

Experiments in Movement Unity

Reflections by Evelin Lindner

in contribution to the Great Transition Network (GTN) discussion of August 2023

in response to the opening essay by Ashish Kothari and Shrishtee Bajpai

Global tapestry of alternatives: Weaving transformative connections

<https://greattransition.org/images/Global-Tapestry-Kothari-Bajpai.pdf>

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The Great Transition Initiative (GTI) Forum of July and August 2023 was titled “Experiments in Movement Unity.” This Forum had two parts. In its first half, contributors were invited to offer descriptions of real-world “experiments in movement unity.” I should have contributed with a description of my work with the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS) network and our World Dignity University initiative, yet, due to work overload, I was not able to offer such a presentation. Here comes therefore a short summary:

HumanDHS is a transdisciplinary academic field and a global collaborative community of concerned scholars, researchers, educators, practitioners, creative artists, and others. We wish to stimulate systemic change, globally and locally, to open space for dignity, mutual respect and esteem to take root and grow. Our goal is ending humiliating practices, preventing new ones from arising, and fostering healing from cycles of humiliation throughout the world.

In the second half of the GTI Forum, Paul Raskin posed two questions:

First, what is your broad assessment of the state-of-play of the movement? Starting with the Global Tapestry of Alternatives, we’ve heard from an impressive array of organizing efforts for systemic change. Taken collectively, do these and others point plausibly toward the coalescence of a global citizens movement (GCM)? Is something essential missing from the movement landscape? What is it? [In GTI’s nomenclature, the GCM — a polycentric ecology

of movements, organizations, and associations within a broad umbrella of inclusive solidarity and common purpose — is the hypothesized systemic change agent for a Great Transition.^{1]}

Second, specifically, how might GTI itself evolve to better serve as a catalyst for a GCM? Launched in 2003, GTI has focused for two decades on building the theoretical and analytical foundations for a GT. The time has come for embarking on a new phase that shifts emphasis from the realm of ideas to the realm of action. Please share your initial thoughts on possible programmatic directions for GTI in 2024 and beyond. What new “experiment in movement unity” should we run?

The first question struck me in particular, as it was the very question that I face almost every day wherever I speak about my work. People ask me, “Is your dignity work not utterly in vain, just like the rest of all those laudable initiatives around the world? How come the world is still on the wrong path, given that there are so many well-intended efforts to make it a better place? A Global Citizens Movement (GCM) for a Great Transition is not in the making, just face it!” “Yes,” I usually answer, “Yes, you are right. We should all be in *one* boat, to speak with the metaphor of Gus Speth, yet we are still in our separate little boats carried by currents that are so much stronger than our individual efforts.”

Let me begin by thanking Paul Raskin and Jonathan Cohn for their seminal work. I benefitted highly from reading each of the many comments that came in from all over the world and I resonate with all of them. The GTI Forum is the only forum that I follow as regularly as I can — I see its members providing the very leadership for a global citizens movement for dignity that the world needs. I see the GTI discussions representing the essential preparations for the next historical window of opportunity for deep change, the next *Overton window*. Indeed, in his contribution to this GTI Forum on August 24, 2023, Jeremy Lent refers to the Overton window as “the set of ideas considered acceptable to mainstream political discourse.” I sometimes call it also “Eleanor Roosevelt window,” like the one that opened in 1948, following the horrors of World War II. It was a window of opportunity that at that time was wide enough for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to be adopted.

In his contribution to this Forum on July 30, 2023, Jeremy Lent reminds us of network theorist Damon Centola’s recent book, *Change: How to Make Big Things Happen*, where Centola demonstrates “how transformative change is generally catalyzed by small, highly committed groups of enthusiasts located on the periphery of mainstream culture, who reinforce each other’s commitment to a new sociocultural norm through repeated affirming interactions, which help to validate innovative ideas.”² Many will now think of anthropologist Margaret Mead and her often quoted saying, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” This was exactly what Eleanor Roosevelt manifested with her drafting committee of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Jeremy Lent points also at the work of Sandra Waddock (see also her contributions to the GTI Forum on August 14 and 24) and her upcoming book, *Catalyzing Transformation*, where she describes transformation catalysts as “entities — people, groups of people, organizations, and initiatives — that work to bring about systemic transformation by undertaking a set of activities that we synthesize as connecting, cohering, and amplifying the work of others.”³ Lent went on to remind us of systems thinker Ilya Prigogine, who describes what happens when “complex

systems transition from one stable state to another,” namely, that the character of the subsequent state is influenced by “small islands of coherence in a sea of chaos” which have “the capacity to lift the entire system to a higher order.”⁴

I resonate with Lent’s point that these “islands of coherence” already exist throughout the world — “generated by distinct visionary ideas, grassroots movements, and community initiatives laying down pathways toward a life-affirming future.” I regard the GTN community as precisely the highly committed group of catalysts that create “islands of coherence” through their work. “The GTI has the potential of creating a transnational caring community that works for environmental integrity, social and economic justice, community solidarity, and people’s democracy,” Wendy Harcourt adds in her contribution on September 19, 2023. Uchita de Zoysa chimes in on August 23, 2023, when he reminds everyone that the Great Transition to date remains one of the best narratives “for a global citizens movement (GCM)” with the aim to build “a post-UN earth commons peer governance architecture” as Vishwas Satgar phrases it on August 16, 2023. “The design of a blueprint for a mass movement of movements is a key next step to be taken by this group with mindful collaboration with other like-minded groups and individuals at least,” demands Uchita de Zoysa. Ostrom’s polycentric subsidiarity principle is the important guidelines, Tim Hollo advises, as, indeed, the Greens party is structurally designed on the principle of subsidiarity, Uchita de Zoysa points out.

My focus on creating a global dignity movement is precisely embedded in this frame of reference.

In my contribution further down, I want to avoid duplicating what others have written and rather go deeper into two points, while embedding them in the context framed by the other contributors. First, so is my proposition, activists may need to better understand *deferred elimination*. Second, they may also need to better understand the influence of humiliation. Nurturing dignifying relationships with people one wishes to convince is a precondition for the acceptance of new ideas, because even the best new ideas will be rejected if they humiliate. Activists themselves may fall for the same problem, namely, when they reject ideas that are worth embracing.

First, I would like to summarize what the contributors to this Forum think needs to be avoided and left behind on the way to a Great Transition.

What needs to be avoided and left behind on the way to a Great Transition?

In his contribution on August 14, 2023, Alexander K. Lautensach speaks of the survival of the human species (together with other species) and the need to avoid “miserable survival.” What we want instead is “acceptable survival,” he argues, speaking in terms of the continuum of Van Rensselaer Potter.⁵ In my work, I use the terminology of dignity: Even if humanity is already in hospice and no longer just in hospital, in all cases it is dignity that counts. What we want to avoid is indignity, be it undignified survival or undignified demise.

Jose Ramos writes in his contribution on September 16, 2023, “In this GTI conversation there are many different perspectives, use of language, and definitions of what the crisis is. Are we in a polycrisis or metacrisis or permacrisis or civilizational crisis... etc.? Is it patriarchy, capitalism, an industrial mindset, a deep pathology within the human species? Is it systems change, or is it anti-systemic? How can we formulate actions without a clear shared diagnosis and analysis of what the problem is?”

On September 13, 2023, Indra Adnan⁶ named the historical moment we live in as a moment of polycrisis.⁷ She wrote, “In the third year of a decade that was identified as crucial for the survival of the human species,⁸ our environmental indicators show that we are going backwards.⁹ We find ourselves at war in a context that seems to imply deeper global divisions than any of us have known in our lifetimes.¹⁰ Future defining tools — AI, nuclear fusion, health — are in danger of being auctioned to the highest bidder¹¹ at the cost of the poorest people.”

Adnan is impressed by the breadth and depth of the many collective endeavors that are around in the world, she writes, such as Convivialism,¹² cosmocalism,¹³ or sustainable mindsets.¹⁴ Yet, she explains, she sees a certain sensibility missing, “To move from lists of global strategists to a Global Citizens Movement is a move from the map to the territory. ... If we don’t see the distinction between map and territory — and the different knowledges implied¹⁵ — we will always be disappointed in our success at mobilizing people behind our theories of change.” The problem is that “the people themselves are seen as the problem to fix, rather than the resource to be discovered,” which means that “we miss the source of energy.” Meantime, and this is the danger Adnan points at, “more disruptive forces can step in: appeal to human need for belonging, meaning, and status¹⁶ and harness their passions for less ecologically regenerative systems.”

Competition for domination must be left behind

In his contribution to this forum on August 21, 2023, Yavor Tarinski reminds us of the core “logic” that we, as humanity, must overcome, namely, the logic of domination. He writes, “The culture of domination has existed since ancient times and has been snowballing into new and more expansive forms. From some of the most ancient forms of oppression known to humanity — those of gerontocracy and patriarchy, through that of feudalism, all the way up to contemporary capitalism — the reality is that domination has predated the current capitalist system.” Tarinski quotes Murray Bookchin’s warning that “the abolition of class rule and economic exploitation offers no guarantee whatever that elaborate hierarchies and systems of domination will disappear.”¹⁷ Only new institutions can help, those that “will operate on the basis of completely different logics and values,” writes Tarinski.

Brian Tokar points into a similar direction in his contribution on July 19, 2023, when he mentions *social ecology* and how it “examines how the myth of human domination of nature emerged from rising relationships of domination among people following the breakdown of ancient tribal societies, particularly in Europe and the Middle East.”

I was delighted to see Riane Eisler’s contribution on August 30, 2023, because I draw on her thinking about domination and partnership in my research a lot. In my contribution to the GTI Forum on big history narratives earlier this year,¹⁸ I laid out how I identify the logic of competition for domination as definitional of *Homo Sapiens*’ history, most prominently in the aftermath of what we call the Neolithic Revolution. It is this logic that must be overcome, in whatever form, including its most recent manifestation through economic arrangements.

Eisler has developed the partnership-domination scale, with the domination-oriented mindsets favoring “authoritarian, top-down, punitive, ingroup versus outgroup systems in both the family and the state or tribe.”¹⁹ In her contribution to this Forum, Eisler lists as examples, “family systems in religious domination-oriented cultures like the Eastern Taliban and fundamentalist Iran as well as in secular and Western ones like Orban’s Hungary, the rightist Nazis, and the leftist USSR.” Eisler explains the significance of research in neuroscience, which shows “that our politics and economics are largely a function of our worldview and values, which are largely

the result of children's genes' interaction with their cultural environment. And all this is primarily transmitted through families during our most formative years." Eisler offers the important insight that "there are hierarchies in partnership systems, starting in families, but they are empowering hierarchies of actualization rather than disempowering hierarchies of domination. She continues by referring to research that "shows that children who experience fear, pain, and anger in punitive, authoritarian, male-dominated families tend to go into denial, deflecting these feelings to different races, gays/trans people, and other outgroups they are taught are inferior, dangerous, or malevolent. This denial becomes habitual, as in denial of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and election results." Eisler points out that "regressives internalize rigid gender stereotypes, despite the evidence that both women and men are capable of caregiving (labeled 'feminine' in domination thinking). They do not recognize that gender fluidity is part of human nature or the massive new evidence that for millennia in prehistory human cultures oriented more to partnership than domination." Eisler offers as examples for domination-oriented mindsets, "Western secular regimes like Hitler's Germany, Stalin's USSR, Trump's MAGA movement, and Putin's Russia," which all see men and "masculinity" as superior to women and "femininity." "This subjugation of women and the 'feminine' is even more overt in Eastern religious Iran and the Taliban," she writes, "where it is a top government priority, as are binary gender stereotypes and the arrest and killing of anyone who deviates, like women who refuse to wear the chador and people in the LGBTQ+ community." Indeed, following Eisler's argument, all of us to varying degrees were taught to rank men and "masculinity" over women and "femininity." "Our religions teach that women are inferior and must be controlled by men, starting with Eve. The university canon has had little or nothing about girls and women, and even the new women's, men's, and gender studies are marginalized," Eisler warns, and continued by saying that "we have not been taught that the ranking of men over women, rigid gender stereotypes that allow no deviation, and ranking 'masculinity' over 'femininity' is a bulwark of domination systems." "But," she alerts, "how gender roles and relations are structured is not 'just a women's issue': it's a central social and economic organizing principle. The economic operating systems we have inherited have been shaped by gendered values in which the economic contributions of the 'women's work' of caring for people from birth as well as caring for our natural life support systems are devalued." Eisler explains that "both Smith and Marx (fathers of capitalism and socialism) perpetuated these values. For them, the work of caring for children, the elderly, and the sick, and keeping a clean and healthy home environment, was to be performed for free by a woman in a male-controlled household. There is nothing in their theories about caring for our natural life support systems." As a result, Eisler explains:

Even metrics like GDP and GNP perpetuate this distorted system of values. These metrics include activities in the market (once an exclusive male preserve) that harm and even take life, like selling cigarettes and fast foods and the medical and funeral costs they result in. But they do not include the 'women's' work of caring for people outside the market (a market where child care workers generally earn less than dog walkers). Nor do they include caring for our natural environment, so trees (which provide us oxygen) are only included when they are dead, as logs.

