

**GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION, FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL  
AND SOCIAL CHANGE, CONSTRUCTIVE POLITICAL INNOVATION  
AND RESPONSIBLE SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**A study on practical steps toward creating a new civilization**

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### *A New Norm for a New Age: New Terminologies*

Scientists have recently begun to meet to discuss the possibility, or inevitability, of addressing the question as to whether it is time to call an end to the epoch we are presently living in, the Holocene, and announce the arrival of the Anthropocene. This new geologic epoch (as oppose to 'periods' which are longer, and 'ages' which are shorter) is meant to signify humanity's imprint on the planet. This is highly controversial, especially since there is no common understanding of the meaning of term 'Anthropocene'.

The term 'Axial Age' (Karl Jaspers) has also reappeared in attempts to denote that all over the world, people are struggling to find new meaning in the very new conditions of existence as a result of industrial, technical and communications revolutions. Existential needs for meaning and comfort now require, some believe, a new spiritual revolution (Karen Armstrong), or a global awakening (Michael Shacker) which envisions a paradigm shift from a mechanistic world view to a holistic world view.

In another vocabulary, we live in the time of structural crisis, a "macroshift" (László 2001, 2008, 2009), or a systemic "bifurcation" and transition from one world system to another (Immanuel Wallerstein). Although we do not know what the new world system or structure will look like, as individuals and collectives we can have more impact at this time, because we are not under the constraints of the old or emerging new world system. Therefore, the age we live in is more open to human intervention and creativity. As such a profound shift has no inevitable or predictable outcome, it will be shaped by the totality of collective action (Wallerstein 2008). The attempts to describe and analyse the morphology and the possible solutions to today's global crises have been numerous regarding institutions (Szentés 2006), civil society (Mizslivetz and Jensen 2006 and 2013) and the construction of the supranational economic and political system (like the European Union, Mizslivetz 2012 and 2013, Mizslivetz and Jensen 2015). Calls for a "New Green Deal" are forthcoming at local, regional and global levels (Holland 2015).

Karl Polányi in *The Great Transformation*, presented a set of interrelated and intertwined phenomena. With extraordinary prescience, he warned that crisis would come. He rejected the idea that the market is "self-regulating" and can correct itself. There is no "invisible hand" such as the market fundamentalists maintain, so there is nothing inevitable or "natural" about the way markets work: **they are always shaped by political decisions**. These observations and propositions were for the most part rather neglected during the past decades

and by the explicit or tacit consensus of both social scientists and political analysts. In most cases analysts deal with each crisis as separate, isolated phenomena. This negligence and restricted perception (based upon the paradigm of the sovereign nation state and doctrine of independent academic disciplines) is greatly responsible for the present global turmoil which is at its heart a civilizational crisis (Miszlivetz and Kaldor 1985, 2009).

The concern lately of nation states, the EU and global multilateral organizations, has been to minimize irrational panic in response to crises and it can be argued that this **reveals a dysfunctional pattern of thinking**. The real challenge is not the particular crisis of the financial system which everyone talks about, but lies in the pattern of derivative thinking that has sustained the system and denied its problematic nature all along. Is the sovereign debt crisis and its consequences for financial and political systems and societies an indicator of a dysfunctional mode of thought in which we collectively participate today? Alternatively, can the crisis of confidence better be understood as a credibility crisis? A major danger is the current assumption that the only "confidence" that needs to be (re)built is defined by market terminology and not by democratic terminology. Why are "solutions" only being dreamt up after a crisis has struck? Does our way of thinking deny the existence of other systemic challenges and repress consideration of potential implications in other areas? Can a more vigilant analysis of the financial crisis as it evolves, and the language used in "saving the system" help to develop a framework to analyze emergent crises that have been subject to the same neglect through "derivative" and not "innovative" thinking.

It is important to identify the systemic role of actors (states), instruments (financial mechanisms and authorities), concepts and dynamics, as well as how long and short-term risk is managed in a context of fear, mistrust and a false notion of what has happened and why. The question is whether more vigilant analysis of crises as they evolve, and the language used in "saving the system" can be used to **develop a framework to analyze developing crises that have been subject to the same neglect through 'derivative' and not 'innovative' thinking**.

One of the major negative results of this is the lack of responsibility taking for global or transnational disasters by the dominant players and stakeholders – from national and regional political leaders and institutions via institutions of knowledge creation and

distribution including eminent social scientists.<sup>1</sup> Alternative voices are emerging, but the question is whether it is too little, too late.

This institutionalised irresponsibility and indifference surrounded by a tacit consensus about dividedness as an unchangeable given is to a significant degree responsible for undermining and emptying out democracies as well as for endangering the future of human existence on the planet. The recent return of the nation state and accompanying nationalistic clichés and prejudices within Europe and all around its borders resulted in the rise of rightwing and religious extremism, populism and an increasing rejection of multiculturalism. Xenophobia, racism and anti-semitism has been growing not only in the peripheries but also in the core countries of established democracies of affluent societies.

