination of organisations, departments and institutions can best (and often, most cheaply) provide that solution. OBB may be read as being designerly in its approach through its end-on, problem-solving ethos.

This thinking recalls Manzini and Jégou’s (2005) notion of ‘results’-driven design wherein responses to problems are not predetermined in terms of their kind of design outcome; rather, the most effective and appropriate (particularly in environmental and social terms) response is

sought. It calls for a radical reconceptualisation of design's aims, processes and outcomes. By prioritising results over means to achieve these, design is immediately taken outside its sub-disciplinary structures of 'graphics', 'interior', 'product' and so on. It becomes media agnostic where the 'best tool for the job' prevails over predetermined, specialist approaches.

Likewise, OBB may be disruptive of traditional public sector bureaucracies and processes: a parks and leisure department may become part of health and wellbeing aims or entirely new forms of administration may need to be created. Either way, it may push public administration into more innovative and flexible modes. Further, its highly pragmatic, results-driven approach has developed in the context of pressure on public budgets. This confluence of austerity and public sector innovation is developed in the next section.

## AUSTERITY

The 2007–08 financial crisis had severe effects on global trade and investment. Naturally this resulted in a reduction of income to the state sector: tax receipts diminished as unemployment rose and business turnover dropped. Many governments, particularly across Europe, instigated austerity programmes in response to this, but also to clear the national debt that had risen, particularly through the years running up to the crisis. An alternative view to this 'official' line is that the crisis was used as an excuse to carry out further scaling down of the state in order to continue the ratcheting up of marketisation and the privileging of private business over state functions (Whitfield 2012; Fraser et al. 2013). It should be added here that the austerity of the post-crisis era may also be seen as a mere extension of an ongoing squeeze on public budgets felt since the 1980s (Peters 2012).

Whichever account of austerity is most accurate, it soon became clear that the ensuing public spending cuts across Europe would result in job losses, pay freezes and the reduction or disappearance of some services. In terms of personnel, for instance, a first wave of planned downsizing of the number of public sector employees would involve reductions of 12 per cent in Ireland, 15 per cent in the Netherlands, 20 per cent in Greece and 23 per cent (in terms of central government civil service) in the UK (Lodge and Hood 2012: 80). Between 2010 and 2014, public expenditure was to be cut by 40 per cent of GDP in Ireland, 20 per cent in the Baltic countries, 15 per cent in Hungary, 12 per cent in Spain and 11.5 per cent in the UK (Leschke and Jepsen 2012). How can frontline welfare services be continued against these challenges?

Budget cuts have taken many public sector interests to the point where service delivery requires wholesale redesign in order to survive at all. A range of policy-oriented thinktanks, foundations and institutions make the same claims that undertaking a more research-led, user-focused approach to the design of services results in efficiency gains and greater effectivity in their many reports (e.g. Lehki 2007; Design Commission 2012; Bason 2013; Design Council 2013; SEE Platform 2013). In 2008, the magazine of the UK Design Council ran a discussion entitled 'Can we deliver better public services for less money?' (Bichard 2008). In the context of post-credit crunch rising national debt and foreseeing the squeezing of public sector spending, this debate was apposite. Tellingly, Ben Reason, director of service design outfit Live|Work, remarked that 'we need to change our relationship with public services, from one where we just expect things to be there for us, to one where we're more engaged in ensuring we don't need them, or managing

our way through them' (Reason, quoted in Bichard 2008). Avoiding 'unnecessary' use of services and making judicious choices within them is therefore also a way of saving public money.

Many consultant design outfits who specialise in this sector have promoted themselves on their effectiveness in making financial savings for them. For example, the Innovation Unit – a London-based consultancy specialising in public sector innovation that was spun out from the government's Department for Education – offers 'radical efficiency' and 'more for less' (Innovation Unit 2015). Their aim is in developing service delivery through focusing on service users, developing new insights and seeing how resources both within and without public sector organisations can be reconfigured and re-used. At the same time they are also interested in influencing the core processes of public sector institutions. An approach is promised in which long-term research relationships are established to generate 'an innovation culture' that enhances their internal efficacy. They are thus involved both outwardly in finding cheaper, effective forms of services and inwardly in capacity building among their public sector clients.