Eisler concludes by pointing at the "false narratives" that support domination systems and are re-taught by regressives, and that "notable are those about an inherently flawed human nature

like ‘original sin’ and ‘selfish genes’ — which argue with each other, but both justify top-down control. To support the old rankings based on fear and force, we inherited stories like Eve’s and Pandora’s that blame women for all our ills. We inherited ‘classic’ fairy tales like Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty that idealize royalty and promote women’s helplessness and dependence. As we see revived in parts of the US where pushback to domination systems is strongest, we also inherited narratives that promote racial, religious, and ethnic prejudices.” Eisler calls for “a unifying framework: a comprehensive partnership approach, recognizing our interconnection with one another and the natural world. This new frame encompasses family, childhood, gender, economic, and political relations, and is key to a successful whole-systems transformation and a better world.”

The growth-driven state-market dyad must be left behind

Where do we stand? In his contribution from July 25, 2023, Heikki Patomäki reports that “in many, if not most, contexts, neo-liberalization continues and has become part of the taken-for-granted background for many forms of agency and activities.” He points out that “especially since 2008-9, economic nationalism, securitization, and militarization have been on the rise.”²⁰

Gustave Massiah adds on July 25, 2023, that “since 2008, neoliberalism has been in crisis but still dominant. It is reinforcing its strategy: commodification, privatization, financialization.” In his contribution from August 18, 2022, Vishwas Satgar chimes in when he speaks of the *growth-driven state-market dyad*, and Dorothy Guerrero (on August 8, 2023) uses the terminology of *monopoly capitalism*.²¹ Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, in her comment on August 21, 2023, emphasizes “the humongous role played by the military-industrial-financial-energy-political-media power structure and of how it tightly controls the ‘opinions,’ ‘pockets,’ and ‘behaviors’ of all of us.”

In his contribution on September 14, 2023, Stewart Wallis offers a chronology of some of the events that characterized the past decades²²:

From the 1940s-1960s Western economies shifted to a Keynesian model, with its emphasis on the management of markets and the provision of health, education, and social safety nets. And, from the late 1970s to the 2000s, neo-liberalism ascended with a focus on individual freedom and market freedom. In the case of Keynesianism, the vision was of solidarity, the right of all to education and health and the need for government to intervene to ensure full employment. Government needed to enhance its authority, while Wall Street and business needed to be weakened. The Great Depression hastened its introduction, as did the Second World War.

In the case of neo-liberalism, its proponents’ vision was, and is, focused on freedom.²³ They created a compelling, positive story based on the view that government was too big; that markets would serve everyone if allowed to be truly free; and that freedom of the individual was a fundamental right. These principles and the ideas flowing from them now permeate all arenas of human life. As William Allen (1993), a former Chancellor of the Delaware Court of Chancery put it. ‘One of the marks of a true dominant intellectual paradigm is the difficulty people have in even imagining an alternative point of view.’

The proponents of neoliberalism set up think-tanks such as Heritage, Cato and the Institute of Economic Affairs. They ‘captured’ some of most important economic departments of the world, became prominent on editorial boards of key economic publications and radically

influenced corporate law and financial institutions. They created a new power base which, helped by the oil price shocks in the 1970s, lifted Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan into power at the end of that decade, and put neo-liberal economic theory into practice around the world.

In his contribution on September 15, 2023, Guy Standing adds that “the neoliberal economics revolution of the 1980s ushered in the current era of rentier capitalism. While rentiers have morphed into a global plutocracy, they and their political representatives have pursued a strategy of GDP growth, at the existential cost of ecological decay, global warming, multiple inequalities, and ‘permacrisis’.” Standings describes how GDP growth has become a fetish since the neoliberal economics revolution of the 1970s and 1980s, while “the concept itself only originated in the 1930s, as a rough measure of mobilizable resources for war.” Our politicians “suffer from Growth Fetish Syndrome,” Standing laments and suggests that “it may require quasi-medical treatment, or at least more satirical scorn. Instead of seeing growth as more goods and wealth, politicians and commentators must be induced to see growth as a tumor — the bigger the more life threatening.”

In this context, many moral distortions have emerged. One is the definition of freedom. “Freedom for the wolves has often meant death to the sheep,” philosopher Isaiah Berlin brought it to the point already in 1969.²⁴ Stephen Purdey, in his comment on August 31, 2023, explains how our “moral failings are rooted in a false sense of freedom, abetted in large measure by an exaggerated sense of human exceptionalism.” He writes:

In a world structured by edges, limits, and boundaries, we see ourselves as unconstrained by any such obstacles. We can take anything, do anything, be anything we choose and freely imagine a prosperous future in which all needs are met, all wants satisfied. But such freedom is illusory if it ignores the limitations of Earth’s finitude, and it’s licentious if it releases decision-makers from the need to make ethically informed choices which may constrain growth-driven behavior in favor of the larger, longer-term common good. False freedom and the moral laxity it engenders are the poison pills of the narrative that political and corporate leaders now regard as consummate law.

Kirsten Stade, in her comment on September 11, 2023, points at recent research that found “that population increase has canceled out most climate gains from renewables and efficiency over the past three decades.”²⁵ She reports that “historic international family planning investment in the 1970s and 80s led to substantial gains in lowered fertility, reduced poverty, and women’s education and empowerment, but these efforts were derailed by neoliberal forces, working in concert with the Vatican, at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994.²⁶ Today, 30 years later, international funding for family planning still falls far short of meeting the unmet need of 257 million women who want to avoid pregnancy but are unable to do so.”

John Bunzl, in his contribution on August 28, 2023, warns, “There is no 99% vs a 1%. There is only the 100%.” What he means is that “our predicament is not a struggle between groups of humans, but a struggle between all humanity and a destructive system which has a life of its own.” He explains:

Since it was unleashed, this system now operates globally, beyond the control of ANY group while powerfully limiting and guiding the actions of all groups toward destructive outcomes. Akin to the dynamic of ‘the Tragedy of the Commons,’ this system is a vicious circle because no government can move first or act alone to solve global problems because doing so would make its national economy uncompetitive, risking unemployment, capital flight, and economic decline. Whether we’re talking about climate, nuclear weapons, AI, tax avoidance, wealth inequality, or other global problems, this destructive system remains in control.

Bunzl speaks of “Destructive Global Competition (DGC). DGC determines that it’s not that governments don’t want to solve global problems, but that they can’t.”²⁷

In 2012, I was asked to write a book about the link between humiliation and terrorism. Upon reflection, I decided to write a book on economics, titled *A Dignity Economy*, because to me, the core of terror stems from our economic systems.²⁸ I may therefore resonate more with Anitra Nelson than with Manuel Manga with respect to the salvatory function of money. Manuel Manga, in his contribution on September 1, 2023, calls for “Billions of dollars.” He explains that “there are several billionaires who want a better world. People who work for these social change organizations need to get paid, and these organizations need to grow to make social impact.” In her comment to this Forum on September 11, 2023, Anitra Nelson calls for something of the opposite, namely, “an ecologically sustainable, money-free world fulfilling everyone’s basic needs.” She notes, that “the elephant in the room is the silent, invisible war between monetary values and ‘real value,’ real values being both social and ecological values”:

We live on a globe of nation-states interconnected through production for trade. Markets and money frame enterprises, buying and selling, booms and busts, and debts. Monetary relationships fragment cultures as surely as they cement destructive, singular, and standardized ways of being (economies of “development” and quantitative growth). Monetary relationships disempower the many as they empower the few.

If the “triple bottom line” has been all but abandoned, its shadow remains in most postcapitalist visions and schemes — as if all we need is to get our act together to make both work for us. But, after decades of reading, thinking, and discussing market mechanisms, capitalism, and money, I have spent even more time arguing that money, trade, and production for trade are the real problems. Money is a metonym for the market, yet neither are reducible to the other, and both are closely associated with the rise and current operation of undemocratic state governance.

Of course, money is not a “thing,” but internationally, it is our only common “language,” better a set of practices and rules, formed by market relations assuming a logic of equivalence and its contradictory identity of non-equivalence. The discipline of monetary values (prices), which co-evolve with monetary relationships, markets, and accountancy, have naught to do with meeting social needs and achieving ecological sustainability.

The primacy that has been given to monetary relationships throughout the past decades has resulted in the *great unraveling* (a term originally coined by Joanna Macy). In her contribution on August 21, 2023, Isabel Rimanoczy describes how this unraveling unfolds before our eyes, “As we are hit in the face with unanticipated or more frequent ‘unprecedented’ events, we are experiencing what now some call ‘the age of consequences’ with poly-crises that are complex, interconnected, not fully understood, and which are challenging our very lives.”

Therefore, it is of crucial importance, Yavor Tarinski advises in his comment on July 19, 2023, “to put an end to the predatory logic of capitalism that sacrifices human lives and the natural world in the name of generating profits for a small class.”

Gustave Massiah chimes in on August 25, 2023, by saying that “the crisis is first of all the crisis of the overcoming of capitalism. It is the crisis of a new project of radical transformation that would be different from state socialism. This project has still not emerged. ... What some are now calling collapse is not the end of the world; it could be the start of a new civilization.... The response to identity-based nationalism is to build an international system, a new internationalism that extends international solidarity and alterglobalism.... We need to build everything: a theoretical and philosophical approach, a social project, a mobilizing narrative, a strategy, and alliances. These are the tasks for the coming period.”

What stands in the way? What needs to be learned?

The need to learn about deferred elimination

On September 12, 2023, Valentine Moghadam pointed at “the organizational inertia (despair?) that accompanied the collapse of both the Old Left and various New Left entities, leading to a myriad of disarticulated identity-based groups and claims that have made barely a dent in the militarized, corporatized, unequal, and unjust world-system?”

What has caused this despair? What stands in the way of a Great Transition? In her contribution on August 22, 2023, Helen Camakaris highlights *evolutionary mismatch*. She explains that “we frequently use heuristics or rules of thumb that, whilst useful in past millennia, are now mismatched to our current situation”²⁹ and that this mismatch originates in the fact that “intuition runs deep, even now with our evolved intelligence, and ability to communicate and learn.” In other words, evolutionary mismatch is a deep-seated handicap that cannot be tackled fast.

I would like to draw attention to another handicap, another cause of despair, another obstacle to a Great Transition, one which becomes more prominent as market economic arrangements take over. Let me explain.

In times of crisis, communities tend to become ever more polarized, as two possible pathways into the future grow ever more irreconcilable — “more of the same” versus “less of the same.” A painful gap opens between “let us optimize business as usual” and “let us do a complete turnaround, exit from business as usual, and embark on something entirely new.”

All around the world, I meet thinkers and activists who opt for a complete turnaround (I am one of them), while others do not, and a third group attempts to form bridges (I am one of them, too).

My observation is that some of those who opt for “let us optimize business as usual” are caught in what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu called *deferred elimination*.³⁰ In a nutshell, they confuse opportunities for entry with opportunities for success. Bourdieu identified this dynamic for the educational system, however, in my view, it can be observed also in a much wider range of situations. It speaks to what Ashish Kothari and Shrishtee Bajpai wrote in their introductory essay, namely, the need to avoid being captured by false hopes and promises within existing structures.