One of the key challenges is the demand for new and innovative ways of thinking to resolve the threats to the sustainability of our social relations, environment and economies. New knowledge is required by the social sciences to meet the demands of technological innovation, management and public policy. New knowledge accumulation, or informational capital, would include the important contribution of civil societies.

### *Paradigm Shift*

Our whole world society appears to be following a distinct pattern that occurs very rarely in history, one that has led in the past to total reinventions of the world within very short periods of time. *In short, we are in the midst of a classic paradigm shift and are fast approaching the tipping point of the whole process.*

Shacker 2013: 31

All of the present crises are connected by a mechanistic world view that has dominated for the past 300 years and endangered the environment and quality of life, societies and individuals. In a mechanistic world view, we all become parts of the machine and mere objects. The fatal flaw of a mechanistic world view is eloquently elaborated by Michael Shacker (2013) in his work, *Global Awakening, New Science and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Enlightenment*. Referring to William Barret's (1979), *Illusion of Technique*, he explains that

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., the Euromemorandum group, The European Trade Union Confederation, the *Manifesto of Appalled Economists* in France, the *Be Outraged Manifesto* constructed by an international group of economists and social scientists, manifestations of the Occupy movements across Europe and the US, etc.

the smooth operation of the machine becomes everything in the mind of the technician; and since there is no meaning that can be derived from a machine, life becomes meaningless.

Our whole mechanistic society now reflects this meaningless and purposeless world view. ... *The illusion of technique* helps us understand this fatal flaw of mechanistic dogma and how it fails to confront reality. In short, the lure of the machine outweighs the mounds of scientific data showing the fragile interconnections of Earth and its biosphere. Social, environmental and health concerns are swept under the rug and ignored. The mechanistic paradigm is thus dysfunctional at its core – so we find ourselves in the mechanistic dilemma (Shacker 2013: 29-30).

He continues by addressing the necessity of “more-than-ordinary” thinking and action to transcend the mechanistic dilemma to extract the planet and humanity from its current precarious situation.

The crisis is further exacerbated by the collusion between big business and increasingly nationalistic governments who, in order to maintain their power positions and monopolistic control of market forces, will not willingly relinquish their power positions. This is clearly seen in the increasing incidents of state violence by state sanctioned police forces against populations that have arisen to protest against economic and social inequalities resulting from the crisis of the world system, as well as aspirations for a more democratic politics of participation.

What is common in these in many ways different old/new bubbling up movements and political worldviews is the strong insistence to historic dividedness and cultural differences as well as the complete lack or rejection of the holistic approach in dealing with grave social, political, and ecological problems. Threatened in their existence and legitimacy, old institutions, interest groups and other powerful global, regional and national stakeholders are keen to entrench themselves and fight one another to secure their interests and survival. The new wave of desintegration and self-isolation is a result of the failure of global and regional institutions such as the UN, the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF or the European Union. Instead of contributing globally and regionally to more democracy, equality, peace and human security, these institutions themselves contribute to the survival of the old paradigm of unequal dividedness, onesided dependency and manifold insecurity. Therefore, the New Norm should establish the perception of oneness of the human race and with the planet on which we live. This means the acceptance and understanding of the inevitability of a holistic view of humankind, together with its self-created institutions, markets, nationstates and means

of violence. The vision and practice of a **wisdom based society** (Falk 2013) that turns knowledge into organic and holistic practices has to replace gradually the old paradigm of a knowledge-based society that was established on the premise and special historical understanding of fragmentation and un-alterable dividedness. Awareness of increasing interdependence in various spheres of our common existence is a slow process that needs to speed up. The discussion of the dynamics of interdependence, of those in the center and those in the peripheries, needs to be translated into action, thus empowering communities through knowledge and legitimation. In order to challenge existing power structures, organizing those marginalized groups and communities that have been historically left out into solid alliances at the local level, such as women, racial-ethnic and religious minorities, gender and age-based groups and indigenous populations, has increased over the past forty years (Wallerstein 2008), but it has not been enough.

*From a Medieval World View to a Mechanistic World View to an Organic World View*

Every world view needs to answer the fundamental questions of who we are, how we got where we are and where we are going that are delivered in a new story or narrative frame. The current crisis of world view requires a paradigm shift which will move humanity into a new world system and mind-set. Paradigm shifts or “flips” have occurred before, from the Medieval to the Mechanistic world view via the Enlightenment, towards a future Organic worldview according to Shacker (2013). The composite tables are provided here to review these paradigmatic shifts:

Table 1: Comparison of Medieval and Mechanistic World Views (Shacker 2013: 36)

Medieval World View	Mechanistic World View
God is responsible for all events on earth.	God or nature merely sets universe in motion, natural law determines the rest; clockwork universe of Newton.
God’s creation only 6000 years old.	Universe very old, Earth millions to billions years old, formed by natural forces.
Two sets of laws: one for Earth, one for heaven.	One set of natural laws governs Earth and the universe.
Geocentric universe: Earth does not move.	Helocentric solar system: Earth orbits the sun.
King and nobility have divine right to rule.	The right to govern derives from the people; kings are tyrants.
Medieval laws and value system designed to	Laws and values designed to provide liberty

protect the lands and power of kings, the aristocracy and the church.	and equality to all men, to protect the pursuit of happiness, and to derive power from the people in a democracy.
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Table 2: Comparison of Mechanistic and Organic World Views (Shacker 2013: 41).