A tactic that is at play here, and which overlaps with social innovation, is in seeing how under-used assets may be set to work in delivering such things as community cohesion, street security or neighbourly care. Examples of these include Participle's 'Circle' system to promote peer-to-peer support among the elderly (Cottam and Dillon 2014) or FutureGov's 'Casserole Club' network to provide home-cooked food by and for neighbours (Nesta 2015b). In both these, the quest is to find creative ways of making use of citizens' free time and skills to produce social benefits. In both these, the consultancies have designed digital and analogue networking and systems to facilitate peer-to-peer support.

Whether or not such developments actually result in budget savings for the public sector has been hotly debated. Participle's 'Circle' system was first rolled out in the London borough of Southwark in 2009, with six further 'Circles' being established in both urban and rural locations. The Circle developed social networks among the over-50s, with learning activities, a helpline for resources and low-level practical support from volunteer Circle helpers. These were initially supported by local council grants: £1m in the case of Southwark Circle, £680,000 for the Suffolk Circle (Brindle 2014). While Circle involved a membership fee of £20 or £30 per year, by 2014, both of these had closed as core support funding was terminated. Meanwhile, impact evaluation of the scheme argued that it generated 85,000 new social connections, 70 per cent of members reporting increased participation in social activities, 15 per cent feeling less unwell and 13 per cent visiting their doctor less (Cottam and Dillon 2014).

The Circle system did not directly provide medical support, therefore, but it did effect savings to health costs. Likewise, its peer-to-peer help for practical issues like household maintenance would mean a reduction on care support costs for local councils. In these circumstances, making the financial case for such innovations is complex and challenging. It calls into question the rigidities of traditional accounting systems that focus more on quantitative inputs and outputs. Nonetheless, the kinds of public sector innovations that have arisen through austerity contexts have a deep background in the rethinking of citizenship and governance.

## TOWARDS NETWORKED GOVERNANCE

There is a demand for change by which the public sector formulates its relationship to citizens, regardless of the financial pressures of austerity economics. Indeed, some of the theory of what

could come after NPM predates austerity, and even just as NPM was getting underway. A seminal text by Bryson and Crosby (1992) identified the need for collaborative working between state and citizens. They wrote:

We live in a world where no one is ‘in charge’. No one organisation or institution has the legitimacy, power, authority, or intelligence to act alone on important public issues and still make substantial headway against the problems that threaten us all ... we live in a ‘shared power’ world, a world in which organisations and institutions must share objectives, activities, resources, power or authority in order to achieve collective gains or minimise losses. (Bryson and Crosby 1992, cited in Quirk 2007: 48)

In this quote we see a relinquishment of the notion that the state, or, indeed, any other organisation, can claim dominion. Following on, models of collaboration, co-production or, otherwise, co-creation are the only viable route to addressing complex, contemporary problems.

This turn towards ‘co-creation’ in relation to the public sector exists within a longer trajectory of thinking with respect to the state, its public and the contexts of post-industrial, neoliberal economies. In his analysis of the relationship of economic change and political reform, Claus Offe (1985) concludes his book *Disorganized Capitalism* with a discussion of the relationship of politics to administrative action. First, he identifies the incongruity of administrations that require norms of action within fluctuating systems of demand. Administrations have to correspond to their socio-economic environments and vice versa, he argues, in order to be fully functional. Rigid state bureaucracies only make sense if they serve an equally rigid economy and society, for example.

On the other hand, in the case of liberal democracy within disorganised capitalism, certain norms are still necessary, but administrative action is nonetheless much more ‘goal oriented’. Fluctuations in demand, employment, exchange and so on make specific and irregular demands on administration. As a result, government is centred on the successful management of systems rather than on the strident enforcement of ideological priorities. Here, the relationship between politics and administration partially reverses as governments are made increasingly reactive to the latter’s demands where bargaining and cooperation are necessary. In this respect, Offe further argues that in the course of the production of state-organised services, the distinction between ‘consumption’ and ‘production’ is blurred (Offe 1985: 311). Users enter into partnerships with agents in ‘productive interactions’.