Whoever wants to silence critical voices has several options: critical voices may be brutally silenced by being imprisoned or even killed, or false dichotomies may be established, such as, for instance, the “environment versus jobs” dichotomy that has been the primary frame for characterizing the relation between organized labor and climate protection,” as Jeremy Brecher notes in his comment on September 8, 2023. More sophisticated strategies eliminate critics with their own consent, and this is what Bourdieu describes. It is the strategy of inviting people to exhaust themselves for promises that are ultimately empty. Idealists all around the world fall into that “trap” and exhaust themselves in “good works” that in the end are irrelevant for the larger context. When they become aware that even their most dedicated efforts cannot keep the larger power structures from moving in the wrong direction, they may even blame themselves. They are then ready for depression or cynicism, or for being captured by authoritarian imaginings or conspiracy narratives. Indeed, having lived on all continents for the past decades, I have met countless formerly idealistic activists who once thought they could make a difference only to end up demoralized. Many were inspired by the first Limits to growth report in 1972, many went out into the world to become humanitarian helpers, only to end up resonating with the book titled *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity*.³¹

This may also be part of the explanation of why “the world became rich in plans for sustainability action ... but poor in meaningful action,” as Paul Raskin reported in 2014.³²

In her contribution on September 13, 2023, Indra Adnan described how, “citizens live in a dream of agency — The American Dream mostly — that if they work hard enough at mostly mindless jobs, they will be rewarded with fulfillment. Freedom is equated with freedom to consume,³³ and belonging is generated through brand loyalty.”

In her contribution on August 8, 2023, also Neema Pathak Broome confirms my observation that activists who threaten existing power structures are pushed out of their organizations or that entire initiatives are defunded.³⁴ Pathak Broome reports from her experience when she writes that those pushing too hard for rights for Indigenous Peoples, for instance, “had to pay a price for being “too socially minded and radical” and were pushed out of their institutions.”

I am reminded of the work of Norwegian development specialist and scholar Benedicte Bull, who sheds light on the time and energy that has been wasted on false hopes throughout the past decades. Bull has identified a “perverse twist” between 1980 and 2000:

On the one hand, from the 1980s, there were governments, businesses, international organizations and intellectuals — often lumped into the neo-liberal category — that argued for a continued focus on growth and modernization, but rejected the developmentalists’ focus on knowledge, technology and industrialization. Moreover, in a perverse twist on the modernization schools’ belief in linear evolution, they saw development as an immanent process in all societies that would naturally take place if hindrances were removed. They thus rejected the developmentalists’ notion of development as a purposeful process pursued by development actors, primarily the state, and considered it rather a natural process that would unfold if state interventions were removed and the market were allowed to regulate prices and encourage entrepreneurship.³⁵

In her contribution to this Forum on August 20, 2023, Francine Mestrum looks back on the 1980s, “when many debates were taking place already on the possible cooperation between parties and movements of the left. There was a lot more optimism then than there is now.

Unfortunately, almost half a century later, we have to admit our failure and understand that the optimism is fading away as well.” She continues:

Finally, a separate point that makes it all more difficult today is the decline of some basic values on which we were able to join in the past. Take universalism, which is now said to be “abstract” as if it were not a condition to preserve diversity; or “development” as if not all people aspire to have decent and sustainable livelihoods. Or take democracy, in whatever form, as if right-wing policies or military dictatorships were able to take care of people’s needs.

In her contribution on July 28, 2023, Melanie Bush points at the opportunities of technology to implement both “connection to the planet and opposition to capitalism, patriarchy, and racism,” yet, how “the Internet was co-opted into being a business and the independent bulletin boards ceased to be used, swallowed by social networks that, copying their characteristics, updated them, and presented them as new forms of communication.”

On September 11, 2023, Anitra Nelson wrote in her contribution, “The dilemmas of the politico-ecological crisis of our current conjuncture center on everyday economic practices of the advanced market-economy-cum-societies within which we are immersed. So immersed that the logic of the very system from which we seek to escape re-emerges in many proposed solutions and generic imaginaries for future freedom.”

The United Nations are caught in all the problems discussed here. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals may serve as an example, as they comprise internally contradicting goals.³⁶ Goal 8, for instance, has the potential to undermine all other goals in that it “lumps together important need-related goals — participation in work and acceptable conditions in work — with economic growth, a questionable means to achieving these goals.”³⁷ “The UN’s sustainable development goals... are clearly not going to be met without drastic recalibration,” warns Philip Alston, outgoing UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, as “the SDG framework places immense and mistaken faith in growth and the private sector.”³⁸

As Steven Klees notes in his contribution on September 10, 2023, the Sustainable Development Goals “are part of a history of broken promises by the international community,” even more, “the SDGs have been a joke, an embarrassment — another in the string of promises that we choose not to fulfill.” Like me, Klees blames Goal 8, “The SDGs explicitly assume that what is needed is increased GDP growth and an increased role of business, markets, and private actors. That, of course, is exactly wrong. The UN is being taken over by private corporations under the guise of multistakeholder governance.”³⁹

Klees continues, “There have been endless global goals established by UN agencies since the 1960s, reaching an apex with the Millennium Development Goals in the year 2000. None of the MDGs were achieved by the end date of 2015 (some advocates argue we did cut extreme poverty in half, but that is not true).⁴⁰ Their successor, the SDGs, vastly expanded the MDGs, but we are nowhere on target to reach any of the 17 goals by 2030.” Steven Klees explains that “increasing poverty and inequality, pervasive racism and sexism, widespread conflicts, the danger of nuclear confrontation, and the specter of climate catastrophe all call into question the legitimacy of the social order. To compensate for this, actors in the world system of neoliberal globalization must introduce policies, for example, the MDGs, and the SDGs, aimed at ameliorating some problematic conditions and thus restoring legitimacy to our social order.” Klees adds that he does not intend to “question the good intentions of many of the proponents of these policies but does

question their effects.” He observes that “simply having these policies appears to be sufficient for compensatory legitimization; providing the needed resources and bringing about the needed structural changes in order to fulfill these promises, judging by past experience, seems not to be forthcoming.” He counters by saying, “This does not have to be so. We could achieve most of the SDGs in a very few years if we were willing to devote a relatively small portion of global resources to this cause, amounting to 1% to 4% of global GDP.⁴¹ Yet those resources are not forthcoming.”

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were drafted at the Earth Summit Rio+20 in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. At first, the drafters of the SDGs at the Rio+20 summit made an impressive start towards dignity — in the beginning, the SDGs included the concept of planetary boundaries. The concept of planetary boundaries should have been preserved in the SDGs because it is vitally important for world peace in equal dignity in solidarity. Yet, it was not preserved. In the last moment, the drafters were undermined, and Goal 8 was brought in like a “Trojan horse.”⁴² As the conference drew to a close, the finance ministers and the big ministries “started turning up,” we have learned from Kate Raworth, economic re-thinker and creator of Oxfam’s doughnut of social and planetary boundaries.⁴³

In the 42nd Schumacher lecture of 2022, Kate Raworth described the 2012 meeting where the finance minister of Brazil said, “What’s this: planetary boundaries? That is a limit to our development! Take it out!”⁴⁴ and the idea of growth was put in instead. Raworth explained as follows (transcription of her oral comments):

And it is not just growth for the low-income countries — I profoundly believe that low-income countries like Malawi, like Bangladesh, their economies will and must and should grow, and that kind of growth should be channelled into meeting the needs of all people, and they will need to grow in regenerative ways. So, I want to be very clear, I am not against growth where it is needed — we are growing until we are grown up — but it uses it to meet the vested interests of all countries. It is like a shield that all countries must grow.⁴⁵

Raworth laid out the backdrop for this situation with great humour.⁴⁶ She drew on Bernhard Lietaer, who co-authored *Money and sustainability: The Missing Link: A Report from the Club of Rome*.⁴⁷ Raworth explained:

Now, that is what we are locked into, the growth-centric paradigm of mainstream capitalism. We are locked into an economy where finance has been designed — and this takes me back to the work of Bernhard Lietaer — it has been designed with cumulative interest. So, it assumes this shape [she shows an exponential curve] and it will accumulate endlessly. It’s profound! Because everything on this living planet, all life deteriorates — potatoes rot, newspapers rot, human bodies die, metal rusts, we are all subject to the second law of thermodynamics — but money, money accumulates, it has compounding interest! Friedrich Schumacher knew that, and Aristotle knew that, and Marx knew that! So, the design of money means that it is endlessly seeking its return and it exploits and consumes the living world. It exploits and consumes the unpaid care of parents, it also has a racial bias, capitalism exploits black and brown bodies in its name, to drive that return. So, there is a vested interest, and it shows up in the major fossil fuel companies that still, well, today, are raking in record profits, because they have for so long lobbied, to first obfuscate and to delay action on climate change. Major companies are driven by shareholder return, it is the owners of capital, so they invest in

protecting the rentier economy. And then many governments are in service of this — I am shocked that even in my own country [England], both the leaders of the conservative party and the leader of the labour party recently have said the goal of our government will be growth, growth, growth! I mean, have we learned nothing left and right in the UK? This is all we can imagine? This is the biggest vision that is been put forward now. It is extraordinary.⁴⁸

Thomas Pogge, philosopher of global justice, has long warned that it is morally unconscientious to compare existing poverty “with historical benchmarks,” instead, one should compare it with “present possibilities” — “How much of this poverty is really unavoidable today?”⁴⁹ Pogge concludes that “by this standard, our generation is doing worse than any in human history.”⁵⁰

In her comment to this Forum on August 7, 2023, Helena Norberg Hodge states her conviction “that a lack of understanding of the global economic system is the reason we don’t have a strong united movement.” She argues that “the global, economic supra-structure has encouraged further and further fragmentation. It has been shaping the national discourse, creating a theatre of polarized left/right divisions, social vs. environmental, and spiritual vs. political issues. Even worse, in the social media, we are victims of machine-like psychological warfare — supported by algorithms — that encourages a politics of identity that is violent and hateful.” The task at hand, according to her, is to encourage *big picture activism* that distinguishes between “resistance” and “renewal.” Alongside “global collaboration to create centralized resistance to the global corporate system,” Norberg Hodge calls for “the renewal of decentralized economic structures that are adapted to biological and cultural diversity.”

I would add that for Norberg Hodge’s wish to become reality, the dynamics of deferred elimination need to be better understood by activists. Too many are misled by the initial “success” of their work. Guy Standing, in his contribution on September 15, 2023, indeed warns that “One cannot imagine any Global Transformation without dismantling the power of finance. But it is hard to see a currently envisaged MOM [transformative movement of movements] addressing the elephant in the room. How many NGOs go cap-in-hand to finance to form partnerships? But any realistic manifesto of a MOM would have to begin with a commitment to campaign to combat the power of finance.” In his comment on August 8, 2023, Tim Hollo refers to the Greens as a political force, stating that they “are surely among the most successful of all our existing experiments in movement unity for transition.” However, he observes, “The flip side of this success, of course, is that the party has found itself increasingly captured by the existing system, too often working in reformist ways which buttress it rather than transform or replace it.”

To see through the strategy of deferred elimination takes time and requires experience. Unsurprisingly, many newcomers to “MTI imagination” as Ruben Nelson calls it, lack this experience. As Helena Norberg Hodge has observed, “the most traditional peoples are more vulnerable to the propaganda that rural communities are inferior to the shiny, clean, images of urban consumer culture and on the other hand, some of the strongest resistance to corporate rule comes from people who have experienced the spiritual poverty of the consumer culture.” Since indigenous voices are needed more than ever in our times, it is tragic when they are coopted into deferred elimination.

In her contribution on July 25, 2023, Halina Brown introduces the SCORAI, the Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative, as “an international knowledge network of researchers and practitioners committed to building a flourishing and ecologically-sound society by changing the way we consume.” She reports that they convened an inaugural two-day

workshop at Clark University in 2009, where, to their delighted surprise, “most invitees (about 40) came, some from as far as Vancouver, and presented papers, even though we could offer no funding for travel, accommodation, or dinners.”

I would argue that funding for travel, accommodation, or dinners should never be the primary motivator of any work that has the ambition to be independent of the very system that offers funding.

I have learned from observing the dynamics of deferred elimination all over the world to direct my efforts toward global work. My aim is to help create a world where valuable local projects no longer get crushed as soon as they come too close to the red lines of the larger power structures.

The need to learn about the dynamics of humiliation

During the past decades, I have observed that many activists overestimate the power of arguments and underestimate the role of relationships, both in their immediate local social environment and globally. This includes a lack of insight into the destructive power of the dynamics of humiliation. In short, many fail to grasp that even the best argument will be rejected if the recipients of the message feel humiliated by it.

Manuel Manga, in his contribution on September 1, 2023, offers one remedy, namely, to highlight whatever is positive. He replies to the question of what is missing from the movement landscape by saying that “a clear and compelling vision of what an ecological, or sustainable or Flourishing civilization could be like” is missing, “including the benefits of living in such a civilization.” He recommends the last chapter of *The Web of Meaning*,⁵¹ which lists “a dozen benefits that could inspire someone to commit toward an ecological civilization.”

