



Government Policy Design is a Serious Game

Towards Genuine Epistemic Justice and Democratic Accountability

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First published 'free-range' 23 July 2025 on Substack; v2 Edition 29 July 2025

Abstract

This essay critically analyses Andrew Knight's representation of the UK Civil Service's policy-design pavilion at the London Design Biennale. Through applying my original theoretical framework—Epistemic Clientelism Theory (ECT)—I expose how seemingly democratic practices such as 'serious games' and curated workshops exemplify performative openness, epistemic gatekeeping, and implicit conformity pressures. These practices systematically reinforce epistemic clientelism, marginalise diverse epistemic perspectives, and undermine fiduciary accountability and democratic legitimacy. Drawing explicitly upon Heidegger's and Foucault's critical analyses, I argue that institutionalised epistemic clientelism fosters epistemic alienation and conformity, eroding genuine democratic epistemological practices. Consequently, I propose explicit fiduciary-epistemic governance

reforms, including epistemic transparency, fiduciary accountability structures, genuine epistemic influence mechanisms, critical reflexivity practices, and authentic democratic co-creation, to ensure genuine epistemic justice, democratic accountability, and epistemological pluralism in government policy design.

Keywords

epistemic justice, epistemic clientelism, fiduciary openness, democratic accountability, epistemic transparency, performative openness, policy design, serious games, epistemic gatekeeping, Heidegger, Foucault, institutional alienation, critical reflexivity, democratic epistemology, co-creation, institutional accountability, UK Civil Service, governance ethics, public sector innovation, knowledge equity, transparency, design thinking

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1. Introduction

In his recent blog post, ‘Taking policy design to a global public audience’ (7 July 2025), Andrew Knight celebrates the UK Civil Service’s participation in the London Design Biennale, highlighting their policy-design pavilion. Knight emphasises ‘serious games’, interactive workshops, and structured public engagement, presenting the event as a model of democratic accountability, transparency, and inclusive governance. At first glance, this initiative appears genuinely aligned with contemporary democratic ideals of citizen involvement and epistemic openness in policy-making.

However, upon closer reflection, I see fundamental issues beneath Knight’s optimistic portrayal. Although framed as inclusive and democratic, such initiatives frequently mask underlying epistemic gatekeeping and performative openness—phenomena I have extensively examined in my prior scholarship. Public participation in these settings risks being merely symbolic, curated to reinforce institutional narratives rather than enabling genuine epistemic agency, democratic participation, and authentic policy influence. Moreover, the UK Civil Service’s participation at the Biennale, as described by Knight, also functioned as an exercise in informal institutional networking and epistemic favour-trading. Such informal exchanges reinforce epistemic clientelism, fostering strategic alliances, conformity, and selective epistemic loyalty among institutional insiders, thereby marginalising critical or alternative epistemic perspectives.

To rigorously analyse these issues, I employ my original theoretical framework—Epistemic Clientelism Theory (ECT)—as a foundational lens. In my recent work, I defined epistemic clientelism as an institutionalised exchange in which epistemic autonomy is strategically delegated or surrendered in return for selective institutional benefits, symbolic rewards, or professional recognition {Kahl, ‘Epistemic Clientelism Theory: Power Dynamics and the Delegation of Epistemic Agency in Academia’ 2025}. Initially developed to examine power dynamics within academia, ECT also provides significant insight into governmental contexts. Specifically, it helps me illuminate how curated public engagements, such as those celebrated by Knight, inadvertently reinforce institutional control, conformity, and exclusion, rather than fostering genuine democratic participation.

Accordingly, the aims of this essay are threefold. First, I critically examine the epistemic dynamics of the UK Civil Service’s recent policy design practices at the London Design Biennale. Second, I diagnose the presence and consequences of epistemic clientelism within these practices, demonstrating how superficially inclusive processes institutionalise epistemic marginalisation and gatekeeping. Finally, I propose explicit fiduciary-epistemic governance reforms, rooted in my earlier scholarship {Kahl, ‘Directors’ Epistemic Duties and Fiduciary Openness’ 2025}, intended to restore genuine epistemic justice, transparency, and democratic accountability in government policy-making.