Mechanistic World View	Organic World View
Limited mechanistic models underlie traditional science and medicine and cannot explain living systems adequately; ecological, health and economic breakdowns.	Encompassing organic/biological models underlie new-paradigm sciences from physics to agriculture, medicine, technology, economics, and psychology.
Clockwork universe, no purpose assigned to humanity or universe; we live in a vast static cosmos.	Complexity-centered universe and evolution means we are always evolving to the next level.
Anthropocentric universe; planet Earth treated as a non-living thing to be exploited.	Complexity-centered universe: planet Earth shown to be a living system.
Newtonian physics limited to macroworld, non-living things only.	New physics studies sub-atomic realm; law od organics and other theories explain living systems.
Time and space quantified.	Life, evolution, consciousness quantified and given meaning.
Studies objects and things as separate parts.	Studies the relationship between objects and things
Old paradigm culture based on oil, ultranationalism and militarism; huge military budget, small foreign aid; top 1% owns 45% of wealth.	Counterculture based on transition from oil, world peace and sustainable development; increase foreign aid to \$50 billion to stop terrorism; new economics to eliminate poverty.
Laws and values designed to protect the rights of men, especially corporations and men with property.	Laws and values designed to protect the rights of all, from women to blacks, gays and all minorities, especially the poor and middle class.
Belief that war has always been a part of human nature.	War has been invented and can be transcended in a future world of peace.

If we look at the four stages of social transformation as outlined by Kuhn (1962), we see that first of all, there is the emergence of an anomaly that contradicts the existing world view and new science and philosophical concepts shock the existing world with radically new ideas to account for the anomaly. A revolutionary period ensues that upsets the stability of the system. The 1960s have been represented as a precursor in terms of beliefs and behavior that underpins the movement from one system to another. Perhaps, the discussions and analysis related to global warming could be considered in the contemporary context as one of the focal points for the emergence of radically new ideas related to humankind's place in the world.

The new sciences and the study of micro-worlds (e.g., quantum physics, complexity and chaos theories, string theory) confront the scientific world view with a new view of humankind's role in the universe.

Subsequently, the second phase can be described as the conservative backlash period that sets back the new paradigm with fundamentalist conservative and political counter-reactions. There is a paradigm resistance from old scientists and bitter paradigm wars are fought between the new realities presented by the new world view, and the ideology and rhetoric of the old world view. In the contemporary sense, the rise of the new right and conservative governments in the 1970s in reaction to the movements of the 1960s can be viewed in this context. At the same time, anomalies and scandals related to the workings of the old world view mount and create pressure on existing structures (large bail outs starting in 1984 of the Savings and Loan industry, invasion of Lebanon, rise of Saddam Hussein, neglect of AIDS and women's rights, increasing environmental catastrophes – Exxon Valdez, Chernobyl, Bhopal). These incidents and the underlying neglect of addressing increasingly pressing social, political, economic and environmental issues, with adequate responses from institutions and authorities contributes to undermining trust and belief in the system. They underscore that the mechanistic world view can never solve the problems of its own making.

What follows is an intensive phase that continues the polarized culture war between world views. Again, it can take the form of regressive and reactionary governments (as in the US in the 1990s-2000s), and the increasing evidence of corporate world domination both in the economic and increasingly in political spheres where the ramifications of corporate-state collusion have devastating consequences for democracy in both old and new democracies. New thinkers begin to construct and popularize a new narrative for the new era that explains the emergent anomalies. The new narrative engages and activates societies that, once they reach a critical mass, provide the tipping point for transformation to the new world view. In fact, our contemporary period is also characterized by the greatest global mobilization of populations in opposition to perceived systemic injustice endemic to the old world system and institutionalized political and economic power relations. The Occupy movement and the breadth of its organization and impact is only one example. Other organizing principles are discussed later in this chapter. But besides new movements and new methods and forms of mobilization, new formulations are emerging and taking shape in the areas of global education, integrative/holistic healthcare and medicine, and in regenerative regional planning. These new perspectives and strategies contribute to the formulation of the new narrative in

science and societies and help to push the new paradigm further forward. This phase encompasses basically the contemporary period from the early 1990s until today.

The last stage is the transformational phase. This is what is beginning today. In this phase new conflicts may arise, but also increasing solidarity/cohesion/one-ness at the local and global levels. The old ideology, system and structure are replaced with the underlying precepts of the new world view with its correspondent scientific models and changed sets of rules. This can take decades to realize and could, in the present circumstances, as it is predicted, last up to 50 years. This is when a regenerative revolution proposes new, alternative economic models, and new technological and social models replace the macro-economic machine models with organic/regenerative/holistic development models based on the axiom of the interdependence of life processes.

### *Economic Consolidation and Disruption*

Where there is great inequality, there is great injustice and where there is great injustice, there is the inevitability of instability.