I would like to draw attention to the significance of relationship building, including the dynamics of humiliation, and why this is more relevant today than in the past. In my contribution to the GTI Forum on Big history narratives in March 2023, I laid out my “big history” narrative that attempts to capture the past in ways that open dignifying horizons for the future. Through my work, I offer a meta-narrative of four basic logics that I see working at the core of the human condition, all the way back to the time when our species *Homo sapiens* first walked on this planet: the *pie of resources*, the *security dilemma*, the *future time horizon*, and *social identity*.⁵² We can trace these logics through the three major eras of human existence: a) the *era of pristine pride*, b) the *era of honor*, and c) the *era of equal dignity in solidarity*.⁵³

The four logics model entails the warning that dynamics of humiliation become more significant in their destructiveness the more the other parameters veer to the benign side.⁵⁴ The fourth logic sounds the alarm that the human rights ideal of equal dignity for all (in contrast to unequal honor for all) introduces a new form of humiliation, namely, *dignity humiliation*, and that this is more hurtful than *honor humiliation*. As a result, fault lines of polarization and confrontation can emerge that are unprecedented and have the power to undermine, obliterate, and malign the most benign processes.⁵⁵

Yogi Hendlin, with his contribution on September 13, 2023, underpins my observation that dignity humiliation goes deeper than honor humiliation. He reminds us of how “people and groups with distaste for injustice” are at a disadvantage when unity is needed. To illustrate the difficulty, he points at the US Republican party, that “brought together Evangelical Christians and Fossil Fuel interests,” even though “there is no necessary link between the two.” He continues, “But the GOP successfully brought the two agendas together and made one group’s

agenda the agenda of the other, and vice-versa, creating an unlikely but sometimes ironclad coalition. A sort of ‘you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours’ agenda. Or: you overlook what you find objectionable about me, and I’ll overlook what I find objectionable about you.” Hendlin explains that “such is the logic of instrumentalism” and calls for the founding of “new religions of harmony with nature and each other.” I would add that “people and groups with distaste for injustice” feel dignity humiliation, which hinders them to collaborate with those they feel are violating their values, while what Hendlin calls “instrumentalists” have less qualms, even if they feel their honor humiliated. Traditionally, honor is something that can be dealt with by negotiations, while this is not possible when dignity humiliation is at stake. Dignity humiliation can only be addressed and healed through much deeper-going undertakings, such as authentic apology and painstaking rebuilding of integrity and mutual trust.

“Free speech vs hate speech: The journey towards coexistence requires dialogue,” was an article by Prince El Hassan bin Talal in the Middle East Eye on January 31, 2023. El Hassan bin Talal is a “Mandela” of this world, former director of the Club of Rome. In his article, he advises to embrace cultural complexity, precisely to aim for cohesion rather than exclusion.⁵⁶

I observe several dynamics of humiliation of the past blocking important future-oriented insights and action: Many “regressives” maintain cycles of humiliation between two “systems,” namely — to simplify, “capitalism versus socialism” — while the colonial past also hinders progressives. The masculinist mindset and Western individualism hinder all.

The “capitalism versus socialism” cycle of humiliation

Rivals such as Russia and the United States could have become friends after the Cold War. Yet, this did not happen. One side perceived itself as triumphant and the other side now strikes back, setting in motion a new hot spiral of mutual humiliation. “In the U.S., the collapse of the Soviet Union was seen as a military victory, which led to a spirit of triumphalism and a feeling of omnipotence as the ‘sole superpower’.”⁵⁷ “The ideological conflict between capitalism and socialism finally seemed to have been replaced by the triumphant sound of one hand clapping.”⁵⁸ The *end of history* seemed to have arrived, the final form of human government, the endpoint of humanity’s sociocultural evolution.⁵⁹ In such a context, suggestions for large-scale systemic change that may transcend this spiral become even more suspect than before, on all sides. Those who perceive themselves as the “victors,” for instance, suspect such suggestions of trying to humiliate the victors by denying and undermining their victory. As a result, instead of peace, nuclear extermination looms. (See Judith Lipton’s contribution on September 13, 2023.)

In his contribution on August 9, 2023, also Bill Baue points at the dangerous outcome of this predicament when he mentions “the relative vacuum of global governance mechanisms for navigating sustainability thresholds (and allocation of responsibility to subsystem scales — organizations, sectors, regions, etc... — for respecting sustainability thresholds).” This vacuum at the level of global governance threatens all local transitions towards dignity in diversity in the world. Short, cycles of humiliation of the past can close *Overton windows* that otherwise could open, they can hinder people to think globally and deter them from looking for systemic alternatives in the future.

The need for “soft” work, away from masculinist mindsets and Western individualism

What is overlooked by most regressives and some progressives alike, is that any focus on “combat” or “victory” is outdated and misplaced in an interconnected world where arguments can no longer be enforced by the sword. Even the best ideas will be rejected when humiliation characterizes the relationship between the senders of the message and the intended recipient. Even the most well-intended arguments, if they create feelings of humiliation, will fail. Before any “hard fact” can be understood, those who bring the message must do the “soft” work of nurturing dignifying relationships with those they want to convince.

What philosopher Ágnes Heller calls masculinist consciousness supports this trend in that priority is given to “combat” and “hard facts,” while attention to everything that smacks of “softness” is looked down upon.⁶⁰ Heller once wrote that “masculinist models of consciousness objectify world order, obfuscating how fluid and continuously malleable it in reality is.”⁶¹ As also Riane Eisler commented in her contribution on August 30, 2023, in such a context, attention to softness, such as self-care, is only accepted as long as it means self-optimization for the sake of improved competitiveness in a market economy and other-care is promoted only as long as it increases profitability.

Human rights defenders need to be aware of this need for “soft” work. The environmental movement can serve as an example. Any Green New Deal falls short if it only aims at protecting the climate. What is needed is a just transition that also protects the people.⁶² Workers will reject solutions for the protection of the environment when these solutions humiliate them. As environmental activists often hail from socio-cultural backgrounds that imbue them with a certain arrogant contempt for the working class, this can constitute a serious hindrance. To transcend it, the environmental movement is well advised to invite all sides into cooperating for a more dignified world. “For example, the call for the protection of the environment could be combined with a call for shared work, for less power to money, and for more time for the breadth and diversity of life.”⁶³

Even the use of notions such as decency can worsen the situation, as scholar Steven Roach has warned, namely, when decency is associated with the emotive justice of compassion and love, and then “prescribed” and “imposed” as a liberal standard ideal, while overlooking the mistreatment people experience in the global system.⁶⁴ Roach, in his chronicle of decency’s complex evolution and contradictions, therefore proposes a heterodox idea of decency as a way forward, a plurality of ways of practicing decency to protect dignity outside of the liberal world order.⁶⁵

I advocate *interconnected individuality* instead of *disconnected individualism* or *oppressive collectivism*.⁶⁶ I call on us to heed that humans are far from mere self-interest maximizing machines, on the contrary, we can find deep fulfilment and meaning in standing together, we are capable of solidarity in connectedness and compassion.⁶⁷

The colonial past, power that humiliates, and the question of freedom

As to the colonial past, I observe some progressives drawing from it the conclusion that “power is bad because it is humiliating.” As mentioned before, Francine Mestrum observes on August 8, 2023, that universalism is now said to be “abstract,” “as if it were not a condition to preserve diversity.” In her contribution on July 27, 2023, she remembers the hope-inducing social forums in Porto Alegre, in Mumbai, in Dakar and Nairobi, in Belém and Salvador de Bahia. By 2010,

she reports, sadly, “the momentum had passed. If more than one hundred thousand people come together to celebrate their diversity without being able to start thinking on common alternatives and strategies, the future is bleak. It became clear that those who started this brilliant experience in fact did not want a ‘movement of movements’, they just wanted ‘movements’. They did not want to fight capitalism, but only its worst neoliberal excesses. They did not want a democracy of opposing voices, but only the unanimity of the powerful.”

While reading Mestrum’s comment, I am reminded of political economist Frédéric Bastiat (1801 – 1850), who is often quoted with the following sentences, “When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men living together in society, they create for themselves in the course of time a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it.”⁶⁸ Bastiat was a leader of the French *laissez-faire* tradition in the first half of the nineteenth century. He thought that *laissez-faire* would serve the well-being, safety, independence, education, and dignity of all best,⁶⁹ that society would be best off with *no* laws rather than with powerful men forcing *bad* laws upon society.⁷⁰ Bastiat was not alone. Philosopher Michel Foucault, for example, held anti-power positions as well, at least initially, believing that no power is better than bad power.⁷¹

Both overlooked that *good* laws may be the solution, rather than *no* laws or *bad* laws.⁷² Philosopher Howard Richards faults precisely post-modernist critics like Foucault for leaving us with a cruel choice: either no meta-narrative or a toxic meta-narrative. Richards’ fear is that the discrediting of modernity has favored the rise of fundamentalisms that are fatally hostile to the Enlightenment.⁷³ Today, Bastiat would perhaps vote for laws that are appropriately designed rather than for no laws, just as Foucault eventually moved from an anti-power stance to embracing positive power. Richards has chronicled in his work how Foucault’s thinking evolved over time, “and then, having carried the logic of revolt against *le pouvoir* to the extreme point where not only all social norms but logic itself became enemies, because they are inevitably accomplices of power, in the latter part of the mid-1970s, Foucault reversed engines once again. Power is good, not bad. Power is productive; without power nothing is produced, nothing is.”⁷⁴

Underlying the problem with power is the notion of freedom. “Freedom for the wolves has often meant death to the sheep,” philosopher Isaiah Berlin brought it to the point already in 1969.⁷⁵ Indeed, the colonial powers of the past killed the “sheep” in far-flung colonies, and by now, oligarchic capitalism colonizes everything. For progressives, power has therefore discredited itself, and calling for “freedom from power” is an understandable spontaneous response. Unfortunately, the result is an unholy alliance: Progressives and regressives together aggravate the toxic *disconnected individualism* that has emerged in the West. People who are steeped in such Western individualism tend to overlook that the belief in “freedom from any power” creates a power vacuum that will soon be filled by “wolves.” Understandably, this oversight is actively kept alive by the wolves in “capitalism,” and it is unfortunate that it is maintained by proponents and opponents of “capitalism” alike.

“New green liberalism” is therefore not enough. In his contribution on July 13, 2023, Michael Löwy has observed that “even among climate activists, including the inspiring new generation of school strikers, Extinction Rebellion rebels, and COP protestors who have hit the streets of the world in such magnificent numbers, the dominant discourse is what might be called ‘new green liberalism.’ This aspires either to change within and on the basis of capitalism or to change the system by means of bringing about a collective change of heart.”

Löwy concludes that from an Ecosocialist perspective ‘new green liberalism’ is insufficient. He believes “that to prevent utter disaster and cope with the disasters that are already inevitable, a structural challenge to capitalism is essential.”

How can a structural challenge to capitalism manifest itself? Without any power, so as to avoid its potential for oppression? I resonate with those who believe that traditional approaches to ecosystem protection are in need to be re-invigorated. Many indigenous traditions — taboo rules, for instance, that could help prevent ecocide and sociocide — represent exercises in “good” power that avoid humiliating oppression. Examples are numerous, from *ho’oponopono*, to *musyawarah*, *silaturahmi*, *asal ngumpul*, *palaver*, *shir*, *jirga*, *minga*, *dugnad*, to *mini-publics*,⁷⁶ *deliberative democracy*,⁷⁷ or *sociocracy*.⁷⁸

A new project of radical transformation: *Dignism* as unifying compass

As mentioned above, in times of crisis, communities tend to become ever more polarized, as two possible pathways into the future grow ever more irreconcilable — “more of the same” versus “less of the same”.⁷⁹ A painful gap opens between “let us optimize business as usual” and “let us do a complete turnaround, exit from business as usual, and embark on something entirely new.” Incumbents antagonize innovators and vice versa, and if this fault line is not bridged, it makes the crisis worse. Already philosopher Thomas Kuhn taught us that paradigm shifting is difficult.⁸⁰ Both groups, incumbents and innovators, get ever more aggravated, both think that the other side is responsible for the deepening of the crisis. Both sides mobilize passionate emotions among their followers, both sides feel ever more humiliated by the other side’s reluctance to “see the truth.”⁸¹ Both sides ratchet up their willingness to make sacrifices for their respective position, and if no overall decision is taken, energies that should go into collaborative construction will drive all-out de-struction.