My thesis is that current UK Civil Service policy design practices, as exemplified by Knight’s Biennale pavilion, represent performative openness rather than authentic democratic epistemology. These practices systematically embody epistemic clientelism, marginalising diverse epistemic perspectives, restricting genuine public participation, and undermining fiduciary accountability. Therefore, I propose concrete institutional reforms explicitly designed to address and overcome these epistemic injustices, thus realising genuine epistemic plurality and democratic legitimacy in government policy design.

2. Epistemic Clientelism in Government Policy Design

To better understand the underlying epistemic issues at play in the UK Civil Service’s policy design practices, it is necessary first to define and clarify my theoretical framework—Epistemic Clientelism Theory (ECT). In my

recent scholarship, I introduced ECT as a lens through which institutional dynamics involving epistemic agency, authority, and conformity can be critically analysed (Kahl, 'Epistemic Clientelism Theory: Power Dynamics and the Delegation of Epistemic Agency in Academia' 2025). Epistemic clientelism, as I define it, is the institutionalised and strategic delegation or surrender of epistemic autonomy by individuals or groups in exchange for selective institutional benefits, symbolic rewards, or professional recognition. Originally developed to explore academia's entrenched epistemic hierarchies and conformity pressures, ECT also provides a rigorous analytical framework for examining similar epistemic dynamics in government policy-making contexts.

In applying ECT explicitly to government policy design, I argue that policy-making processes and public engagement practices are similarly susceptible to epistemic clientelist relationships. Just as senior academics or institutional gatekeepers in academia selectively reward epistemic conformity, government policy designers and senior civil servants may selectively amplify or marginalise particular epistemic voices based on their alignment with institutional narratives or political expediency. This selective process effectively delegates epistemic agency away from broader public constituencies towards strategically chosen epistemic participants, thereby establishing informal, yet coercive, epistemic hierarchies and alliances.

Viewed through this theoretical lens, the UK Civil Service's participation at the London Design Biennale, as described by Andrew Knight, can be critically analysed as an instance of epistemic clientelism. While publicly framed as a genuinely democratic and inclusive exercise, the pavilion's selective curation of participants, structured interactions, and implicit conformity pressures reveal deeper epistemic power relations. The very act of curating which ideas and participants received visibility or recognition inherently involves epistemic gatekeeping, establishing implicit conditions for participation that prioritise institutional conformity and alignment with prevailing policy narratives.

For instance, the structured 'serious games' and public workshops celebrated by Knight appear, upon closer scrutiny, to function as symbolic engagements rather than authentic democratic epistemological exchanges. By carefully selecting participants whose epistemic perspectives align comfortably with institutional frameworks, organisers effectively reinforce existing policy paradigms while subtly excluding critical, challenging, or radically alternative epistemic positions. This selective participant inclusion—an explicit manifestation of epistemic clientelism—delegates epistemic agency selectively, creating incentives for participants to align their epistemic contributions to prevailing institutional expectations, thereby perpetuating institutional conformity rather than genuine democratic debate.

Moreover, the informal institutional networking and epistemic favour-trading I noted earlier further reinforce epistemic clientelism within the Civil Service's policy design practices. Informal alliances and relationships cultivated through participation at prestigious events such as the Biennale serve to reinforce epistemic loyalty and conformity among select epistemic agents. Participants implicitly understand that maintaining institutional favour requires epistemic alignment, compliance, and symbolic deference to the dominant epistemic paradigms promoted by senior policy designers. Such subtle epistemic pressures effectively restrict genuine epistemic autonomy, authenticity, and critical inquiry, systematically marginalising alternative epistemic voices.

In summary, explicitly applying ECT to the UK Civil Service's policy-design pavilion at the London Design Biennale reveals that its structured, curated engagements and implicit institutional relationships manifest clear epistemic clientelism dynamics. Selective participant inclusion, subtle conformity pressures, and symbolic public engagement practices systematically reinforce institutional epistemic conformity, marginalise critical or alternative epistemic perspectives, and significantly restrict genuine democratic epistemological participation. Recognising these epistemic clientelist practices explicitly is therefore essential to understanding—and subsequently addressing—the epistemic injustices and democratic accountability deficits that currently characterise government policy-design processes.

