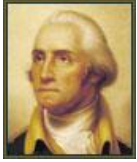


Location:
The George Washington University
Mt. Vernon Campus
2100 Foxhall Road
Washington, DC



Reflexivity in Social Systems: An Introduction to the Theories of George Soros

Stuart A. Umpleby
The George Washington University
Washington, DC
umpleby@gwu.edu

We can think of the process of social change as consisting of four steps. Ideas are invented by one or a few people. Groups of people who support the idea then form and attempt to persuade others. Eventually they achieve enough influence to produce some noticeable change in a social system, for example the passing of legislation or a new industrial product. This event has some effect on the character of the social system, which can be measured by variables, such as average level of education, life expectancy, or level of pollution. By studying these variables, a new idea for change or reform is formulated and the process repeats. The usual conception of science focuses primarily on the last step, from variables to ideas. However, the process whereby science affects society involves all four steps: ideas, groups, events, and variables. This paper compares a narrow, seemingly objective conception of social science with a broader, participatory conception. Reflexivity theory includes the participant in the action and the observer in the description. Although other versions of reflexivity theory will be mentioned, this paper will focus on the work of George Soros. His work provides a connection between second order cybernetics and economics, finance, and political science.

Title Page

Listing by Author

Listing by Panel

Speaker Contact Info

Flyer (Legal Size)

Flyer (Normal Size)

**Program & Abstract
Booklet**