The Great Transition Initiative faces this dilemma as well and must struggle to position itself. As Stephen Purdey wrote in his contribution on August 31, 2023:

People rising against a status quo they deem unacceptable, people rising against power-brokers and the narratives which normalize and legitimize their hegemony, this is the battle being undertaken in earnest, but only by a minority, and with only modest success. Hope for change is countermanded by the reality that the business-as-usual paradigm still dominates the international agenda. Policy makers and captains of industry around the world are seized by the belief that no radical change is required, that adjustments at the margins within the dominant paradigm will suffice, that our current systems of governance are adequate to the task of creating a viable future.

Many GTI contributors opt for a complete turn-around. In his contribution on July 19, 2023, Yavor Tarinski shows that he belongs to that group when he warns against seeking all solutions on the scale of the Nation-State. He refers to anti-colonial thinker C.L.R. James, who once said that “a radical, essentially revolutionary, social change cannot be achieved on the national level.” More specifically, according to James, “the national quality of the state must be destroyed.” Tarinski lauds James’ proposition, since it is commensurate with the fact that “for-profit capitalist globalization and national-centered statecraft both tend to divide people” and that “the natural world does not recognize borders.”

In my words, what must emerge from Disunited Nations are Globally United People. Indeed, the title of the Dignity Conference that I helped organize in 2022 was titled “From United Nations to United People: From the Brink of Disaster to a Future of Dignity.” It was convened at

the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in Amman, Jordan, and online, in cooperation with the World Dignity University Initiative, September 5 – 7, 2022, under the patronage of Prince El Hassan bin Talal, former president of the Club of Rome and uncle of the King of Jordan.⁸²

Stephen Purdey, as well, in his comment on August 31, 2023, made clear that he belongs to those who speak up for a complete turn-around when he argues that “the challenge we face is not just about the nuts and bolts of sustainability — it’s about the fact that what we’re doing to the planet, and to ourselves, is wrong, an affront to morality.” Purdey refers to William Ophuls *Plato’s Revenge*, “The destruction of nature,” he says, “is the consequence not of policy errors that can be remedied by smarter management, better technology, and stricter regulation, but rather of a catastrophic moral failure that demands a radical shift in consciousness.”⁸³ Purdey refers also to Thomas Homer-Dixon, who gives voice to a similar sentiment in his book *Commanding Hope*, noting that wrecking Earth would be “an unparalleled moral calamity, an unmitigated evil.” What we are doing is “just wrong, plain and simple.”⁸⁴ Purdey states that “some quandaries extend beyond the inconvenient, unfair, or tragic to the existentially lethal — and that’s what takes today’s moral discourse to a new level. The expropriation of the lives and living spaces of other species for the benefit of the human animal and the expropriation of our own future for the embellishment of the present are both emphatically unconscionable. The wanton razing of life on Earth combined with (even the possibility of) the destruction of our own species and the terminal interruption of the flow of human history should now be the main ingredients of contemporary moral discourse.”

In his contribution on July 25, 2023, Alex Pazaitis recommends *cosmolocalism*, “an alternative political economy centered around the commons where communities collectively manage resources and carve sustainable paths,” as economist Elinor Ostrom has described.⁸⁵ He suggests that cosmolocal production may be helped by the proliferation of digital communication networks, “to unite local communities through networks of shared resources and products, with the noble aim of lessening our material and energy footprints, all while treading gently upon other precious ecosystems.”⁸⁶ Indra Adnan confirms on September 13, 2023, “To be attractive, movements can only arise from the whole of the communities they hope to serve — in the language and culture that ensures ownership by the people implied. At the same time, these containers of human potential need global connectivity to each other to be able to flourish: cosmolocal,⁸⁷ in mind, body and spirit.”

Economist Elinor Ostrom has shown that commons can be protected not just by small groups but also in larger groups — for this work, she received the Nobel Prize for Economics 2009.⁸⁸ Jose Ramos reminds us of her work in his contribution on September 16, 2023:

Ostrom’s many children (the many people she has inspired) have pluralized the notions of commons into a wide variety of domains, whether they are ecological, urban, digital, affective/emotional, atmospheric, etc. These different commons, furthermore, have been studied with great rigor, and we have learned that the internal logics within the variety of commons are indeed different. They can’t be easily conflated — there is no one-size-fits-all. We can only say very generally that something which we mutually depend on for our survival and well-being is a commons, and through that implication of that commons we are called forth to action, into the need to collaboratively govern this commons together (be it digital, urban, educational, atmospheric, etc.). But beyond this their logics are diverse.

Jose Ramos continues by asking: “What are the commons that all humans are implicated into? Where none of us can opt out?” What are “the things that without we cannot mutually survive, let alone be well”? What are our “Planetary Commons”? This is his response: “The atmospheric commons is one. A de-nuclearized world, a global public sphere free from mis/disinformation, a world with real equity and free of oligarchs, these may also be considered commons. These general commons can become the basis for allowing many GCM [global citizens movement] people and orgs to play a role in collaborative governance (support, decision making, etc.). We could also create prototype governance systems for these various planetary commons.”

In his contribution on September 15, 2023, Heikki Patomäki speaks up for a “world political party”:

While a world political agency can assume different forms, my basic hypothesis is that a world political party is likely to constitute a key moment in the process of constructing such an agency. Also the construction of democratic world political agency takes time and will be an experimental process. The *raison d’être* of the party must lie in furthering transformations and various new institutional forms in which the planetary public realm can be organized. For this purpose, the sufficiently shared opinion will be forged into a program of change.

John Bunzl has related ideas. In his contribution on July 5, 2023, he presented his International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (Simpol) project as operating in two stages:

- A. Politicians and governments are invited to support Simpol only in principle by signing a Pledge to implement its policies simultaneously, subject to all or sufficient nations participating, and subject to the policies eventually being agreed.
- B. Once sufficient nations have signed, an international negotiation to define and agree detailed policies can proceed, followed by implementation.

On August 8, 2023, Sebastian Ordoñez Muñoz enumerated what is needed to succeed with such transitions, namely, courage and connection:

- Courage: Reimagining the economy on a planetary Scale: The Global Green New Deal is a metaphor for ambition, for meeting the ecological crisis in its magnitude, and having the courage to reimagine the economy on a planetary scale. The GGND is an orientation of boldness, gearing social and economic policy towards the global environmental challenge. Rejecting piecemeal approaches to systemic crises, it is a visionary proclamation not just of what we don’t want but of what we are for. It is an attempt to envision what the world could look like.
- Connection - A Life of Dignity for Everyone: The goal of a Global Green New Deal is ensuring a dignified and thriving life for all. Cutting across all GGND pillars and proposals is a desire to improve health and well-being for all people. What is wrong about the economy is not the choices of individuals: it is a system, and one that must be transformed.

On September 12, 2023, Wendy Harcourt calls on us to “enter the concept of care as a way to reset the dominant imaginary.” I deeply resonate with her call. In this context, I appreciate the work of anthropologist Alan Page Fiske, who names the caring way of organizing communal life *communal sharing*. Nowadays, unfortunately, every aspect of life is moving into the opposite

direction, into the least comprehensive way of being, namely, what Fiske calls *market pricing*, thus reducing the fullness of the *quality* of life on this planet into mere *quantity* calculations. The healthy and peaceful Indigenous cycle of *cooperative companionship* that characterizes many indigenous cultural traditions, is turned into *competitive detachment*, as indigenous psychologist Darcia Narváez would say.⁸⁹

Through his research, Alan Page Fiske found that people, most of the time and in all cultures, use just four elementary and universal forms or models for organizing most aspects of sociality. Interaction can be structured according to what people have *in common*, Fiske calls this form of sociality *communal sharing*, second, according to *ordered differences* or what Fiske calls *authority ranking*, third, according to *additive imbalances* or Fiske's *equality matching*, and, finally, according to *ratios* or Fiske's *market pricing*.⁹⁰ These four social models follow the four scales of measurement — *nominal*, *ordinal*, *interval*, and *ratio* — the first of which is the most comprehensive and qualitative, while the last is the least comprehensive and most quantitative.⁹¹ There is maybe also a fifth basic type of scale, a discrete interval scale that is intermediate between interval and ratio scales, which, Fiske suggests, could inspire also future research on forms of sociality as it might represent a fifth fundamental model.⁹²

Manuel Manga, in his contribution on September 1, 2023, asks for “a clear and compelling vision,” and for “a global network of evolutionary leaders who are skilled in powerful competencies, like generative language, systems thinking, ontological design. Leaders that are effective and visionary. Leaders that can mobilize people and promote effective coordination of action, and are results oriented. Evolutionary leaders that can also communicate our evolutionary choice, as Jonas Salk, described it, to engage in a conscious evolution from Epoch A to Epoch B.”

In search for a “clear and compelling vision” of radical transformation I offer my four logics, as referred to above. Since 2001, I have been nurturing a global network of evolutionary leaders, dedicating my life to humanizing globalization through equal dignity for all in freedom and solidarity so that dignified life can flourish on this planet in the future. (others speak of “Counter-hegemonic Globalization,” see, for instance, Peter Evans’ contribution on September 16, 2023). As Ruben Nelson wrote, “A new path is opening before us. One we have not seen before.” On this path, I do my best to avoid humiliation. Among others, I try to stay clear of those cycles of humiliation that are being carried by hot button words such as “socialism,” “communism,” and “capitalism.” I have coined the term *dignism* (*dignity-ism*) to describe a decent global village:

Dignism describes a world where every new-born finds space and is nurtured to unfold their highest and best, embedded in a social context of loving appreciation and connection, where the carrying capacity of the planet guides the ways in which everyone's basic needs are met. It is a world where unity in diversity reigns, where we unite in respecting human dignity and celebrating diversity, where we prevent unity from devolving into oppressive uniformity, and keep diversity from sliding into hostile division. Dignism means ending past cycles of humiliation and preventing new ones from emerging. Dignism means loving care for the common good of all of humanity as co-inhabitants of one single finite habitat. Dignism weaves together all dignifying aspects of all the world's cultural traditions into one decent global village.⁹³

How to proceed

In his contribution to this GTI Forum on August 15, 2023, Michael Karlberg calls for a pro-active construction “of the world we want, rather than simply protest or disrupt the world we no longer want.” Indeed, in his 2016 book *Journey to Earthland*, Paul Raskin imagined a scenario in which after phases of crisis and emergency an “Earthland Parliamentary Assembly” adopts a world constitution in 2048 that brings a “Commonwealth of Earthland” into being.⁹⁴ This is what Andreas Bummel reminds us of in his contribution on August 7, 2023.

How do we achieve a Commonwealth of Earthland? Bill Blaue, in his comment of August 9, 2023, points at Dana Meadows’ 1999 concept of “leverage points” (or places to intervene in systems).⁹⁵ In my work, I often highlight to the work of philosopher Howard Richards, who expresses similar thoughts in his search for “levers” and “fulcrums” that have the power “to move theory” — Richards speaks of “growth points” when he observes practices that provide “accounts of facts on the ground,” which, even though they may not precisely “falsify theoretical claims as stated in their own terms,” at least “cast them in a different light.”⁹⁶ Sociologist Erik Olin Wright puts his hopes on “changes in the interstices,” places in the institutional structures that are largely overlooked and have therefore better chances to persist than those aimed at higher-level structure.⁹⁷ Paulo Freire has used the phrase of *temas bisagra* or “hinge themes” that can serve as wedges or hinges, while systems theorist Buckminster Fuller thought of “trimtabs,” the miniature rudders in front of ocean liners that help the main rudder to shift direction almost effortlessly by changing the pressure in front of it.⁹⁸ Philosopher Roy Bhaskar speaks of the “transcendental argument,”⁹⁹ while Steven Cohen, executive director of Columbia University’s Earth Institute, simply calls it “reasons for hope.”¹⁰⁰ Philosopher Iris Young advocates forward-looking responsibility and a social connection model of responsibility,¹⁰¹ as does human rights scholar Kathryn Sikkink in her book on the politics of responsibility.¹⁰² I sometimes use the term “Trojan Horse” for the act of “sneaking in” ideas and practices that may help adapt human-made reality to our ideals, instead of sacrificing ideals for badly designed reality.¹⁰³

In his contribution on August 24, 2023, Jeremy Lent wrote that “in human systems, the coherence arises in the form of an organizing idea or ideas.” For example, “as the Scientific Revolution emerged in early modern Europe, there were many different discoveries and theoretical breakthroughs, each of which reinforced each other’s impact through building on the cohering metaphor of “nature as a machine” and following Francis Bacon’s clarion call to ‘conquer nature’.”