3. Performative Openness: The Illusion of Democratic Participation

In my recent scholarship, particularly in ‘Epistemic Violence or Simply Good Marketing?’ (2025), I argued that contemporary institutions frequently use language and symbolism of openness, inclusion, and democratic participation as strategic marketing, rather than as genuine commitments to epistemic justice and democratic accountability. Within government policy design contexts—such as the UK Civil Service’s pavilion at the London Design Biennale—the distinction between genuine epistemic openness and performative openness becomes especially critical. While the pavilion and similar public engagement events are publicly framed as examples of innovative democratic governance, closer scrutiny reveals these practices as predominantly superficial, designed more to project institutional legitimacy than to facilitate genuine epistemic participation or accountability.

The pavilion’s widely promoted ‘serious games’ and structured public workshops exemplify performative openness. Superficially, these games promise meaningful public engagement, suggesting participants’ voices directly inform policy outcomes. However, applying my Epistemic Clientelism Theory (ECT), it becomes clear these activities function as ‘institutional scripts’—structured interactions prescribing implicit norms of epistemic behaviour and conformity {Kahl, ‘Epistemic Clientelism Theory: Power Dynamics and the Delegation of Epistemic Agency in Academia’ 2025}. Institutional scripts, in this context, establish boundaries around acceptable epistemic contributions, subtly directing participants to align their inputs with existing institutional narratives, epistemic expectations, and policy frameworks.

These structured engagements, thus, do not facilitate genuine epistemic exploration or democratic epistemological debate. Instead, participants—implicitly aware that their contributions must conform to predetermined epistemic parameters—strategically moderate their epistemic inputs, consciously or unconsciously reinforcing institutional epistemic orthodoxies. Such institutional scripts effectively coerce symbolic conformity, systematically discouraging critical epistemic challenges or genuinely innovative policy proposals.

This symbolic conformity becomes particularly problematic given the public-facing nature of the pavilion. Under the guise of inclusive and democratic participation, the Civil Service strategically markets itself as epistemically open, progressive, and transparent. However, the actual epistemic practices embedded in these events—careful participant curation, scripted interactions, and implicit epistemic conformity pressures—reveal a systematic performance of openness rather than genuine democratic epistemological engagement. These symbolic performances systematically marginalise critical epistemic voices and alternative epistemological frameworks that could meaningfully challenge institutional paradigms or policy directions.

Viewed through the lens of Epistemic Clientelism Theory, performative openness thus functions explicitly as a clientelist mechanism. By selectively rewarding participants whose epistemic contributions reinforce institutional narratives—and implicitly penalising or marginalising those who challenge established epistemic frameworks—institutions strategically delegate epistemic agency, reinforcing internal epistemic hierarchies. Consequently, public engagement activities designed to project democratic legitimacy actually reinforce epistemic clientelism, systematically suppressing genuinely critical epistemic inputs and epistemological plurality.

Ultimately, this critique demonstrates clearly that public participation events such as those celebrated by Andrew Knight at the London Design Biennale operate predominantly as institutional performances. These events strategically project openness, democratic engagement, and epistemic transparency, while simultaneously reproducing epistemic conformity, symbolic compliance, and clientelist epistemic hierarchies. Recognising this performative openness explicitly is crucial, as it highlights the urgent necessity of robust fiduciary-epistemic

reforms designed explicitly to restore genuine epistemic plurality, democratic accountability, and authentic epistemic agency within governmental policy design practices.

4. Institutional Control, Epistemic Gatekeeping, and Fiduciary Breaches

A critical examination of Andrew Knight's description of the UK Civil Service's participation at the London Design Biennale reveals significant institutional control mechanisms, epistemic gatekeeping, and fiduciary accountability failures. As I have previously argued, the curatorial role held by Knight and his team inherently involves explicit epistemic gatekeeping: by controlling the boundaries of permissible epistemic input and selectively amplifying certain epistemologies, the event organisers shape and constrain policy discourse to align with existing institutional expectations. This curatorial practice is far from neutral; it systematically privileges epistemic conformity and marginalises alternative epistemic perspectives.

