

**Abstract of proposed paper on:**

**Some abuses of “science”, logic, and authority  
illustrated from responses to the COVID-19 threat  
and especially in the Dynamic Systems Models being used by policy consultants.**

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In this talk I will summarise a paper of the same name written following a Systems Dynamics conference in the spring of 2020<sup>1</sup>.

One conclusion is that, especially, given that the crisis was not been caused by COVID-19 itself but by the international policies justified in its name, it has been an abuse of science to focus “scientific” research predominantly on the spread of COVID-19 itself. In other words, it has been an abuse of “science” to fail to give equal weight to the study of the multiple outcomes of the policies that have been introduced in the name of halting the spread of COVID-19.

*These abuses highlight the widespread acceptance of the thought-way which leads to the word **science** being equated with **reductionist** science.*

They reflect the pervasive assumption that studies which fail to situate themselves in a systemic context can nevertheless legitimately claim to be “scientific”

Beyond that, it has been an abuse of authority to mandate what have (correctly) been described as medieval notions of how to stem the spread of the virus.

These things reflect extraordinary tunnel vision (lack of systems/systemic thinking) on the part of decision makers, scientists, and the general public.

However, a huge number of obscene educational and environmental policies are also supported by reference to equally flawed, non-systemic, reductionist, "science".

If research is to be used to guide policy that research must be *comprehensive*.

It must deal with *all* personal and social, intended and unintended, desired and undesirable, short and long term outcomes of proposed policies.

What is good for an individual may be bad for other individuals and society.

As sociocyberneticians we must ask what are the implications of this extraordinary abuse of science and authority for our image of the (quintessentially socio-cybernetic) process of governance itself?

Currently, we have what John Stuart Mill and Adam Smith described as government by “committees of ignoramus”; government by people not only do not know, but *could not* know, what they need to know to take wise decisions.

Using the available research, I have elsewhere outlined one set of possible arrangements that could be implemented to create a society which would innovate and learn without central direction<sup>2</sup>. These have to do with the evolution of new job descriptions for public servants and means of holding them accountable for their actions.

We are left with six central tasks for sociocyberneticians:

- 1 To disseminate the implications of “systems thinking” for the prevalent image of “science”.
- 2 To generate alternative models for societal governance ... viz cybernetics writ large.
- 3 To clarify appropriate relationships between government and “science”.
- 4 To generate a socio-cybernetic understanding of how it came about that essentially the same (largely destructive) processes were implemented by most governments virtually overnight.
- 5 To study the nature and diffusion of the mental viruses that have played such a major role in the dissemination of this and other policies.
6. (Although not mentioned in this summary), to better understand Friston’s *Dynamic Causal Modelling* process and how it links to the work of Bertalanffy and Maturana.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343127688> *Some abuses of science logic and authority illustrated from responses to the COVID-19 threat and especially in the Dynamic Systems Models being used by policy consultants*

<sup>2</sup><https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292308206> *The New Wealth of Nations The Societal Learning Arrangements Needed for a Sustainable Society*