Lent recommends learning from the Mont Pelerin Society’s influence on “the most successful transformational movement in modern history: neoliberalism.” The Mont Pelerin Society formed in 1947, laying “the conditions for powerful reciprocal causality by encouraging diverse perspectives expressed through a shared manifold of meaning: the primacy of individual liberty.” The Mont Pelerin Society declared in its Statement of Aims:

The group does not aspire to conduct propaganda. It seeks to establish no meticulous and hampering orthodoxy. It aligns itself with no particular party. Its object is solely, by facilitating the exchange of views among minds inspired by certain ideals and broad conceptions held in common, to contribute to the preservation and improvement of the free society.

Lent recalls that “at that time, the ideas presented by neoliberal thinkers were utterly rejected by mainstream culture. Yet, as a result of a carefully orchestrated strategy, placing neoliberal opinion-shapers in the centers of powerful networks where they could seed conversations around their ideas, they succeeded over a few decades in shifting what became known as the Overton window: the set of ideas considered acceptable to mainstream political discourse.”

Manuel Manga, in his contribution on September 1, 2023, chimes in by calling for “a clear strategy that brings together people and movements, inspired by a new version of The Mont Pelerin Society or the Meadows Memorandum. A strategy that communicates the vision, the opportunities, and the goals, and brings people together from different sectors and levels of participation. A strategy that recognizes the need for collaboration, knowledge sharing, hierarchies, meta narratives, top down and bottom up, and other flexible alternatives. A strategy that recognizes the need for leaders at all levels. A strategy that can put AI supporting a sustainable future.”

I deeply resonate with Lent’s and Manga’s advice to learn from the strategies of the Mont Pelerin society, since, as Lent expresses it, “our only hope for a viable future is to shift the Overton window ourselves — not just back to where it was before neoliberalism, but into completely different terrain.” Lent continues by expressing the belief that “the most important driver of that shift would be an alternative shared manifold of meaning — the idea of an Ecological Civilization built on life-affirming principles, setting the conditions for all people to flourish on a thriving living Earth, and leading to profoundly beneficial changes in virtually every aspect of society.”

I resonate with all propositions which argue that another governance structure on the global level needs to be established. For instance, Frank Adloff, in his contribution on August, 30, 2023, reminds us that it is urgent to create a body “that can speak on behalf of and from the perspective of all humanity. Only a global parliament of citizens could embody such a body. And only NGOs or multinational networks present in several countries or continents and independent of both states and multinational corporations are in a position to bring it into being.”

Gwendolyn Hallsmith agrees, deeming this to be a very good idea, yet, at the same time she fears that implementing it will be too slow. She writes on August 31, 2023, “but the time it will take to achieve it will make the actions of such a body too little, too late for real change on climate. We need that now, and the organizing energy for action needs to focus on that and ending systemic racism and inequality like a global laser, not on all the machinations that would be required to do it.” While international institutions could be feasible targets for action, including the United Nations, Hallsmith’s personal favorite is “United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), an international conference of all the national leagues of cities, which in turn are national conferences of state level leagues of cities.”

Through my work as a nurturer of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies both as an academic field and a global community, I have indeed learned to follow Hallsmith in referring to cities rather than countries, or, rather, to local communities, be it rural or urban.

I see myself as a gardener, a nurturer of the *cogitospheres* (a term coined by El Hassan bin Talal for the realm of thinking and reflection¹⁰⁴) of our world, so that our *sociospheres* and *ecospheres* may flourish.¹⁰⁵ While walking our planet, I try to harvest the best from all cultures,¹⁰⁶ I enact ‘the role of the bumblebee’ that flies from flower to flower to nurture unity in diversity by connecting and cross-pollinating the diversity of cultural flourishings around the world. I thus follow the format of *dignilogues* that we have developed for our dignity conferences as an adaptation of what is known as “open space” format.¹⁰⁷ I have therefore

appreciated the “Bee and Flower Logic” that Jose Ramos recommended in his contribution on September 16, 2023:

Identify the types of strategic congruences that do not require people or organizations to be or think the same: “bee and flower logic”. The bee does not consciously know it is “exchanging a service for a product” (my pollen distribution for your pollen). The flower does not know it is exchanging a product for a service (my pollen for your transport). However, they both sustain each other despite never entering into an agreement. Cosmolocalism,¹⁰⁸ for example, relies on this logic, as people don’t need to agree on an analysis or vision to share in the fruits of the virtuous cycle. Let’s look for all the places this bee and flower logic can be enacted.”

Even more, through our global work with dignity, we have learned to focus on individuals rather than organizations, on individuals who can form “a global network of evolutionary leaders” as Manual Manga phrased it in his contribution, individuals who are able to form the seeds of a future global dignity community by giving life to Margaret Mead’s saying, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

In 2011, our Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies network launched the World Dignity University initiative. Incidentally, Guy Standing speaks to our motives in his contribution on September 15, 2023, “We cannot hope to attain a Global Transformation without a strategy for rescuing the education as a commons. We can have as many wonderful civil society organizations or movements as we would like. But if people are dis-educated as well as insecure and scrambling around for ‘free’ time, there will be no MOM with sufficient drive and direction.”

In conclusion, I’d like to echo Gwendolyn Hallsmith’s endorsement of Riane Eisler’s call for unity in partnership. Hallsmith wrote, “We need to recognize that GTI/GCM probably isn’t going to ‘lead’ anything in the typically male way of seeing how things move forward. But all of us can join with other organizations, other academies, other local communities and governments to inspire and accelerate the hard work they’re doing.”

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- ⁵ Potter, 1988.
- ⁶ www.thealternative.org.uk/dailyalternative/2017/3/2/the-alternative-uks-first-friendly-event-kings-cross-impact-hub-pictures?rq=Impact%20hub%20%20%20%20.
- ⁷ www.ft.com/content/498398e7-11b1-494b-9cd3-6d669dc3de33.
- ⁸ www.climatechangenews.com/2020/02/24/world-faces-decisive-decade-fix-global-warming-former-un-climate-chief-says/.
- ⁹ www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/jun/28/uk-has-made-no-progress-on-climate-plan-say-governments-own-advisers.
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- ¹¹ www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2020/12/02/blog-how-artificial-intelligence-could-widen-the-gap-between-rich-and-poor-nations.
- ¹² <https://online.ucpress.edu/cs/article/1/1/12721/112920/THE-SECOND-CONVIVIALIST-MANIFESTO-Towards-a-Post>.
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- ²⁰ Patomäki, 2020.
- ²¹ "Monopoly Capitalism — What Is It and How Do We Fight It?" by N. Glynn and N. Dearden in *Global Justice Now*, March 2023, www.globaljustice.org.uk/resource/monopoly-capitalism-what-is-it-and-how-do-we-fight-it/.
- ²² *A Theory of Change*, by Stewart Wallis, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Zeit16ZAToMNF-KkGj-jmKZcWKgmMl-7/edit?pli=1>.

²³ Mirowski and Plehwe, 2009, Jones, 2012.

²⁴ “Freedom for the Wolves,” Berlin, 1969, p. xlv. See also Berlin, 1958a, b. The 2017 documentary film *Freedom for the Wolf* by Rupert Russell takes its title from Isaiah Berlin. It is about the idea of freedom and how it can be hollowed out by the “wolves.” At the same time, people all over the globe — from Tunisian rappers to Indian comedians, from America’s #BlackLivesMatter activists to Hong Kong’s students — struggle to regain freedom for the “sheep.” See www.freedomforthewolf.com.

French philosopher Denis Diderot (1713–1784) had a lifelong preoccupation with questions of life, liberty, and purpose, and his definition of liberty as “freedom to do whatever the law does not forbid” has deeply influenced the American view on freedom.

Consider also historian David Hackett Fischer, 1989, who differentiated four “British folkways in America” and their radically different notions of liberty, namely, the Puritan, Cavalier, Quaker, and Scots-Irish notions. The values of the Virginia Cavaliers “caused the unusual brutality of the American system of Black enslavement,” as for them, “Freedom was defined by what it wasn’t. It wasn’t slavery. It was the freedom to enslave. It was a freedom, granted to the plantation masters, to indulge themselves, gamble and debauch.” See “Joe Klein Explains How the History of Four Centuries ago still Shapes American Culture and Politics,” by Joe Klein, *New York Times*, October 4, 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/10/04/books/review/joe-klein-explains-how-the-history-of-four-centuries-ago-still-shapes-american-culture-and-politics.html. I thank Linda Hartling for making me aware of this article.

See also a critical discussion in *Whose Freedom?* by cognitive linguist and philosopher George Lakoff, 2006, who surveys the political landscape in the U.S.A. and offers a map of the “Republican battle plan” that has “captured the hearts and minds of Americans,” showing how progressives may reinvigorate this “most beloved of American political ideas.” See the description of Lakoff’s book:

Since September 11, 2001, the Bush administration has relentlessly invoked the word “freedom.” Al-Qaeda attacked us because “they hate our freedom.” The U.S. can strike pre-emptively because “freedom is on the march.” Social security should be privatized in order to protect individual freedoms. The 2005 presidential inaugural speech was a kind of crescendo: the words “freedom,” “free,” and “liberty,” were used forty-nine times in President Bush’s twenty-minute speech.

See also Orr, et al., 2020.

Minarchism — min(imal) + -archy (government) + -ism (system) = “system of minimal government” and maximum freedom — became a popularized concept in the 1960s through the American philosopher Robert Nozick, 1974, and had nineteenth-century Britain as main proponent. See also note 2206 in chapter 7 in Lindner, 2023a, about the difference between the Anglo-Saxon realm and continental Europe. Professor of mathematics Bruce Boghosian and his colleagues used a mathematical model to mimic a simplified version of the free market and found that wealth becomes increasingly more concentrated, and inequality grows until almost all assets are held by an extremely small percentage of people. Therefore, free markets cannot be stable without redistribution mechanisms, indicating that reality on the ground manifests the opposite of what market fundamentalism teaches. See, for instance, Devitt-Lee, et al., 2018. See an accessible summary in “The Mathematics of Inequality,” by Taylor McNeil, *Tufts Now*, October 12, 2017, <http://now.tufts.edu/articles/mathematics-inequality>:

While economists use math for their models, they seek to show that an economy governed by supply and demand will result in a steady state or equilibrium, while Boghosian’s efforts ‘don’t try to engineer a supply-demand equilibrium, and we don’t find one’, he said... Over time, they added three parameters to the model, he said. ‘One is for how redistributive the society is, another is for how biased the transactions are in favour of wealthier agents, what we call the wealth-attained advantage, and the third one measures how far “underwater” the poorest agents are’, meaning the extent to which their debts exceed the value of their assets, like real estate. It’s easy to imagine how wealth-attained advantage works in real life. ‘The people with that advantage receive better returns on their

investments, lower interest rates on loans, and better financial advice’, said Boghosian. ‘Conversely, as Barbara Ehrenreich famously observed, it is expensive to be poor. If you are working two jobs, you don’t have time to shop for the best bargains. If you can’t afford the security deposit demanded by most landlords, you may end up staying in a motel at inflated prices’.

See also “It Is Expensive to Be Poor,” by Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Atlantic*, January 13, 2014, www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/01/it-is-expensive-to-be-poor/282979/.

²⁵ www.whp-journals.co.uk/JPS/article/view/658/413.

²⁶ www.whp-journals.co.uk/JPS/article/view/819.

²⁷ Bunzl and Duffell, 2017.

²⁸ Lindner, 2012.

²⁹ Li, et al., 2018.

³⁰ Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970/1990, p. 159.

³¹ The book *The Road to Hell* by Michael Maren, 1997, was on the reading list of nearly all humanitarian helpers I met during my doctoral research in Africa in 1998 and 1999.

³² Raskin, 2014, p. 4.

³³ www.academia.edu/42832588/Freedom_to_Consume_the_World.

³⁴ I thank Michael Boyer for offering the following link in this context: “Defunding Dissent: Restrictions on Aid to NGOs,” by Jeremy M. Weinstein, and Darin Christensen, *Journal of Democracy*, April 2013, volume 24, issue 2, pp. 77–91, www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/defunding-dissent-restrictions-on-aid-to-ngos/.

³⁵ Bull, 2015, p. 25. See also the work of sociologist Jacques Ellul, 1985, on the “humiliation of the word,” see more in note 1919 in chapter 7 of Lindner, 2023a. “The American-inspired pattern of development does not create real wealth, it creates the illusion of wealth,” says Charles Marohn, see note 3056 in chapter 10 of Lindner, 2023a. Furthermore, see note 3584 in chapter 11 about supposedly ‘necessary’ humiliation in the name of progress and development.