Through the lens of my Epistemic Clientelism Theory (ECT), it becomes evident that such curatorial roles function explicitly as gatekeeping mechanisms that strategically delegate epistemic agency and autonomy {Kahl, 'Epistemic Clientelism Theory: Power Dynamics and the Delegation of Epistemic Agency in Academia' 2025}. By selectively choosing participants and defining criteria for participation, curators like Knight create powerful incentives for epistemic conformity, rewarding participants whose ideas reinforce established institutional narratives and implicitly excluding those whose epistemic positions might critically challenge existing policy paradigms.

Moreover, explicit examination of institutional control practices employed at the pavilion—such as selective participant criteria, structured and curated workshop interactions, and lack of transparent procedures—reveals systematic marginalisation of epistemic dissent and autonomy. Participant selection processes that lack transparent epistemic criteria effectively exclude genuinely critical or alternative epistemological voices, thus artificially narrowing epistemic debate and reinforcing epistemic conformity. Furthermore, the opacity of decision-making processes ensures that epistemic gatekeeping remains largely unaccountable, thereby perpetuating institutional epistemic hierarchies and informal clientelist relationships.

These epistemic gatekeeping practices, from a fiduciary-epistemic perspective, represent explicit fiduciary breaches. As I argue in my scholarship on fiduciary duties and epistemic openness, institutions hold explicit fiduciary responsibilities towards truth, epistemic fairness, and democratic accountability {Kahl, 'Directors' Epistemic Duties and Fiduciary Openness' 2025}. In failing to implement transparent epistemic criteria, explicit oversight mechanisms, and clear accountability structures for curatorial decisions, the UK Civil Service effectively breaches these fiduciary responsibilities. Without explicit accountability and transparency, curatorial and participant-selection practices become susceptible to institutional favour-trading and epistemic clientelism, systematically distorting epistemic outcomes and compromising democratic legitimacy.

Consequently, the lack of fiduciary-epistemic accountability explicitly documented in Knight's account significantly undermines public trust, institutional integrity, and epistemic justice. Genuine fiduciary governance demands explicit mechanisms for transparency, independent oversight, and procedural accountability—none of which are evident in the described policy-design pavilion. Thus, Knight's portrayal of the UK Civil Service's Biennale participation inadvertently highlights explicit fiduciary-epistemic failures, underscoring the urgent necessity of robust fiduciary-epistemic reforms explicitly designed to dismantle epistemic gatekeeping, restore genuine epistemic autonomy, and revitalise democratic accountability in governmental policy design practices.

5. Serious Games and the Problem of Democratic Epistemology

A crucial component of the UK Civil Service's pavilion at the London Design Biennale was the use of 'serious games', publicly presented by Andrew Knight as democratic and innovative tools for policy design. Although attractive in their apparent promise of collaborative policymaking, serious games must be critically scrutinised to assess their genuine democratic epistemological value. As I have argued in my paper 'Is Artificial Intelligence Really Undermining Democracy?' (2025), authentic democratic epistemology demands explicit epistemic transparency, genuine participatory agency, and rigorous procedural fairness in decision-making processes. When examined against these criteria, the serious games employed at the Biennale reveal significant shortcomings, functioning more as symbolic performances of epistemic openness than as authentic mechanisms of democratic co-creation.

Structured engagements such as these serious games inherently carry risks of tokenistic participation. Although participants ostensibly contribute to policy formation, their contributions occur within narrowly predefined institutional parameters. By setting these constraints, organisers implicitly prescribe acceptable epistemic inputs, limiting the scope for genuine epistemological innovation and critical dialogue. Rather than authentically empowering participants to shape policy, such structured engagements subtly delegate epistemic agency, reinforcing dominant institutional epistemologies and marginalising alternative, critical perspectives.

