

Biographical Note



Alan Sturt was educated in classics, English literature and modern languages at school. He went on to St. John's College, Cambridge with a State Scholarship in Classics, switched disciplines to Natural Sciences and received his BA in 1959.

His career has spanned industrial research, management, organisation, and business and economic policy analysis.

Not surprisingly he favours a multidisciplinary approach to problem-solving. He finds it more fruitful than other, narrowly focussed approaches both for the purposes of analysis and in the action which follows.

His interests include political, economic and social history from the earliest times to the present, archaeology, music, reading, hill-walking and sailing.

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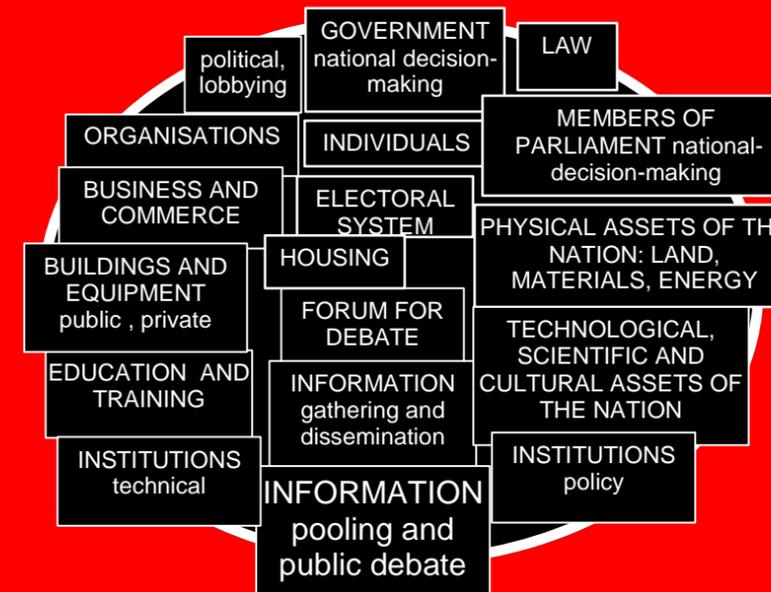


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Political decisions often seem to bring about the very situation they were intended to prevent. Governments take action to increase accountability, improve parental or patient choice and rein in public expenditure. The result is that public expenditure continues up, parents and patients are given choices which are no choice and the non-accountable are less accountable than ever.

The problem lies in the failure to consider whole national systems and their interactions. It is not all inept administration or ideological deceit, though this certainly plays a part. Mistakes are made at the very first step which could have been avoided with a basic understanding of the simplest systems rules. After that the systems cannot possibly work as intended, whatever the effort expended on them.

Systems thinking in this sense has so far been applied almost exclusively to scientific and engineering problems, usually quantitatively.

Here it is applied in a non-mathematical way to the systems which underpin a modern industrial society: legal, education, health and broadcasting, and finally the system of democracy itself. It explores their dynamics and interactions, and points them at explicit national goals, no less.

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