

Cinnteacht & Comhaontú Máitrís Stacey

Stacey Agreement and Certainty Matrix

conlan.sean@gmail.com

Basic Concept

- Stacey Agreement & Certainty Matrix*
- Select appropriate management actions based on the degree of Certainty & Level of Agreement

*Stacey, Ralph. *Strategic Management and Organizational Dynamics*. London: Pitman Publishing, 1996
See also Zimmerman, Brenda et al. *Insights from complexity science for health care leaders* Edgeware, VHA inc. Irving, Texas 1998

conlan.sean@gmail.com

Possible Context for use

- Choose between management & leadership approaches
- Making sense of array of decisions or an agenda for a group
- Communicate why a particular approach is appropriate
- Deliberately increase uncertainty/disagreement needed to push the system towards chaos in order to create alternatives or stimulate innovation

Description

Management & leadership has an array of approaches – the art is to know when to use which one

Decisions are identified on two dimensions
Degree of Certainty & Level of Agreement



conlan.sean@gmail.com

The Poles

1 Issues or decisions are...

- Close to Certainty

 - When cause-and effect linkages can be determined

 - Usually have done it previously

 - Can extrapolate from experience with certainty

- Far from Certainty

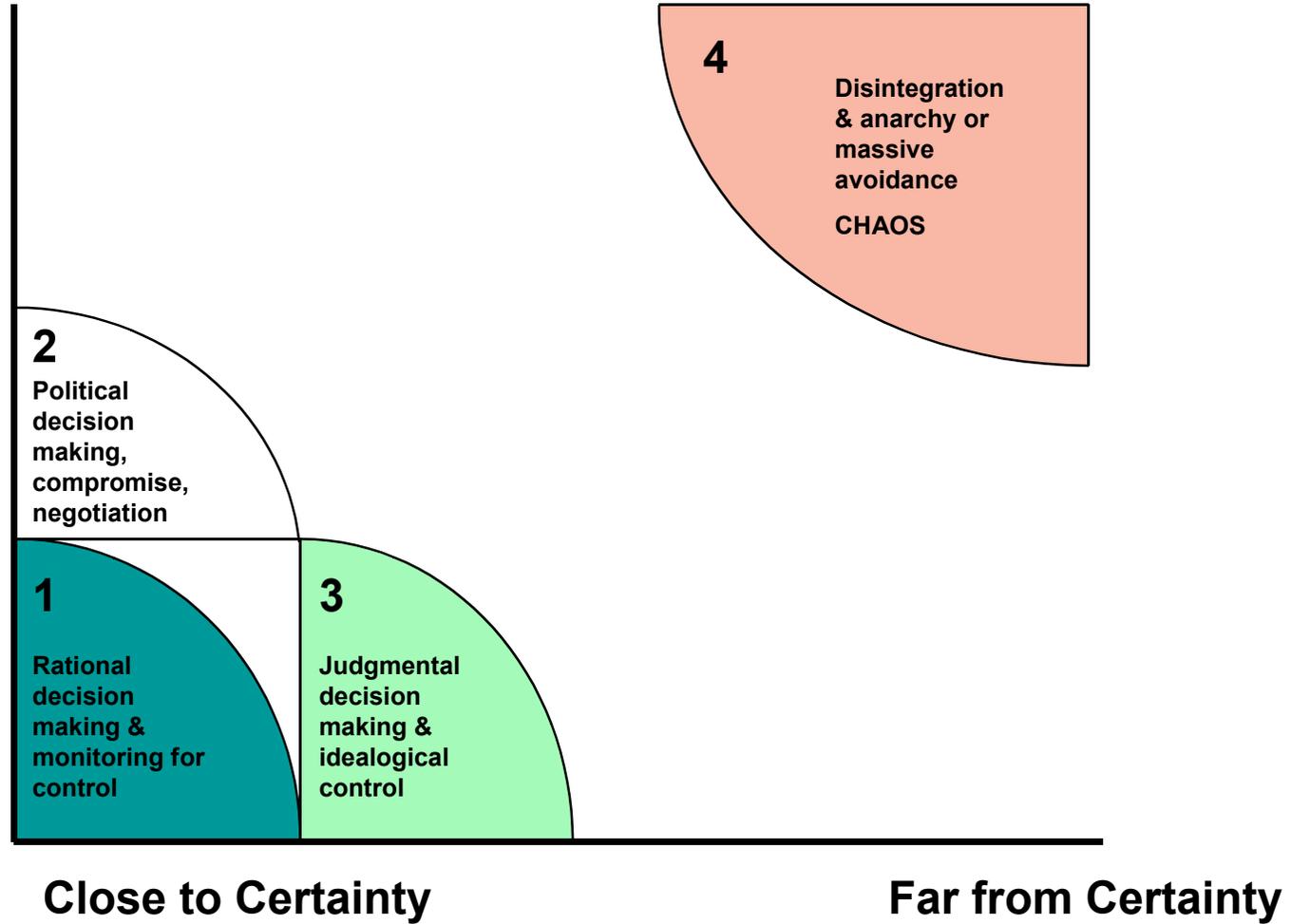
 - When they are unique/new

 - Cause-and-effect not clear

2 Depending on level of agreement - management/leadership function must be varied accordingly

Far from Agreement

Close to Agreement



Characteristics of Zones 1 & 2

Zone 1: Close to Agreement/Close to Certainty

- Traditional Management theory zone