These epistemic limitations are compounded by the institutional incentives embedded within serious games, incentives explicitly analysed in my Epistemic Clientelism Theory (ECT). Participants who seek institutional recognition or continued inclusion strategically align their epistemic contributions with the prevailing policy frameworks and epistemological expectations. This institutional dynamic reinforces epistemic conformity, discouraging genuine epistemic dissent or radical innovation and systematically marginalising diverse epistemologies.

Moreover, the epistemic harms arising from epistemic clientelism in serious games are substantial. By privileging epistemic conformity and subtly penalising epistemic dissent, these structured interactions marginalise participants whose epistemic perspectives diverge from dominant paradigms. Such systematic marginalisation restricts the epistemic plurality essential to democratic epistemology, significantly impoverishing policy debates and limiting genuinely innovative or transformative policy solutions. Consequently, serious games structured around epistemic clientelism dynamics actively undermine the core democratic ideals of participatory agency, epistemic inclusivity, and democratic accountability.

Ultimately, my analysis demonstrates explicitly that the serious games celebrated by Knight represent a problematic approach to democratic epistemology. Rather than facilitating authentic democratic participation, epistemic transparency, and procedural fairness, these structured engagements reinforce epistemic clientelism and conformity pressures, systematically marginalising alternative epistemic voices and restricting genuine epistemological innovation. Addressing these epistemic harms requires explicit fiduciary-epistemic governance reforms, robust transparency practices, and institutional commitments explicitly designed to ensure genuine epistemic openness, pluralism, and democratic accountability within governmental policy-design practices.

6. Lack of Critical Reflexivity and Institutional Alienation

A notably absent feature of Andrew Knight's narrative regarding the UK Civil Service's policy-design pavilion at the London Design Biennale is critical reflexivity concerning institutional practices, epistemic exclusions, and underlying power dynamics. Drawing explicitly upon Heidegger's foundational work, *Being and Time* (1962), in

my Epistemic Clientelism Theory (ECT), I have articulated how institutions often promote ‘inauthenticity’—conformity to external norms and institutional expectations—at the expense of ‘authenticity’, defined by Heidegger as genuine self-understanding, existential engagement, and critical reflection {Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962; Kahl, ‘Epistemic Clientelism Theory: Power Dynamics and the Delegation of Epistemic Agency in Academia’ 2025}. Applying Heidegger’s distinction to government policy design contexts reveals how structured institutional practices, such as those described by Knight, systematically produce epistemic alienation rather than fostering authentic epistemological engagement.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger argues explicitly that institutionalised inauthenticity arises from uncritical acceptance of external expectations, cultural scripts, and established power structures. By contrast, authenticity emerges through critical reflexivity, active questioning, and genuine openness to diverse existential and epistemic possibilities {Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962}. Explicitly applying this philosophical framework to Knight’s celebratory narrative exposes the conspicuous absence of critical reflexivity regarding implicit epistemic biases, exclusionary practices, and power relations inherent in the pavilion’s policy design activities. Knight’s account notably lacks explicit consideration of whose epistemic voices were marginalised, how epistemic boundaries were established, or how conformity pressures shaped participants’ contributions. By presenting an exclusively positive narrative, Knight effectively perpetuates institutional inauthenticity, reinforcing an epistemic landscape that systematically avoids genuine epistemic confrontation, critical dialogue, and authentic reflexivity.

Furthermore, the practices of institutional rituals, symbolic capital, and public recognition—explicitly critiqued by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1995)—serve as subtle but powerful tools of epistemic coercion. Foucault argues that institutional disciplinary practices reinforce internalised norms, conformity pressures, and hierarchical relationships, shaping epistemic agency and reinforcing dominant epistemologies through symbolic rewards and structured interactions {Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 1995}. Applied explicitly to the UK Civil Service’s pavilion, these ceremonial and symbolic practices function precisely as described by Foucault, subtly compelling epistemic conformity, suppressing critical dissent, and systematically marginalising epistemically authentic contributions.

Participants, implicitly understanding institutional expectations and rewards, strategically align their epistemic engagements toward symbolic conformity rather than authentic epistemic inquiry. This alignment further deepens epistemic alienation, reinforcing institutional epistemic hierarchies, conformity dynamics, and clientelist relationships.

