

AN INVITATION

Here is the article of faith behind my work of the last year.

Creating a general, and executable, object model for human social behavior will greatly advance our understanding of politics and human collaboration in general, and can lead to better policies.

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This is a life-and-death topic, as we see in the news every day. I believe that a qualitative advance in understanding social behavior and exploring policies is possible, using object models and agent-based simulation in a self-correcting research process.

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I believe that our public conversation is stuck in narrative and must adopt behaviors resembling experimental science. That's what I mean by the distinction between "descriptive stories" and "generative stories" in this outline of the work:

https://twitter.com/conways_law/status/1354871192025526276

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Here and now, in the present thread, I suggest the creation of a collaborative community of like-minded researchers on this theme.

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I am retired and unaffiliated, and I command no resources except my own time. My network is largely based on software development professionals, who will be vital to this work, primarily because they embody precious systems thinking.

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But the network must be broadened to include social scientists, artists, journalists, government professionals, and others from both sides of C.P. Snow's Two Cultures.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Two_Cultures

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I especially would like to see the participation of journalists, historians, political scientists, and similar researchers who are dissatisfied with telling merely descriptive stories.

I believe that this work can create new approaches to solving our big social problems.

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I invite those who share my view of the opportunity and who want to contribute, to participate in a self-organizing experiment using my

Twitter account as an initial seed. Given the indeterminacy of my timeline I suggest backing up public expressions of interest with DMs.

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I will respond publicly, and we can take the next steps together, including designing the processes we would use.

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How will an object-model-based approach to understanding politics contribute? The contribution will be seen in the treatment of today's nagging "anomalies", for example, alternate realities, cults, mass radicalization, propaganda, and conspiracy theories.

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Mel Conway Twitter: [@conways_law](https://twitter.com/conways_law)

In the popular conversation these are seen as unfortunate pathologies.

My answer: These are not pathological behaviors; they are primitive attachment behaviors basic to our socialization. Our line of descent acquired attachment behaviors well before our species emerged.



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To develop a *workable* understanding of attachment behaviors we must treat attachment as a basic part of the human personality, not as an anomaly.

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Politics is the art of managing our ancient socialization behaviors, in part by keeping them within workable limits. Traditionally we do this procedurally; that's the meaning of "rule of law".

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The roles of conspiracy theories in the invasion of the Capitol on January 6, 2021 and the splitting-off from evidence-based reasoning of one-third of the US voting population suggests that our governance paradigms have hit a new kind of limit.

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Treating phenomena such as the Capitol invasion and conspiracy theories as emergents within the emergence model enables us to design policies and interventions at a finer level of detail than is the case with single-level models.

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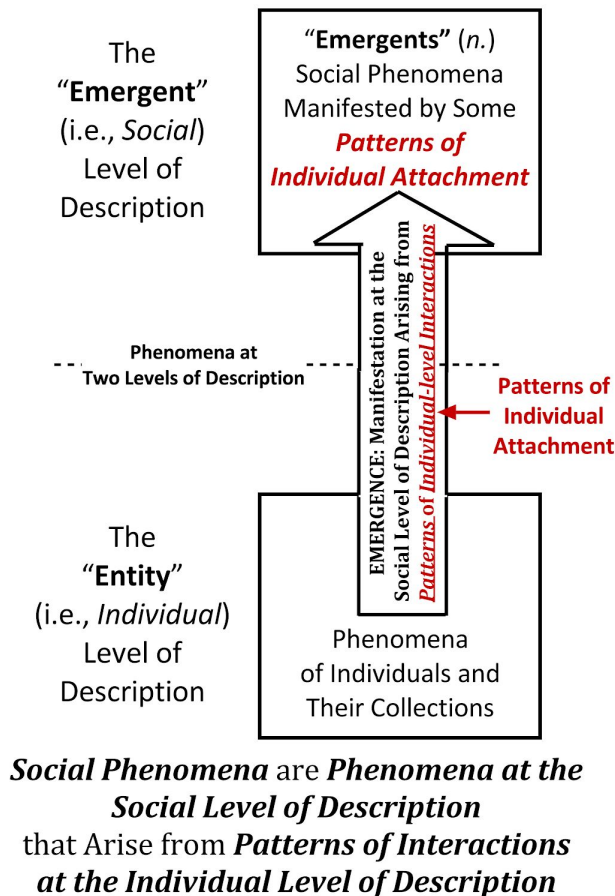
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Here is the emergence model specialized to human social behavior. The structure of an agent-based simulator follows directly from this.

To build a simulator that executes patterns of individual attachment we need an executable object model for human attachment.

https://www.pnas.org/content/99/suppl_3/7280



Mel Conway, 2020-2021

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The attachment object model is at a very early stage of development. For a while I intend to maintain a current version here:

Draft 2021-02-27

http://melconway.com/CBH/Attachment_Model.pdf

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One key aspect of the model is that each individual (person) contains a memory object for each attachment object.

A second key idea is that some (perhaps all) of these memories decay, requiring refreshing.

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Decay of attachment-object memory is a very productive hypothesis. It enables a lot of apparently disparate phenomena to be understood as related. Decay accounts for the importance of repetition in mass-manipulation tactics such as propaganda and “the big lie”.

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Because attachment is buried much more deeply in our cognitive structures than language and the use of logic to reason about evidence, it makes sense that well-designed disinformation tactics can overpower truth. The public conversation needs to incorporate this reality.

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Intra-cohort refresh signals are the pathways whereby the exponential growth of mass radicalization occurs.

These inter-cohort pathways are important “patterns of individual attachment” of the emergence model.

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A meme is an attachment object (that might be a physical object or a symbolic expression) whose perception by the individual acts to refresh the associated attachment object memory. This is the meme persistence mechanism.

https://twitter.com/conways_law/status/1357351995968000001

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The powerful meme, “We wuz robbed!” was the progenitor of the “Stop the steal” trigger meme behind the January 6, 2021 invasion of the US Capitol.

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/we-wuz-robbed>

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The decay hypothesis also suggests possible interventions. You can’t conventionally deprogram 25 million Americans, but you can interrupt their refresh loops. Twitter’s cancellation of the Donald Trump account might be a test of this.

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As a concrete project I imagine modeling the January 6 Capitol invasion as an emergent, and simulation-testing the model against alternate policies. This would be a big task and would require many skills, multiple sources of knowledge, and some form of central management.

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After-the-fact investigations are revealing, for example, instances of the “Unit Cohesion” pattern. I expect other synergies to show up as the pre-planning process is revealed.

https://twitter.com/conways_law/status/1357715507462483968

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Doing such a research program in parallel with the proposed January 6 Commission would be a big job and a powerful test of the vision, particularly with respect to the differences in social policies that they suggest.

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