³⁶ For the Sustainable Development Goals, see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>. If the exponential growth curve of Goal 8 were to be taken seriously, it would undermine the success of the other goals. Goal 8 of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals: “Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all,” www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/economic-growth/. See an interdisciplinary introduction to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that looks at all SDGs and their progress and challenges and is offered by Johan Schot, a historian working in the field of science and technology policy. See www.edx.org/course/the-un-sustainable-development-goals-an-interdisci?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI1ILQ_qOR7QIViNPtCh1Vzg-4EAAAYASAAEgL4TfD_BwE. Consider also Inger Andersen, UNEP Executive Director, who warns, “There’s this idea out there that we have to log, mine, and drill our way to prosperity. But that’s not true. By embracing circularity and re-using materials we can still drive economic growth while protecting the planet for future generations,” see *New Trade Rules Vital to Protecting the Planet*, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), November 20, 2020, www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/new-trade-rules-vital-protecting-planet. I resonate with the conclusion of the member of the Club of Rome Stefan Brunnhuber that the monetary system is the missing link in the debate of sustainability. See Brunnhuber, 2021, and Lietaer, et al., 2012a. This is why I wrote the book *A dignity economy*, Lindner, 2012. Green New Deal proposals suffer from the same problem, as they intend to implement public policies built on the same economic principles that led to ecocide and sociocide in the first place. For European efforts, see, for instance, “Statement by President von der Leyen on delivering the European Green Deal,” European Commission, Brussels, July 14, 2021,

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_21_3701.

See also “Beware UN Food Systems Summit Trojan Horse,” by Jomo Kwame Sundaram, *Inter Press Service*, www.ipsnews.net/2021/07/beware-un-food-systems-summit-trojan-horse/.

For an easy-to-read text on financial instability, see, among others, “The Stock Market Is one Black Swan Away from the Greatest Reset in History: How a Hidden Stock Market Crash Exposed the Illusion of Stability,” by Concoda, *Medium*, 15th May 2021, <https://medium.com/concoda/the-financial-system-is-a-lot-more-fragile-than-were-led-to-believe-7303fb6bcac8>.

³⁷ Scholar of human needs Ian Gough, 2017, p. 56. In his book *Heat, Greed and Human Need*, Gough refers to an eudaimonic psychology definition of three universal needs, *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness*, see page 44. Katherine Trebeck, a research and policy adviser with Oxfam, summarizes Gough’s definition of basic needs on July 17, 2019, on www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/book-review-heat-greed-and-human-need/:

...basic needs encompass physical health, autonomy of agency (mental health, cognitive understanding, opportunities to participate), and critical autonomy. They are satisfied by access to things such as adequate food and water, protective housing, safe work environment, healthcare, and significant primary relationships, and in turn optimized by freedoms from (civic and political rights), freedoms to (rights of access to need satisfiers), and political participation.

I resonate with Trebeck’s appreciation of Gough’s work, as it helps those who are “skeptical about the merit of wellbeing as individual self-reported happiness in the hedonic sense.” While it is true that preferences and wants depend on context, which means that it is not advisable to make simplistic assumptions about how people feel, “human needs are objective, plural, non-substitutable and satiable,” Gough, 2017, p. 3.

³⁸ “Covid-19 Has Revealed a Pre-Existing Pandemic of Poverty that Benefits the Rich”, by Philip Alston, outgoing UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, *The Guardian*, July 11, 2020, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jul/11/covid-19-has-revealed-a-pre-existing-pandemic-of-poverty-that-benefits-the-rich. See also Hickel, 2018, and *The Parlous State of Poverty Eradication: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights*, advance unedited version, Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, NYU School of Law, July 2, 2020, <https://chrgj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Alston-Poverty-Report-FINAL.pdf>.

³⁹ See Harris Gleckman, “A Corporate Takeover of the UN Must Be Stopped,” *Al Jazeera*, August 3, 2023, www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/8/3/a-corporate-takeover-of-the-un-must-be-stopped.

⁴⁰ Hickel, 2016.

⁴¹ Sachs, et al., 2013.

⁴² See note 36 above.

⁴³ Raworth, 2017.

⁴⁴ *Planetary Economics: New Tools for Local Transformation* with Kate Raworth, Schumacher Center for New Economics, November 12, 2022, <https://youtu.be/aPWOHR6dM-4>.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ See, for instance, Lietaer, et al., 2012b.

⁴⁸ *Planetary Economics: New Tools for Local Transformation* with Kate Raworth, Schumacher Center for New Economics, November 12, 2022, <https://youtu.be/aPWOHR6dM-4>.

⁴⁹ “The End of Poverty?” by Thomas Pogge, *The Mark News*, 7th February 2016, www.themarknews.com/2016/02/07/the-end-of-poverty/. See also Pogge, 2008. It has been a privilege for me to learn from Thomas Pogge, starting more than twenty years ago, when he was part of the Ethics

Program of the Norwegian Research Council, led by Dagfinn Føllesdal. When I studied psychology at Hamburg University in the 1970s, Pogge studied sociology there at the same time, however, we did not meet then. See also the work of Norwegian economist Kalle Moene, 2018.

⁵⁰ “The End of Poverty?” by Thomas Pogge, *The Mark News*, 7th February 2016.

⁵¹ Lent, 2021.

⁵² Adapted from Lindner, 2000, p. 437. This model has been developed further since 2000, see, among others, Lindner, 2023a.

⁵³ See also Ury, 1999.

⁵⁴ Lindner, 2006, pp. 45–48, and Lindner, 2000, p. 437.

⁵⁵ Lindner, 2006, p. 45. See also Tajfel and Turner, 1979.

⁵⁶ See www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/free-speech-hate-speech-journey-towards-coexistence-needs-dialogue.

⁵⁷ “Why Neither Reagan nor the United States Won the Cold War: Jack Matlock discusses superpower illusions,” by Alex Kingsbury, *U.S. News*, January 22, 2010, www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2010/01/22/why-neither-reagan-nor-the-united-states-won-the-cold-war-2#close-modal.

⁵⁸ Eriksen, 2016, p. 13.

⁵⁹ Lane, 2005.

⁶⁰ Lindner, 2023a.

⁶¹ Philosopher Ágnes Heller, 1984..

⁶² See, among others, “Making the Green New Deal Work for Workers: A true just transition means robust training, guaranteed jobs and pensions for fossil fuel industry workers,” by Jeremy Brecher, *In These Times*, April 22, 2019, <http://inthesetimes.com/features/green-new-deal-worker-transition-jobs-plan.html>.

⁶³ Lindner, 2023a.

⁶⁴ See Massumi, 2015, referred to in Roach, 2019.

⁶⁵ See Roach, 2019.

⁶⁶ I advocate *interconnected individuality*. See also note 358 in chapter 2 of Lindner, 2023a, and note 2224. Consider social psychologists Markus and Kitayama, 2010, who suggest that collectivism and individualism do not need to exclude each other but can be furthered independently and potentially to the same degree. Philosopher Kwame Gyekye once said that ‘communality does not obliterate individuality’, Gyekye, 1987, p. 159. For the complexity of notions such as collectivism, see also “Why Your Understanding of Collectivism Is Probably Wrong,” by Thomas Talhelm, *Association for Psychological Science (APS) Observer*, October 29, 2019, www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/why-your-understanding-of-collectivism-is-probably-wrong. It is possible that Daudi Azibo, 2014, a theorist in African-centered psychology, may be too optimistic about collectivism when he includes individualism — in contrast to individuality — in the list of 55 culture-focused personality-based mental disorders particular to African descended people in the Azibo Nosology, Azibo, 2014, p. 71.

⁶⁷ See, among others, Niemi and Young, 2016, Abstract:

Why do victims sometimes receive sympathy for their suffering and at other times scorn and blame? Here we show a powerful role for moral values in attitudes towards victims. We measured moral values associated with unconditionally prohibiting harm (‘individualising values’) versus moral values associated with prohibiting behavior that destabilizes groups and relationships (‘binding values’: loyalty, obedience to authority, and purity). Increased endorsement of binding values predicted

increased ratings of victims as contaminated (Studies 1–4); increased blame and responsibility attributed to victims, increased perceptions of victims’ (versus perpetrators’) behaviours as contributing to the outcome, and decreased focus on perpetrators (Studies 2–3). Patterns persisted controlling for politics, just world beliefs, and right-wing authoritarianism. Experimentally manipulating linguistic focus off of victims and onto perpetrators reduced victim blame. Both binding values and focus modulated victim blame through victim responsibility attributions. Findings indicate the important role of ideology in attitudes towards victims via effects on responsibility attribution.

See also “Who Blames the Victim?” by Laura Niemi and Liane Young, *New York Times*, June 24, 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/06/26/opinion/sunday/who-blames-the-victim.html. I thank Linda Hartling for making me aware of this research. Linda Hartling and I, while we highly appreciate the work of Niemi and Young, suggest a more relational approach to “caring” and “fairness.” We would speak of “caring” and “fairness” as “connectedness-compassion values” rather than as “individualizing values.” See also Opatow, 1995.

⁶⁸ Bastiat, 1848. French original:

Lorsque la Spoliation est devenue le moyen d’existence d’une agglomération d’hommes unis entre eux par le lien social, ils se font bientôt une loi qui la sanctionne, une morale qui la glorifie.

⁶⁹ Bastiat, 1848. French original:

Je parle à quiconque tient la Richesse pour quelque chose. — Entendons par ce mot, non l’opulence de quelques-uns, mais l’aisance, le bien-être, la sécurité, l’indépendance, l’instruction, la dignité de tous.

⁷⁰ Bastiat, 1850.

⁷¹ *Against Foucault: Middle Foucault*, part twelve, video lecture by Howard Richards, Pretoria, South Africa, May 26, 2013, recorded by Justine Richards, youtu.be/voUdwSZPAR0. See also the book that resulted from these lectures and dialogues, Richards, et al., 2018. It is a privilege to have Howard Richards, Catherine Odora Hoppers, and her brother George, as esteemed members in the global advisory board of the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies community. In this lecture, Richards analyzed the middle period of Foucault’s thinking (1970–1976):

Even before Foucault cast power in the role of general enemy, power had been groomed for the role because it had played a somewhat similar role in the past. Whatever else ‘power’ (‘le pouvoir’) denoted, power was the entity that had re-established itself by putting down the revolts in France in 1848, in 1870, and in 1940, Foucault and Deleuze, 1972, p. 308. It tended to be the word that named whatever put down popular revolts anywhere; so that if the revolt was successful one said the people won; if the revolt failed one said power won.

⁷² Bastiat’s reflections are reminiscent of the way of thinking that Ayn Rand later brought to the United States. See my analysis in chapter 4 in Lindner, 2012.

⁷³ Richards, 2014:

So we have a problem: Nothing authorizes us to believe that humanity today is so different from humanity in the past that today we can get our act together and work in concert to solve our problems without sharing a metanarrative that tells us who we are and what our role is in the great scheme of things. But liberal economics is a toxic brew. It shreds community more than it builds it. It smothers diversity and imposes the crudest and most violent forms of cognitive injustice. Its growth imperative and its systematic demand to create conditions for capital accumulation and ever more capital accumulation are killing the biosphere very rapidly, so rapidly that if we think in a perspective of geological time the end of life on this planet is the equivalent of only a few seconds away. Sometimes we seem to face a cruel choice: either no metanarrative or a toxic metanarrative. Either civil wars between mutually incompatible ethnic fundamentalisms which in principle can share no common ground, or else a secular state imposing certain death by liberal economics on one and all.

...

My second simple question is: “Where are we going?” The beginning of a simple answer is: “We are going to a green future”. The simple reason why we are going to a green future is that we cannot possibly go to any other future. Failing to maintain the delicate equilibriums of the biosphere is not an option. Human cultures whose constitutive rules and basic norms are incompatible with the laws of physics, the laws of chemistry, and the facts of biology are not sustainable.

See also Lyotard, 1979/1984, and his view on ‘the end of the big stories’. Furthermore, note work done in Germany on the balance between facticity and “narrativity,” and how the coronavirus pandemic showcases how dangerous it is when narrativity not only crowds out facticity but treats it as an enemy. See, for instance, Friedman and Welzer, 2020.