Thus, explicitly invoking Heidegger’s authenticity versus inauthenticity and Foucault’s critical analysis of disciplinary practices clarifies the epistemic harms embedded within the described practices of Knight’s policy-design pavilion. Institutional practices devoid of critical reflexivity—marked by symbolic conformity rituals, conformity pressures, and unexamined epistemic biases—produce systemic epistemic alienation. Knight’s narrative, by failing to explicitly recognise these practices, implicitly reinforces epistemic inauthenticity, institutional conformity, and epistemic clientelism. Consequently, addressing these epistemic harms demands explicit fiduciary-epistemic governance reforms that actively encourage critical reflexivity, epistemic authenticity, and genuine democratic epistemological practices within government policy design.

7. Proposed Solutions: Fiduciary-Epistemic Governance Reforms

Addressing the epistemic injustices, conformity pressures, and institutional gatekeeping critically examined throughout this essay requires robust, practical reforms grounded explicitly in fiduciary-epistemic governance

principles. Drawing upon my earlier work, ‘Directors’ Epistemic Duties and Fiduciary Openness’ (2025), I propose clear, actionable fiduciary-epistemic governance reforms designed explicitly to restore epistemic justice, democratic accountability, and genuine epistemic plurality in government policy design contexts.

- **Explicit Epistemic Transparency**

A fundamental fiduciary-epistemic reform is explicit epistemic transparency. Government institutions must clearly document and publicly disclose all epistemic criteria used for participant selection, decision-making processes, and policy engagements. Such transparency includes explicit public rationales for curatorial choices, clear disclosure of selection criteria for participation in policy-design events, and transparent documentation of epistemic decision-making frameworks. Explicit epistemic transparency mitigates epistemic clientelism by reducing opportunities for informal favour-trading, epistemic gatekeeping, and conformity pressures, thus enhancing genuine epistemic fairness and democratic accountability.

- **Mechanisms for Genuine Epistemic Influence**

A second necessary fiduciary-epistemic reform involves institutionalising explicit mechanisms for genuine epistemic influence. Government institutions must establish formalised feedback loops, ensuring that participants’ epistemic contributions substantively shape subsequent policy decisions rather than merely symbolically representing participation. These mechanisms explicitly link public inputs to concrete policy outcomes, systematically documenting how participant epistemic contributions directly influence policy formulation. Genuine epistemic influence reduces symbolic conformity, epistemic alienation, and institutional inauthenticity, restoring authentic democratic epistemological participation and empowering epistemically diverse participants.

- **Fiduciary Accountability Structures**

To reinforce these reforms, government policy design requires explicit fiduciary accountability structures. Institutions should implement independent epistemic oversight bodies, fiduciary-epistemic audits, and transparent public reporting frameworks to rigorously monitor and document compliance with fiduciary-epistemic duties. Independent oversight explicitly ensures institutional practices remain epistemically open, fair, and accountable, significantly reducing opportunities for institutional gatekeeping, epistemic clientelism, and fiduciary breaches. Regular fiduciary-epistemic audits further enhance transparency and accountability, ensuring explicit adherence to fiduciary responsibilities of epistemic fairness, transparency, and democratic legitimacy.

- **Critical Reflexivity**

Institutionalising explicit practices of critical reflexivity represents another essential fiduciary-epistemic governance reform. Government institutions must mandate reflective evaluations explicitly addressing epistemic exclusions, conformity pressures, and implicit institutional biases arising from policy design processes. Such reflective practices foster explicit awareness of epistemic gatekeeping practices, systemic epistemic exclusions, and conformity dynamics. Institutionalising critical reflexivity systematically reduces epistemic alienation, restoring authentic epistemic engagement, epistemic autonomy, and genuine epistemological pluralism within governmental contexts.