- Gather historical data to predict future
- Plan future actions for specific outcomes and monitor actual behaviour against plan
- Goal is to repeat what works/improve efficiency & effectiveness

Zone 2 : Far from Agreement/Close to Certainty

- May have high certainty about how outcomes are created but disagreement about which outcomes are desirable
- Plans & shared mission will not work
- Use politics/coalition-building/negotiation/compromise to create direction and agenda

Characteristics of Zones 3 & 4

Zone 3 : Close to Agreement/Far from Certainty

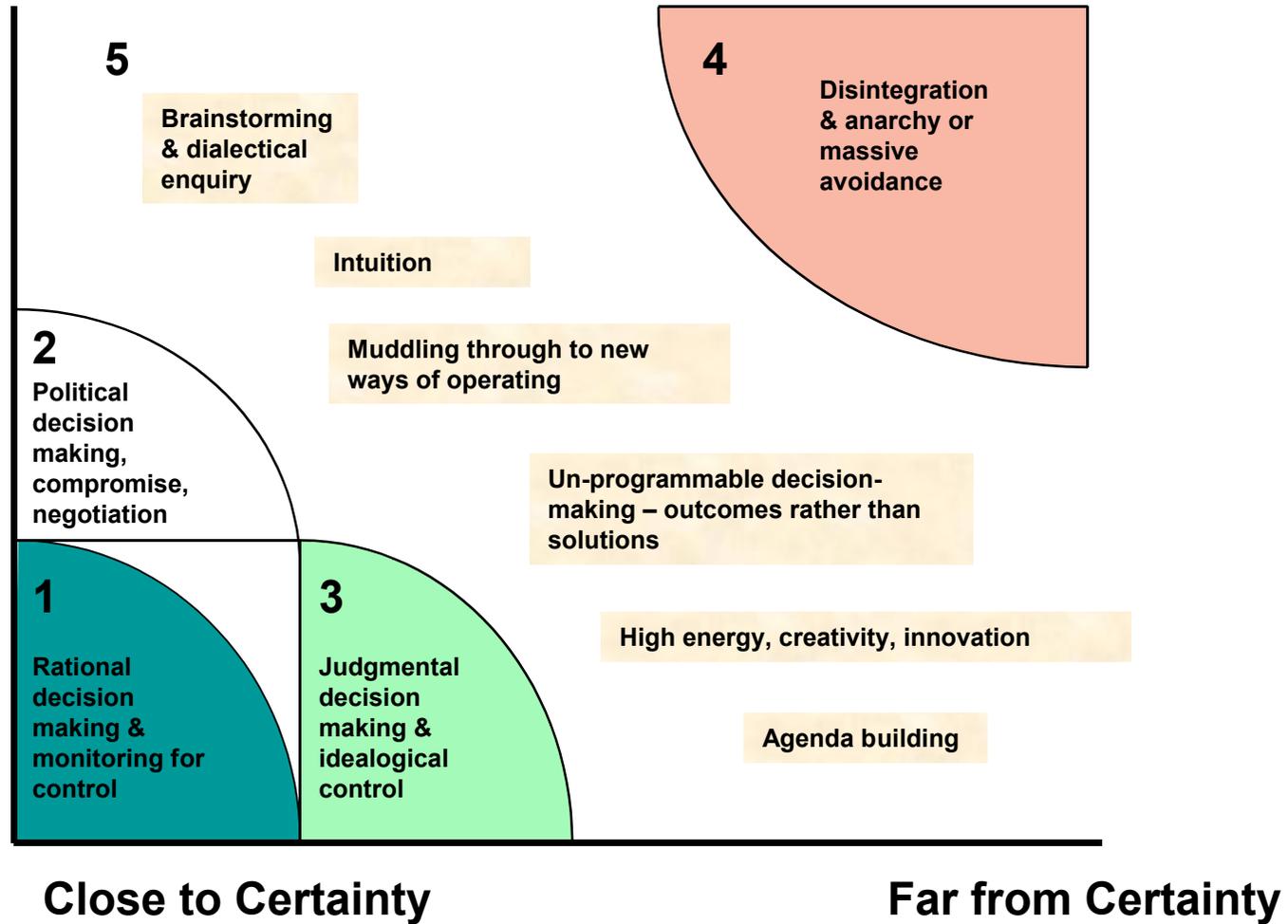
- Monitoring against plan will not work
- Strong sense of vision/mission may substitute for plan
- Compare progress against vision/mission not plan
- Goal to get to agreed future state, even if path there is not known