⁷⁴ *Against Foucault: Middle Foucault*, part twelve, video lecture by Howard Richards, Pretoria, South Africa, May 26, 2013, recorded by Justine Richards, youtu.be/voUdwSZPAR0. See also the book that resulted from these lectures and dialogues, Richards, et al., 2018. In this lecture, Richards analyzed the middle period of Foucault’s thinking (1970–1976).

Richards’ thinking is in resonance with the Climate Justice Charter Movement (CJCM) in South Africa. Michelle Williams reported in her contribution to the GTI Forum on September 4, 2023:

The South African Constitution allows for Charters from the public to be adopted by Parliament — it’s a little-known clause in the Constitution and one that has never been tested. The CJCM has spent the last four years building consensus around the contents of the Charter through a series of year-long deliberations with a range of constituencies including youth, students, labor, faith based, media, and academics, etc. The outcome is a visionary and beautiful Charter outlining alternatives for a future world. While Parliament has ignored the CJCM thus far, it is gaining traction with 284 organizational endorsements and thousands of people endorsing it, and at the very least is popularizing radical visions and giving people hope that an alternative is possible. You can read the Climate Justice Charter at <https://cjcjcm.org.za/>.

⁷⁵ See note 24 above.

⁷⁶ See “How Could Citizens’ Assemblies Be Used to Tackle Climate Change?” by Isabella Kaminski, *Open Democracy*, May 7, 2019, www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/how-could-citizens-assemblies-be-used-to-tackle-climate-change/.

⁷⁷ See, for instance, the work of the Center for Deliberate Democracy at Stanford University, <https://cdd.stanford.edu>.

⁷⁸ See Endenburg, 1988.

⁷⁹ Albert Otto Hirschman, 1977, is the author of several books on political economy and political ideology. He labels the position “stay and seek change from within” as *voice*, and the position “leave” as *exit*. See also Adelman, 2013, and *Understanding Society — Innovative Thinking About a Global World: Hirschman on the Passions*, by Daniel Little, May 14, 2013, <http://understandingsociety.blogspot.no/2013/05/hirschman-on-passions.html>.

⁸⁰ Kuhn, 1962.

⁸¹ Göpel, 2016, p. 28. See also Göpel, 2020. Already Hannah Arendt, 1951/1973, described the tendency among ideologues to conceive of history as a science that predicts the ‘success’ of their respective ideology as if it were a law of nature. See also “Men in Dark Times: How Hannah Arendt’s Fans Misread the Post-Truth Presidency,” by Rebecca Panovka, *Harper’s Magazine*, August 2021, <https://harpers.org/archive/2021/08/men-in-dark-times-hannah-arendt-post-truth/>. I thank Linda Hartling for making me aware of this article.

⁸² See <https://humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/annualmeeting/37.php>.

⁸³ Ophuls, 2011.

⁸⁴ Homer-Dixon, 2020.

⁸⁵ Ostrom, 1990b.

⁸⁶ Alex Pazaitis points at Schismenos, et al., 2020, Manzini, 2015, and Kostakis, et al., 2023.

⁸⁷ www.thealternative.org.uk/dailyalternative/2019/5/13/what-is-cosmo-localism-and-why-we-think-its-a-game-changer?rq=cosmolocal.

⁸⁸ See Ostrom, 1990a, 2010. See Graeber, 2011, for the insight that Indigenous communities used to practice mutual sharing and *giving forward* rather than *exchange*. See also the common *Indigenous worldview* manifestations described by Four Arrows (Wahinkpe Topa of Cherokee and Muscogee Creek ancestry, aka Donald Trent Jacobs) presented in note 701 in chapter 3 of Lindner, 2023a, and consider the *substantivist* economic model conceptualized by Karl Polanyi also discussed in Lindner, 2023a.

⁸⁹ “For Life to Continue on Earth, Every Day Must Be Indigenous Peoples’ Day,” by Four Arrows (Wahinkpe Topa, aka Donald Trent Jacobs), and Darcia Narváez, *Truthout*, October 13, 2019, <https://truthout.org/articles/for-life-to-continue-on-earth-every-day-must-be-indigenous-peoples-day/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=77eb805f-119f-4887-b0f3-0e978fd87d6b>. See, furthermore, Descola, 2005, and Sahlins, 2008.

Psychologists Tarsha and Narváez, 2019, write about the *evolved nest* and state, “Although most people want children to thrive, many adults in industrialized nations have forgotten what that means and how to foster thriving.” The reason is that the healthy and peaceful indigenous cycle of *cooperative companionship* that characterized the first 97 per cent of our human history has been turned into *competitive detachment*. Narváez, et al., 2014, explain how human children in the first years of life, when neurobiological systems are shaped, need a *nest* that offers a high degree of relational connection and social support, that offers responsive calming care by multiple adults including frequent affectionate touch and extensive play, including years of on-request breastfeeding. Watch the short film *Breaking the Cycle — Reclaiming our Humanity with our Evolved Nest*, April 28, 2021, https://youtu.be/d_f4fzzFc8A. See also Parrotta and Trosper, 2012, and Narváez, et al., 2019.

⁹⁰ See Fiske, 1991, Fiske and Kintsch, 1992, Fiske, 2004, Fiske and Fiske, 2007, Rai and Fiske, 2011. See an introduction on www.sscnet.ucla.edu/anthro/faculty/fiske/reimodov.htm. See also *Why the P2P and Commons Movement Must Act Trans-Locally and Trans-Nationally*, by Michel Bauwens, P2P Foundation, June 12, 2016, <https://blog.p2pfoundation.net/p2p-commons-movement-must-act-trans-locally-trans-nationally/2016/06/16>. I thank Uli Spalthoff for making me aware of this article. Bauwens recommends Karatani, 2014. Like Alan Page Fiske, 1991, in *Structures of Social Life*, also Karatani recognizes four basic modes of social life that exist at all times and in all places. See more in notes 4165 and 4191 in chapter 12 in Lindner, 2023a.

⁹¹ Psychologist Stanley Smith Stevens, 1946, has developed the best known classification of measurement with four levels, or scales: *nominal*, *ordinal*, *interval*, and *ratio*. “Types of data measurement scales: Nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio,” www.mymarketresearchmethods.com/types-of-data-nominal-ordinal-interval-ratio/, “In summary, nominal variables are used to ‘name’, or label a series of values. Ordinal scales provide good information about the order of choices, such as in a customer satisfaction survey. Interval scales give us the order of values + the ability to quantify the difference between each one. Finally, Ratio scales give us the ultimate –order, interval values, plus the ability to calculate ratios since a ‘true zero’ can be defined.”

⁹² Fiske and Kintsch, 1992, p. 692. See also Luce and Narens, 1987, Narens and Luce, 1986.

⁹³ See Lindner, 2023a.

⁹⁴ Raskin, 2016.

⁹⁵ *Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System*, by Donella Meadows, Harland, VT: The Sustainability Institute, 1999, donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system/.

⁹⁶ Howard Richards on *brute facts*, in a personal communication, 11th December 2017, in an early draft of his introduction to his book *Economic Theory and Community Development*:

I want to take advantage of John Searle's idea that brute facts are logically prior to institutional facts, of Martin Heidegger's idea that all seeing is interpretation, and of Roy Bhaskar's idea that the objects of scientific study exist independently of how scientists describe them. But I want to leave all three, as far as this particular text is concerned, without further discussion. My wager is that this simple mentioning of three extensively discussed philosophical ideas, will help the reader to understand a little better what I am doing. Here, for example, I am treating the details of South Africa's National Development Plan as brute (or, in Elizabeth Anscombe's terms, relatively brute) while terms from economic theory that I will be discussing, like 'growth' and 'rent' are being treated as not brute. Later I will be treating the experiences of South Africa, India and Sweden with public employment programs as brute grist for the mill, while the theories of thinkers like Smith, Marx, Walras and Keynes will be treated as not-brute mills through which brute facts are processed. The motivation for my brute fact *démarche* is that economic theory tends to build self-contained thought-worlds of its own, impervious to refutation by facts because of its own way of processing facts. I am trying to find a lever and a fulcrum (so to speak) to move theory, by providing rather extensive accounts of facts on the ground that, while not precisely falsifying theoretical claims as stated in their own terms, cast them in a different light.

See also Elizabeth Anscombe, 2015, "On Brute Facts."

⁹⁷ Wright, 1978.

⁹⁸ Trimtab, www.bfi.org/trimtab.

⁹⁹ See Bhaskar, 1986, chapter 3: "Metaphysics and Method," pp. 10–26. See also Kaidesoja, 2005, who suggests the "naturalization not just of transcendental arguments but of the whole transcendental realist ontology."

¹⁰⁰ Cohen, 2017, in his book *The Sustainable City*. See <https://sustainable.columbia.edu/events/book-talk-sustainable-city-steven-cohen>.

¹⁰¹ Iris Young, 2011, pp. 153–166.

¹⁰² Kathryn Sikkink, 2020.

¹⁰³ I used the notion of "Trojan horse" for the first time in my 2006 book on humiliation and international conflict, Lindner, 2006, p. 66. Evidently, the "Trojan horse" trope originally signaled danger. See, for instance, "Beware UN Food Systems Summit Trojan Horse," by Jomo Kwame Sundaram, *Inter Press Service*, www.ipsnews.net/2021/07/beware-un-food-systems-summit-trojan-horse/. I acknowledge that subversive ideas are dangerous for existing systems, yet, those ideas are necessary in systems that require change.

¹⁰⁴ *The Challenge of Informed Humanity: From 'Infosphere' to 'Cogitosphere'*, Prince El Hassan bin Talal's Opening Address to the 2004 Annual Conference of the Club of Rome "On limits to ignorance: The challenge of informed humanity," October 11–12, 2004, in Helsinki, Finland.

¹⁰⁵ See Singh, 2013. See also Kasser, 2017. Kasser looks at the suggestion that engaging in pro-ecological behaviors (PEBs, such as recycling, eating locally, political activism) increases people's measures of subjective well-being (SWB, such as happiness, life satisfaction, and hedonic balance), and vice versa: Is it that pro-ecological behavior makes happy, or, do happy people engage in pro-ecological behavior? Other variables may be the prioritization of intrinsic values over extrinsic values such as money or status, or mindfulness, or a choice to lead a more simple lifestyle. Tim Kasser writes in his contribution to the Great Transition Initiative (GTI) Forum on the topic "Sustainability and Well-Being: A Happy Synergy," March 12, 2017, in response to Barrington-Leigh, 2017:

- a) prioritizing intrinsic values (for personal growth and relationships) over extrinsic values (for money, Evelin Lindner, 2023

image and status); b) how mindful one is (i.e., how focused a person is on accepting and attending to one's momentary experiences); and c) whether one has made a choice to work less and lead a more voluntarily simple lifestyle. Each of these three variables has been empirically associated with BOTH greater SWB and more engagement in PEBs, suggesting each could potentially explain the documented positive correlation.

¹⁰⁶ For “harvesting” from all cultures, see, among others, Lindner, 2007. See more in note 166 in the introduction to Part I of {Lindner, 2023 #1278}. I thank Adair Linn Nagata for inviting me to write this article and for welcoming me into her classes at Rikkyo University in Tokyo. It is a privilege to have Adair Linn Nagata as an esteemed member in the global advisory board of our Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies community.

See also Wright, 1942, and Goonatilake, 1998, on “mining civilizational knowledge.” Much more has been written since 2007 on this topic, here are just some recent examples, Dupré, 2015, Schlichtmann, 2017, Cabrera, 2017, May and Daly, 2020, or Townsend, 2020.

¹⁰⁷ Open Space Technology (OST) was developed by Harrison Owen. It is a privilege to have him as an esteemed member in the global advisory board of our Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies community. Open Space Technology is a “method for facilitating community meetings and conferences” by building “on the passions and interests of the people who attend” so that “the program emerges out of the group itself.” See www.ktchange.com/openspace.html:

Using less than one hour, no matter how large the group, the facilitator outlines the procedure for creating topics to discuss, the 4 principles of Open Space, and the Law of Two Feet Naturally, this creates two roles: Bumblebees and Butterflies. Bumblebees fly from group to group cross-pollinating the discussions while Butterflies sit around looking relaxed — interesting discussions emerge around them as people find them and pause to chat.

Owen has condensed four principles to inspire passion, responsibility, and flow:

Whoever come are the right people.
Whenever it starts is the right time.
Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.
When it's over it's over.

¹⁰⁸ www.dropbox.com/s/64q6fn18wz4ewtt/CL_Reader.pdf?dl=0.