Marshall (2013)

After 2007, when the financial crisis surfaced, and in its aftermath, it became increasingly clear that for a critical mass of world society existing economic and financial models were seriously limited, oversimplistic and overconfident and actually helped to create the crisis. This is a combination of opinions not from people who are skeptical of capitalism but who actually work at the heart of finance: a governor of the European Central Bank, and from the head of the U.K. Financial Services Authority.

What is implied in these opinions is that we do not understand the complexity or interdependence of, for example, our economic systems that drive our modern societies. In reality, we are surrounded by interconnected and complex systems. Complexity theory tells us that what looks like complex behavior from the outside is actually the result of a few simple rules of interaction. To begin, therefore, to understand a system you need to look at the interactions.

Complex systems have a unique characteristic that is called „emergence” which means that a system as a whole cannot be understood or predicted by examining the components of

the system, because the system as a whole starts to reveal a particular behavior. **Therefore, the whole is literally more than the sum of individual parts.**

Networks also represent complex systems and the nodes in a network are its components and the links are the interactions. Applying this analysis to economic networks is new and reveals a surprising gap in the literature. The following analysis was originally presented in the work entitled *The Network of Global Corporate Control* in 2011 (Vitali, Glattfelder, Battiston 2011). Starting with a list of 43,060 TNCs identified according to the OECD definition,<sup>2</sup> and taken from a sample of over 30 million economic actors contained in the Orbis 2007 database, they singled out, for the first time, the network of all the ownership pathways originating from and pointing to TNCs. The resulting TNC network included 600,508 nodes and 1,006,987 ownership ties.

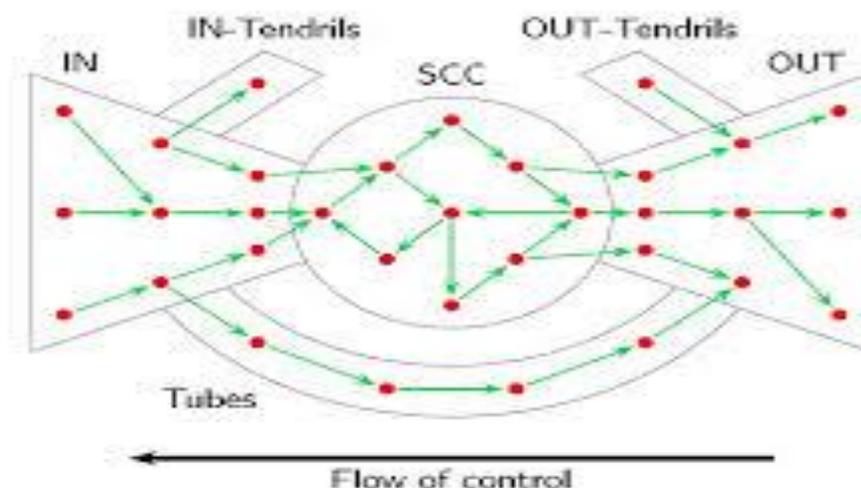
The center contains about 75% of all players, and in the center there is a tiny but dominant core of highly interconnected companies. Although they only make up 36% of total TNCs, they make up 95% of the total operating revenue of all TNCs.

After computing network control, they found that global corporate control has a dominant core of 147 firms radiating from the center. Each of these 147 firms own shares in one another and together they control 40% of the wealth in the TNC network. The top 737 shareholders have the potential to collectively control 80% of the TNC's value. Keep in mind the value of the 600,000 nodes of interconnections, and that these 737 top players make up 0.123%. These are mostly financial institutions based in the US and UK and together they have the collective potential to control 40% of the TNC's value.

Figure 1. Flow of Control (Vitali, Glattfelder, Battiston 2011: 4).

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<sup>2</sup> [TNCs] comprise companies and other entities established in more than one country and so linked that they may coordinate their operations in various ways, while one or more of these entities may be able to exercise a significant influence over the activities of others, their degree of autonomy within the enterprise may vary widely from one multinational enterprise to another. Ownership may be private, state or mixed (OECD 2000).



This level of hyperconnection is dangerous because of the extremely high degree of control, and because the high degree of interconnectivity of the top players in the core could pose a significant systemic risk to the global economy. Any kind of disturbance felt in the core would expand exponentially like a virus to the other parts of the system.

The study concludes not with a global conspiracy but rather likens this development with such biological structures such as fungus and weeds. The study concludes that the network is probably the result of self-organization which is an emergent property and that the network depends on the rules of interaction in the system. By ‘emergent property’ what is meant is that the system as a whole reveals behavior that can not be understood or predicted by looking at the individual components of the system. In fact, the whole is literally to be understood as more than the sum of all parts. Beyond the potential for catastrophic instability, the system reveals an undeniable imbalance in terms of power and wealth. The study does not attempt to derive implications in terms of inequality and increased potential of social unrest, nor in terms of political instability and costs to democratic representation and practise. In what follows, we will endeavor to illustrate the consequences for politics, economies and societies of the anomalies that have been identified in the old world view that have been elaborated so far.