From around 2000, this thinking about ‘productive interactions’ was picked up by a range of academics, practitioners and organisations and developed further. Of particular influence on UK government policy was Charles Leadbeater, who was also a co-founder of Participle, the public service innovation agency (Leadbeater 2008). It figures under various other headings such as ‘co-production’ (Brandsen and Pestoff 2006), ‘digital-era governance’ (Dunleavy et al. 2005), ‘the collaborative state’ (Parker and Gallagher 2007) and the ‘relational state’ (Cooke and Muir 2012). As an umbrella term, we may think of these as sitting under the heading of ‘networked governance’ or, alternatively, new public governance (NPG). Conceptually, networked governance rests on, as the words suggest, the idea that all actors in society (citizens, public servants, organisations etc.) rely on mutually sustained systems. Governing structures (i.e. national, regional or local governments) are engaged in the management of networks in such a way as to include the interdependencies of

actors, directed towards shared goals. Thus, partnerships, cooperation and collaboration become ways to create, produce and maintain public service systems (Christensen 2013).

While there may be subtle differences in their backgrounds and aspirations, all these terms may suffer the accusation that they don't amount to much more than 'policy cheerleading' (Hodge and Greve 2007; Christensen 2013). It is all very well to envision more democratic, open forms of governance where citizens and public servants collaborate in the fashioning of policies and services and where 'citizen engagement' goes beyond the voting turns, but in the sometimes necessarily grinding world of public administration and accountability the actual carrying out of these may be over-ambitious. Further, it may be that this public administration and academic jargon is really just a set of policy 'language games', created to obfuscate something else (Teisman and Klijn 2002) – that is, the relinquishment of responsibility by the state for welfare and other public services.

In terms of citizen representation, and the claim to open out and democratise governance, there are other quandaries. How are we sure whose particular interests are being represented among those 'representing' or represented citizens (Swyngedouw 2005)? How do the results include and exclude individuals and groups in their membership of society? How is design sometimes used to iron out difference or dissent in what it means to be a citizen (Fortier 2010)? Governmental interests may privilege certain networks over others. While it may appear to build decision making and designing outside its own bureaucracies, one has to consider which groups it is choosing to foreground over others. What groups that were previously represented through other systems are now excluded in networked governance?

## DESIGN IN NETWORKED GOVERNANCE

The sticky questions that revolve around networked governance that arise here may be regarded as challenges that can never go away. They are things that we should be constantly vigilant to and that constantly reconstitute themselves as problems as we address them. They emerge, it could be argued, through the ongoing consideration of high-level challenges that governments, policymakers and their designers confront. In the meantime, multiple, complex problems have to be addressed.

While earlier in this chapter I have stressed the austerity driver of public sector innovation and a move towards networked governance, the pressure on public sector budgets is also met by an intensification of demand on governments due to a series of challenges being felt across the developed world. Aside from climate change (something affecting the entire world), health and care are among the most significant. While the predominant concern for mid-twentieth century health was acute illness, today it is for chronic illness and 'lifestyle diseases'. In the UK, for example, diabetes accounts for 9 per cent of the National Health Service's budget and was projected to increase to 25 per cent by 2020 (Parker 2007: 178). In terms of care, the ageing population combined with a pensions crisis and growth in the number of women and men working full-time creates impossible demand on the formal care sector. The ageing timebomb is not just confined to the West. In 2009, China had 167 million over-60s – around one-tenth of the population; by 2050 this is expected to reach 480 million – about one-third of inhabitants (Branigan 2012; Sun 2014).

