

Robert Keohane's Final Comments Chairs' Discussion, December 2, 2020



What is the biggest recent advance in our knowledge of governance?

To be viable, strategies for sustainability must generate self-interested incentives for support by powerful coalitions, including coalitions within governments and firms, which requires both analysis of political-economic structures and of the path-dependent dynamics of complex systems.

What are the most important questions ripe for research? (1)

- 1. Under what conditions can strategies for sustainable governance generate both desirable outcomes and robust political support?
- 2. How can innovations be nourished in protected niches yet be diffused enough to become systemically transformative?

What are the most important questions ripe for research (2)

- 3. Under what conditions do politically viable near-term steps open greater opportunities for later action rather than creating path dependence that blocks desirable future options?

What do we know that has the clearest implications for action?

- 1) Success on complex issues requires focal points and institutions for concerted or complementary action, and leadership.
- 2) Leadership, and willingness to follow enlightened leadership, is essential at every level: local, national, transnational and international.