The worldwide yearning for human dignity is the central challenge inherent in the phenomenon of global political awakening.

Brzezinski (2008)

In 2014, Oxfam reported that the world's 85 wealthiest individuals had a combined wealth equal to the collective wealth of the world's 3.5 billion people, at USD 1.7 trillion. At the same time, the global top 1% owns about half the world's wealth at USD 110 trillion. Oxfam commented:

This massive concentration of economic resources in the hands of fewer people presents a significant threat to inclusive political and economic systems ... inevitably heightening social tensions and increasing the risk of societal breakdown (Oxfam 2014).

In 2005, Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote about a global awakening that is potentially socially massive and politically radicalizing. He clearly articulated that populations in the developing world are awakening and stirring with unrest in response to a growing consciousness of social injustice and political indignity. He argues that since the breakdown of the bipolar system which pitted a Marxist/Communist ideological opposition to Western capitalist democracies, an ideological vacuum emerged in terms of ideas that oppose the current world order. He argues that a 'community of shared perceptions' is being created by old and new technologies that transcend national borders, challenge current nation state structures and existing global hierarchies. In a 2010 speech to the Canadian International Council he spoke of a totally new reality in which "most people know what is generally going on ... and are consciously aware of global inequities, inequalities, lack of respect, exploitation". He concludes that "Mankind is now politically awakened and stirring". Years earlier he warned of a demographic time bomb of impatient and unemployed youth is just waiting to be triggered (Brzezinski 2005).

Many sources are warning of increasing, and increasingly wide spread unrest. In 2011, the International Labour Organization warned that the unemployment resulting from the global financial crisis threatens waves of unrest in both rich and poor countries, pointing out that 45 of 118 countries that were studied already saw rising unrest (particularly in the EU, Arab world and Asia).

*The Economist* (2009 December, 2013 November) has frequently reported on increasing global social unrest due to painful austerity measures, growing expectations from emerging market middle classes, and revolts against dictatorships. *The Economist* Intelligence Unit estimates that 43% of the 150 countries it studied will be at high or very high risk of social unrest in 2014.

A recent OECD publication states that “Income inequality has a ‘statistically significant impact’ on economic growth,” where as the redistribution of wealth through taxes and social benefits does not hamper economic growth. (OECD 2014). The report finds that in the 34 OECD member states the gap between rich and poor has reached the highest level in 30 years; and the richest 10% in those member states earn 9.5 times as much on average as the poorest. In the 1980s this ratio stood at 7:1. The only countries where inequality has fallen is in the economically stressed Greece, and in Turkey where a new middle class continues to emerge. Emphasis in the report was placed on the fact that lack of investment in education was a key factor in the rise of inequality. The report found that fewer educational opportunities for disadvantaged individuals had the effect of lowering social mobility and hampering skills development, thus reproducing systemic poverty.

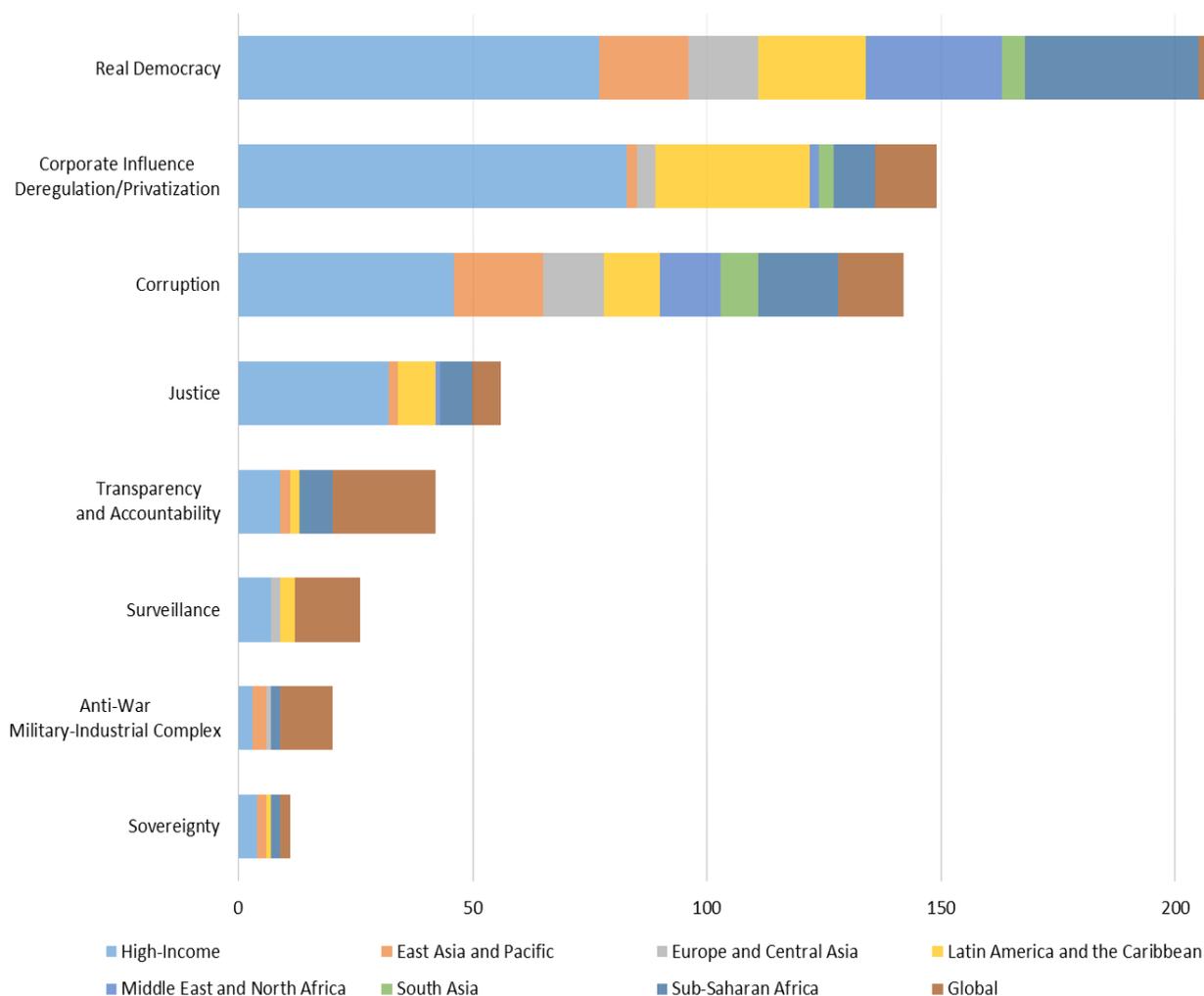
The 2013 study of world protests by the Initiative for Policy Dialogue and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung New York outlined the following four main areas of grievance that sparked unrest from the 2006-2013 period (Ortiz et al. 2013: 5):