Zone 4 : Far from Agreement/Far from certainty

- Anarchy or breakdown
- Traditional methods - planning, visioning, negotiation insufficient
- Possible strategy to use avoidance; but may protect in short term only
- Should avoid this zone!

Far from Agreement

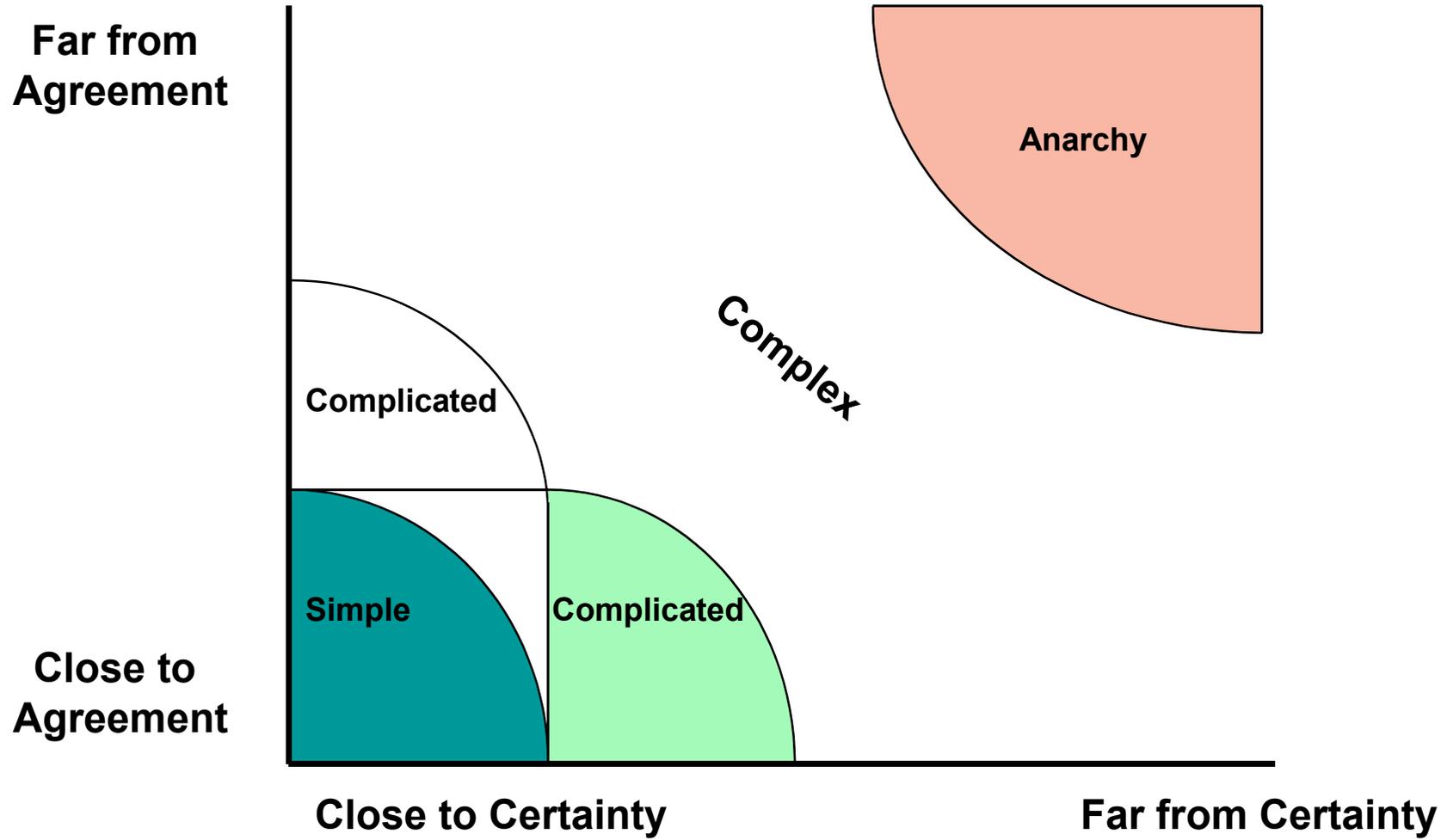
Close to Agreement



conlan.sean@gmail.com

The Edge of Chaos...

- Zone of Complexity (Stacey) or the Edge of Chaos
- Traditional Management approaches not effective – zones 1, 2, 3 extrapolate from the past
- Breaking with past modes
- Lack of predictability seems problematic
- Zone of high creativity, innovation, individuality



conlan.sean@gmail.com

Some insights

- Chaos an essential stage in a change-process ?
- Stable systems destabilise to seek a higher level through chaos
- Self-organisation mechanisms ensure a new stable dynamic with a higher degree of effectiveness
- Focus on means rather than ends
- Simple rules (seek the pattern) approach
- Complexity focus – emergence, self-organisation, interdependencies/relationships, unpredictability, non-linearity and diversity = more complete picture of organisation

Possible applications

Facilitation Approach:

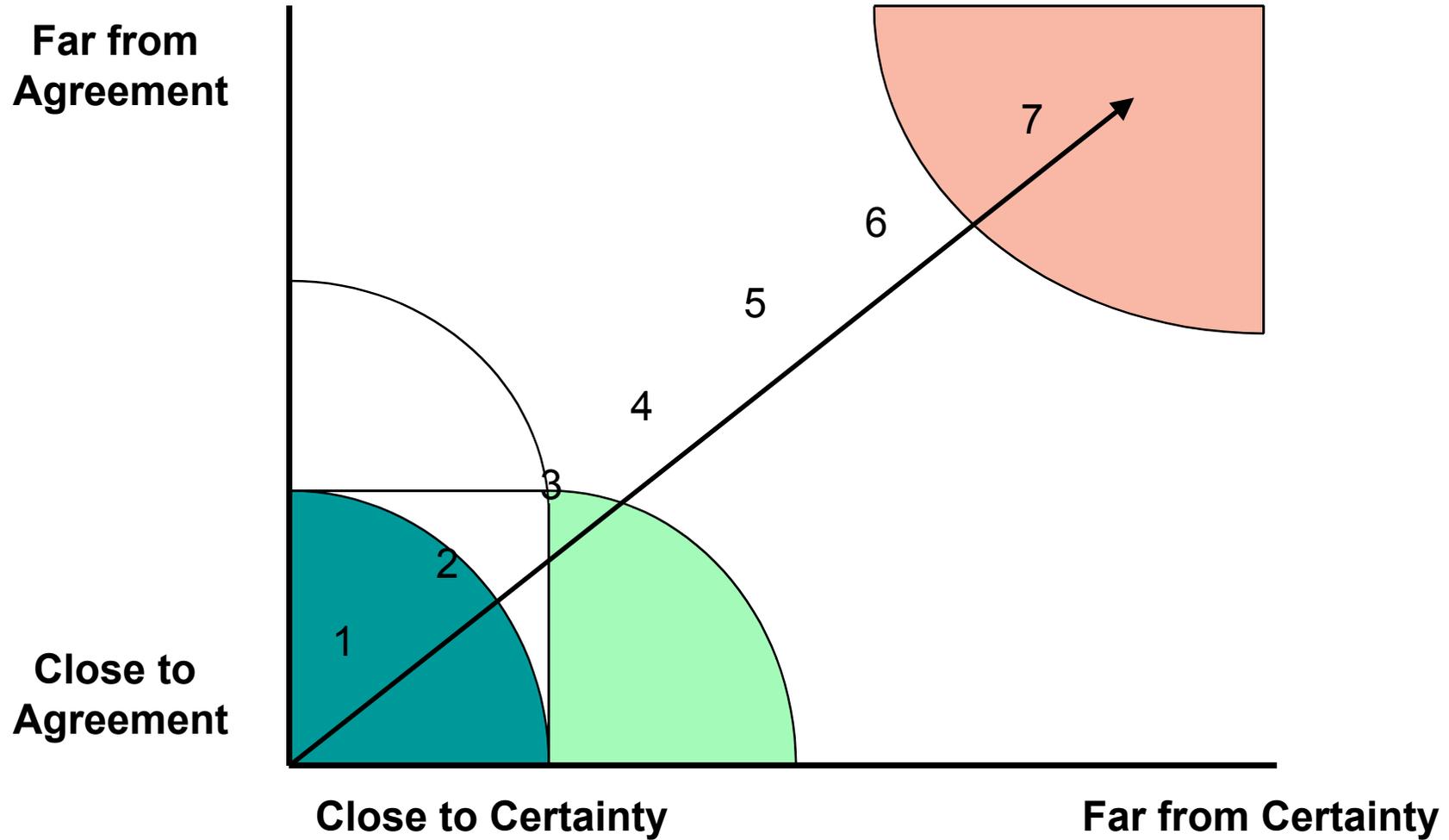
Identify specific examples for each zone for your workplace

Which management approach makes most sense for each

What are the factors which suggest an issue might be in the zone of complexity or one of the others? (Look for factors e.g. many people/bodies connected; time frame between cause & effect, unpredictability...)

Start with historical examples and move to current/future issues

Using the Matrix for management – the Larned approach



conlan.sean@gmail.com

Larned's simple approach

1. Direct workers to complete tasks
2. Change work processes to facilitate self-organisation
3. Modify structure to increase diversity, information & connections
4. Bring agents from different CASs together to intervene & seek change
5. Bring agents from different CASs together to facilitate self-organisation
6. Examine & describe patterns beyond leaders' influence
7. Scan the system for patterns

In Summary

- Stacey offers insights not normally exposed in 'traditional' management
- Insights enable mapping of 'where the organisation is at'
- Possible roadmap for innovation
- For more on it try:
 1. http://www.plexusinstitute.org/edgeware/archive/think/main_aides3.html
 2. http://www.change-management-toolbook.com/tools/cert_matrix.html