In broad terms, the potential for networked governance to address such issues had already been recognised in theory but without practical application and testing. For instance, the UK Government's White Paper 'Innovation Nation' (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills 2008) listed climate change, the ageing population, globalisation and higher expectations of public sector users as drivers of the need for innovatory approaches to service delivery. It represented a concern to optimise service delivery at local levels by instilling a sense of innovation and autonomy on the part of the public sector workers who configure and provide it as well as in including end-users in their co-creation and operationalisation. However, it would not be until 2014 that the UK Cabinet Office would establish its PolicyLab, which was set to experiment with ways of working through design approaches to policy (Kimbell 2015).

Design has therefore moved to the centre of grey literature reports and other publications produced by organisations concerned with social innovation and change in the public sector. These include the Institute of Public Policy Research (e.g. Rogers and Houston 2004), Demos (e.g. Parker and Gallagher 2007) and Nesta (e.g. Murray et al. 2010). However, again this move may be seen as part of a longer design history. In the UK, the recession of the early 1990s led to a radical overhaul of the Design Council. John Sorrell, who was chair of the branding company Newell and Sorrell, produced a review and policy document for it (Sorrell 1994) that ushered in a leaner version, scaling down from 200 employees nationally to just 40 located in a new London office. The Design Centre, which exhibited examples of 'good design', was closed. Instead, the Design Council was to act more as a thinktank for the dissemination of new knowledge in design. It was also to carry a greater emphasis on its role in the public sector.

In its role as a thinktank on new knowledge, it cultivated a particular approach to the processes and uses of design that keyed in with changes in public sector discourse. Between 2004 and 2006, the Design Council housed RED, a unit was set up to tackle social and economic issues through design-led innovation. Spearheaded by its director, Hilary Cottam (who was later to become the head of the aforementioned Participle), RED developed co-creation approaches to the design of public services such as health, schools and prisons. Such projects foregrounded the intermediary role that design may play between citizens and the state. This way of thinking was set out in RED's document *Touching the State* (2004). It argued that

[d]esign, after all, is not just about producing effective and attractive objects. Designers ... are trained to analyse and improve processes, exchanges and encounters – between customer and products, clients and services or, potentially, between citizens and States. They are, or should be, rehearsed at looking at the larger picture, and identifying where an object, or process, fits in the user's life ... government institutions don't for the most part look at civic encounters in this way. No one seems to be thinking about the citizen's journey through even a single encounter – from, say, the arrival of the first summons letter from the jury service, to the final goodbye – let alone through the course of a life.

This statement reflects the growing importance of service design as a specialism. Indeed, arch proponents of service design such as the agencies Engine Service Design and Live|Work had close relationships to many Design Council projects from 2000 onwards.

Why else should a particularly designerly approach to the problem solving of such policy challenges emerge in any case? Why should such a plethora of design-oriented innovation labs

become an almost standardised response here? Christian Bason lists three possible reasons. First, design research allows the ‘architecture of problems’ – how different components that constitute challenges fit together – to be revealed. The designer’s tools of ethnographic, qualitative, user-centred research, experimentation and probing through prototyping solutions and data visualisation help this understanding. Second, design, he claims, stimulates group creativity. Through their tools, designers are able to provide usable meeting points between policymakers, interest and lobby groups as well as citizens and business representatives. Third, designers can articulate policy so that its user experience can be understood and engaged with (Bason 2014: 4–5). As such, it allows for new hybrid spaces between government and its partners in policymaking (Bailey et al. 2016; Kimbell 2016).

It is also where all that service-user journey mapping and all that Play-Doh and Post-its, as described at the beginning of this chapter, comes into play.

## VIRTUALISM

Two related difficulties remain to be discussed in this narrative of design in networked governance. The first is that it can lead to a perception that design-led public sector innovation suffers a surfeit of workshops and Post-its whose results rarely find their way through to implementation. Put otherwise, its emphasis on process and collaboration, its customer experience mapping or its frequent use of workshops, hackathons and jams makes it appear to contribute to a kind of virtualism where things are made real but not actual (Miller and Carrier 1998). In this, abstracted accounts of social and economic activity then become the accepted model of how things should be, regardless of how they would play out in the messy friction of actuality. Negotiating a project through public sector bureaucracies and power systems or, even, the legacies of NPM and its audit culture, certainly present challenges that, as we have already seen in terms of ‘Circle’, the designer has to understand and surmount.