Economic Justice and Anti-Austerity	488 protests on issues related to reform of public services, tax/fiscal justice, jobs/ higher wages/labor conditions, inequality, poverty/low living standards, agrarian/land reform, pension reform, high fuel and energy prices, high food prices, and housing.
Failure of Political Representation and Political Systems	376 protests on lack of real democracy; corporate influence, deregulation and privatization; corruption; failure to receive justice from the legal system; transparency and accountability; surveillance of citizens; and anti-war/military industrial complex.
Global Justice	311 protests were against the IMF and other International Financial Institutions (IFIs), for environmental justice and the global commons, and against imperialism, free trade and the G20.
Rights of People	302 protests on ethnic/indigenous/racial rights; right to the Commons (digital, land, cultural, atmospheric); labor rights; women’s rights; right to freedom of assembly/speech/press; religious issues; rights of lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered people

(LGBT); immigrants' rights; and prisoners' rights. A lesser number of protests focus on denying rights to specific groups (eg. immigrants, gays).

The report explains that although it appears that the demand for economic justice takes precedence, the overwhelming demand was not for economic justice per se, “but for ‘real democracy’ ... and frustration with politics as usual and a **lack of trust in the existing political actors, left and right**” [our emphasis]. This demand is seen in every type of political system, from authoritarian regimes to representative democracies that are failing to listen and respond to the needs and views of the people.

**Protesting Failures of Political Representation/Political Systems by Region, 2006-2013**



Source: world protests in media sources 2006-2013 as of July 31st 2013 (Ortiz et. al. 2013: 21)

The report forcefully concludes that

... policy reforms will be insufficient if governments fail to guarantee democratic participation and curtail the power of elites—not only in local and national governments but in the institutions of global governance as well. Leaders and policymakers will only invite further unrest if they fail to prioritize and act on the one demand raised in more of the world's protests between 2006 and 2013 than any other—the demand for real democracy (Ortiz et al. 2013: 43).

In addition to the insurrection that results from political invisibility and disempowerment, unregulated capitalism is charged by these movements with creating wealth but not effectively distributing it and that it takes no account of what it cannot commodify, neither the social relationships of family and community nor the environment, which are vital to human wellbeing and survival, and indeed to the functioning of the market itself. There has been a surprising sustained character to global protests over time which could signal a new impetus for civil society and demands for new social contracts between citizens and power holders. Dissenting groups mobilize and form, submerge, and re-emerge in new, diverse and innovative morphologies.

Even before the financial crisis broke out in 2008, research was being carried out on new social and economic justice and democratic movements worldwide that were very much under the radar of the media. What was discovered was that something profound and pervasive was occurring in terms of social organization at the local, national, regional and international levels. This could not be called a “movement” in conventional terms, because it did not coalesce around a particular ideology or even topical focus. The world has become too complex for that today. What amazed researchers was the breadth and scope of this new phenomenon on a scale never seen before. Elements of this new formulation for activism extend to all parts of the globe; it cannot be divided because it is already atomized, although it shares a basic set of values regarding our world, how it functions, and our role in it. These new social organizations are based in environmental and social justice movements and movements of indigenous peoples and cultures, all of which are intertwined and interdependent.