- **Democratic Co-Creation**

Finally, authentic democratic epistemology demands replacing curated participation practices with genuine democratic co-creation governance structures. Institutions should explicitly implement participatory governance practices that genuinely empower diverse epistemic participants to co-create not only policy outcomes but also explicitly shape the framing of policy questions, methodologies, and epistemological approaches themselves. Genuine democratic co-creation explicitly dismantles epistemic hierarchies, reduces epistemic clientelism, and revitalises epistemic pluralism, fostering authentically democratic epistemological processes and genuinely participatory governance.

In summary, these explicit fiduciary-epistemic governance reforms—epistemic transparency, genuine epistemic influence mechanisms, fiduciary accountability structures, critical reflexivity, and democratic co-creation—collectively represent a robust institutional response explicitly designed to redress epistemic injustices, dismantle epistemic clientelism, and restore genuine democratic accountability and epistemological openness in government policy-design contexts.

8. Conclusion

This essay has critically examined the UK Civil Service’s recent participation in the London Design Biennale, as represented by Andrew Knight’s celebratory narrative, uncovering significant epistemic and democratic shortcomings. My analysis explicitly revealed how seemingly democratic and inclusive initiatives—structured as ‘serious games’, curated workshops, and symbolic public engagement—actually embody performative openness, epistemic gatekeeping, and subtle coercion toward epistemic conformity. By applying my Epistemic Clientelism Theory (ECT), I demonstrated that these structured participatory practices implicitly reinforce institutional epistemic hierarchies and informal clientelist relationships, systematically marginalising diverse epistemic perspectives and undermining genuine democratic accountability.

Throughout my analysis, I explicitly identified fiduciary-epistemic breaches inherent within current policy-design practices, including the absence of transparent epistemic criteria, lack of genuine mechanisms for epistemic influence, procedural opacity, and institutional practices that promote epistemic alienation. These practices significantly compromise democratic legitimacy, institutional trust, and epistemic justice, as evidenced by the systematic exclusion and marginalisation of critical or alternative epistemic voices.

Consequently, addressing these fiduciary-epistemic failures demands immediate and robust institutional reforms explicitly grounded in fiduciary-epistemic governance principles. I propose clear fiduciary-epistemic reforms—including explicit epistemic transparency, institutionalised mechanisms for genuine epistemic influence, fiduciary accountability structures, critical reflexivity practices, and authentic democratic co-creation governance structures. Collectively, these reforms provide an actionable blueprint explicitly designed to dismantle epistemic clientelism, restore epistemic autonomy, revitalise genuine epistemic plurality, and ensure robust democratic accountability in government policy-making contexts.

Therefore, this essay serves as an explicit call to action directed at government institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders responsible for democratic governance. To restore public trust, institutional legitimacy, and genuine democratic epistemological practices, these fiduciary-epistemic governance reforms must be explicitly adopted. By embracing explicit commitments to epistemic justice, democratic accountability, and authentic epistemological openness, governmental bodies can effectively transcend performative openness and meaningfully realise the democratic, epistemic, and fiduciary ideals they claim publicly to uphold.



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Cite this work

Peter Kahl, ‘Government Policy Design is a Serious Game: Towards Genuine Epistemic Justice and Democratic Accountability’ (2025) available at <<https://pkahl.substack.com/p/government-policy-design-is-serious-game-peter-kahl>>

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My Mission

I seek no alliances with political or institutional orthodoxies. My sole commitment is to epistemic authenticity, ethical autonomy, and democratic accountability. My aim remains ethical dialogue and principled collaboration, grounded in fiduciary duties to truth, epistemic fairness, and authentic democratic discourse.

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Revision History

Version	Description of Changes	Epistemic Impact	Date
—	Initial release under title “A Critical Look at Andrew Knight’s Blog Post: Towards Genuine Epistemic Justice and Democratic Accountability in Government Policy Design”.	None	2025-07-23
2	Changed title from “A Critical Look at Andrew Knight’s Blog Post: Towards Genuine Epistemic Justice and Democratic Accountability in Government Policy Design” to “Government Policy Design is a Serious Game: Towards Genuine Epistemic Justice and Democratic Accountability”. Expanded analyses by lenses of Epistemic Clientelism Theory (ECT), Foucault, Heidegger.	Stronger arguments and clarity. Greater body of text.	2025-07-29

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