A second difficulty, not unrelated to this notion of virtualism, is in the institutional infrastructures that give voice to design-led public sector innovation. We have noted the number of organisations, either supported as foundations, through endowments or directly by governments, who are engaged in developing and promoting this specialism. There is the danger here that orthodoxies flow like memes through and between these, without focusing on what is possible or, even, politically desirable. One of the founders of the Social Innovation Lab for Kent (SILK), Sophia Parker, has noted with regard to both these difficulties that

it can feel a bit like the same group of people talking to each other about the same ideas, with a bit too much affection for Post-it notes and bunting and with not enough focus on impact.... the real challenge to anyone working in this space is to ensure that at the beginning of a project, you aren’t just creating a great piece of work, you’re also anticipating how the change is actually going to happen. Who do you need to line up? How does spending need to be redirected, and who will decide on that? Unless we focus on

Design may be seen to provide a cheap and quick fix for structural problems that are produced through the shrinkage of the state sector within neoliberal governance. However, some design interventions produce substantive changes and re-imaginings of what the state, publics and their relationships might be.

impact and what that looks like, there's a danger that Lab work just ends up as some really nice Post-it notes on a wall somewhere. (Parker 2015)

Notwithstanding these internal challenges within design-led public sector innovation, the context of networked governance orients a particular relationship to value and futurity. In a sense, it creates design economies wherein value is co-produced with citizens and other stakeholders (Sangiorgi 2015). In short, this may be read as involving the tapping into under-used resources that exist among citizens – sometimes colloquially referred to as ‘sweat assets’. As shown in the earlier example of ‘Circle’ and ‘Casserole Club’, designers and public servants are looking to leverage social arrangements and practices – to nudge or re-scale them for social benefit by developing communications and working infrastructures. In this, the general approach as well as its tools exhibit something of that sense of futurity. They look to things as they could be. The prototyped service models the value of things in use.

In the final sections of this chapter, we analyse how design has actually been mobilised and implemented in two contrasting contexts. One is destined to impact on very personal, behavioural practices. The other takes a place-based approach that invokes a kind of ‘design citizenship’.

## BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Behaviour change appears as a frequent, if not core trope in the offer of many public sector oriented design consultancies. For example, the Chicago-based Greater Good Studio announced on its website that ‘We believe that research changes design, design changes behavior, and behavior changes the world’ (Greater Good Studio 2015). Notwithstanding this rather ambitious view with regard to ‘changing the world’, the message is clear that their work is directed towards influencing the ways by which individuals undertake their lives. As a consultancy that is focused on social impact, they are taking the concept of behaviour change that actually derives from the study of economics and importing it into the non-commercial world of everyday practices.

Behaviour change has its origins in mid-twentieth century thinking, particularly in the USA, around the limits of the ‘utility-maximisation’ (Sent 2004). This latter model makes the assumption that citizens are going to be entirely rational in the way they spend their money to get the most out of this expenditure for their daily lives. The departure from this assumption began to look at deviations – how seemingly irrational behaviours lead to consumer practices that appeared to defy utility-maximisation. Out of this the specialism of behavioural economics grew that focused on the actual, empirical description of personal conduct. In terms of commercial advertising and design, tapping into this apparent ‘irrationality’ has been an important aspect of their practices and specialisms. Indeed, it could be said to sit at the heart of concepts such as styling and high design that try to capture the subjective, even whimsical desires of consumers (Haug 1986; Julier 2014: chs 5 and 6). A hugely influential text that extended from this conception was *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness* by Thaler and Sunstein (2008). Here, as the title suggests and using ‘nudge’ as another term for behaviour change, the aims of behavioural economics were extended into how individuals could improve