Not just the forms of organizational structures are changing, but also the underlying values, especially as regards participatory democracy. The assertion “Nothing about us without us” is flourishing, increasing the voice of previously marginalized and excluded groups. This could be the means and the medium for implementing a new path towards inclusion and tolerance, based on respect for individual cultures and the environment, and it

has powerful potential.

According to research, there may be as many as 114,000 international NGOs and, depending on the criteria, the Union of International Associations estimates about 65,000 international organizations operating at the global level today. This should be weighed against the estimates of 43,00 globally operating TNCs. Combined efforts, then of international NGOs and international organizations represent an enormous scope and potential power for change in terms of expertise, organization and activism. These estimates reveal an exponential increase since the 1950s, and do not even reflect millions of local or national initiatives in the civil sector.

Dunn (2005) argues that the reaction of popular forces against global corporate capitalism and the ideology of neoliberalism is generating new constellations of ideas and new forms of organization. What is happening now is the emergence of large transnationalized segments of the popular classes who are using new information technologies to organize globally. There are already clear and important initiatives, particularly emerging in civil society frames that are making attempts to reinterpret the content of contemporary structured relations (between states and societies; between business and states; between business and the societies within which they operate). There is an increasing cooperation and collaboration within and across sectors in general. This can be clearly seen in, for example, the Occupy Everything movements across the world that are still emerging, submerging and reappearing in response to a broad spectrum of threats and challenges. The World Social Forum, for instance, is an important arena for the organization of global networks and parties that claim to represent the peoples of the Earth.

The insurrections can be recognised as events of radical change only retrospectively, if the rules of politics change. This depends on who will uphold the possibility of changing the rules of what counts as political. There are certain moments in history when significant change is possible, it is not a certainty, but a possibility. It is very difficult for any single act or national response to actually set the “momentum” for change in motion. But when that historical wave arrives, it can be guided. We are in one of those moments now.

Some of the most salient examples of alternatives and a new and rising global civil consciousness and organization are presented here.

Occupy and Global Democracy Movements: In October 2011 a “United Global Democracy Manifesto was produced over four months through consultation among groups, activists and people's assemblies in countries such as Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Britain, Egypt, Germany, India, Israel, Mexico, Palestine, Spain, Tunisia, Uruguay, and the US. In

summary the manifesto states that united in diversity, people demand global change, global democracy and global governance by the people. They call for a 'global regime change' replacing the G8 with the whole of humanity. They criticize undemocratic global institutions like the IMF, WTO, global markets, multinational banks, the G8/G20, the European Central Bank and the UN security council. They demand that the citizens of the world take control over the decisions that affect their lives, from the global to local.

*Occupy Central (Hong Kong). The Umbrella Revolution:* The ongoing pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong have very specific local goals to achieve democracy but not in a broad ideological sense. What they want explicitly relates to universal suffrage, elections, reinterpretation of Hong Kong's constitution by Beijing and the resignation of the current chief executive. They do not claim to be a revolutionary movement.

*Occupytogether.* This is the internet face of the #occupy movement. The website frames the international movement as by people with a variety of backgrounds and political beliefs who feel change must come from the bottom-up, and not from distrusted political institutions. It aims to fight back against the system that has allowed the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer. The main issues they address are corporate influence, corporate personhood, student debt, wrongful foreclosures, too big to fail" banks, living minimum wage levels, and budget cuts.

*The "New Abduction of Europe" Congress in Madrid (February-March 2014).* The Congress was intended to mark a turning point in the recent history of European and Mediterranean social movements. It was to close the so-called "revolutionary" period (initiated by the Arab Spring, the events of 2011 in Spain, Greece and other Southern European countries). These were the countries who experienced the most social turmoil as a result of the economic crisis. A new period of a pan-European coalition of "old" and "new" social movements, political and non-governmental organizations and public cultural institutions was to be initiated at the conference. This new coalition is aimed at a democratic and open Europe as an alternative to both the market-oriented technocratic vision of the EU advocated by the Troika and the anti-European trends associated with increasingly strong national tendencies.

*MORELIKEPEOPLE.* Their recent publication (*Anarchists in the Boardroom*) calls for changes in the way social movements organize today in order to be more in touch with the people and the cause they represent. At the same time, lessons have been learned from the use of social media and technology from the new social movements that could improve impact and change the world. The publication travels from worker-run factories, to Occupy

encampments and non-violent direct actions, and even to some forward-thinking companies. More like people activists propose that social media and new technologies can help NGOs, charities, trade unions and voluntary organisations to both stay relevant during the current period of transitions.

Indigenous Movements: The objective of most of these movements is to protect the sovereignty and control of land and resources. Indigenous peoples' organizations recognize the need to reach out to other movements and groups around the world because the nature of globalization requires a global response. In Latin America, for instance, there has been a very explicit effort of indigenous peoples to link with the environmental movement, and the campesino movement, and other social movements. Their strategies involve legal action, i.e. changing national laws and national constitutions, and using international law, direct action, voicing their cause to the international arena as well as entering government. One fascinating and successful group is the Pachamama Alliance begun among the Achuar people of Ecuador and Peru who began building a world alliance in 1995. The "Pachamama Alliance is a global community that offers people the chance to learn, connect, engage, travel and cherish life for the purpose of creating a sustainable future that works for all".

Food Safety and Food Sovereignty Movements: These groups typically address the WTO, the World Bank, IMF, and multinational corporations like Monsanto and the roles they play in agricultural production, at the same time advocating the rights of peasants. One such group is the international movement Via Campesina. The movement operates in Asia, Africa, America and Europe and comprises and coordinates 148 organizations of small and medium sized agricultural producers and workers, rural women and indigenous communities. The coalition of small producer organizations from around the world operates programs of seed-sharing. They protect seeds against Monsanto patents and against genetic modification.

Two other notable examples are the food sovereignty movement and the zero waste movement. Both movements exhibit features where the traditional meets the globalized world. They are locally driven but organize widely across the globe. The food sovereignty movement is largely comprised of small-families, peasants and landless farmers. Their activism fights against the World Trade Organization and its role in agriculture, and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and their roles in destroying local agriculture through the spread of corporate production.

The proponents of the zero waste movement are trying to find ways to step outside the consumption model of capitalist-produced goods. They are finding ways to regenerate what they need from what they have within their societies already, and thereby also produce

cooperative forms of income that foster community development and cohesion. They are international in their reach and scope, and they are very clear and explicit in their analysis about the role of corporations and the international financial institutions in destroying their ways of life and lands.

Alternative Economic Models: There is a growing list of economic alternatives to capitalism which include the green economy, blue economy and the global Zeri network, Buddhist economics (aims to clarify the harmful and beneficial range of human activities involving production and consumption in order to enhance human ethical maturity), Muslim economics (where taxation is imposed in order to reallocate resources to the needy in societies). These models already exist and more alternative economic models are emerging with innovative tools and frameworks, like the sharing (mesh) economy or the participatory economy.

Cultural Creatives – A Cultural Movement: The term was coined by Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson (2000) in their famous book *Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People are Changing the World*. Ever since the book's publication, a self-awareness has formed in groups that promote innovative, non-mainstream lifestyles outside the flows of global capital and that now call themselves 'cultural creatives'. They have web sites, as well as social media presence, and the movement has grown into a 'subculture', also known as LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability). It aims to promote creative forms of capitalism and actively participate in making a better world. It is estimated that in America more than 40 million identify with the movement, and in Europe around 60-80 million people are involved with the cultural creatives ([www.elasticmind.ca/innerpreneur/index.php/cultural-creativity/](http://www.elasticmind.ca/innerpreneur/index.php/cultural-creativity/)).

It is a mentality as well as a way of setting up and conducting businesses and living an organic life style. The attributes of being a culturally creative person are also formulated (see website above) and its primary values are authenticity, social activism, idealism, globalism and ecology, consciousness (feeling empathy and sympathy for others, understanding different viewpoints, valuing personal experience), and personal growth. The collective awareness of people advocating such values is not historically new, but the wide scale of this collective identity, and the number of people it connects are rather unprecedented – even with the common tendency that they are often isolated and not well-informed about each other.

Although the number of alternatives to the current paradigm of neoliberalism may appear small, it is important to know that their number is growing, and growing fast. They are

not often connected to a larger super-structure of a hierarchical movement and they are not always articulated as anti-capitalist or anti-globalization. There has been a clear surge in attempts to create real alternatives. This is being done by stepping outside the current system of relations and creating more fulfilling parallel micro-systems. This can also take the form of overcoming obstacles to fulfill needs within the dominant system, or changing unjust structures altogether.

### *Pathways to the Formulation of New Norms*

New norms cannot be achieved in a linear way via indoctrination, preaching or sanctions, especially not in a deeply divided world with a rapidly developing planetary or even cosmic technology of destruction, surveillance and manipulation. During the consecutive waves of democratization of the past century, new norms developed rather via open public discourse based upon the evaluation of failed political, cultural and social practices and the increasingly convincing moral, academic and artistic criticism of concerned citizens and the institutions run by them. It is impossible to forecast or prescribe the way a new discourse or narrative will emerge from the cacophony of the different movements, civil society networks, responsible academic institutions and creative and courageous individuals. Their increasingly dense networks seem to guarantee, however, the creative chaos for an emerging global civil society. This global civil society is far from crystallized; it exists rather in fragments and only expresses itself in sporadic global and regional rallies (such as the World Social Forum, the European Social Forum) or spontaneous solidarity actions. A more systematic and interrelated structuring of these transnational and local events, combined with an efficient methodology of collection and dissemination of documents, appeals and analyses, would have significant impact on global public opinion. These are the embryonic seeds of transnational democracy. If their activities would be coordinated and shared, they might more effectively act as the controllers of today's uncontrolled and nontransparent decision makers, holding them accountable for decisions that determine our planet's and humanity's destiny in the long run.

This path of global democratisation will not be easy, linear or rapid. It presupposes a new and complex perception of democracy, accountability and social responsibility from the side of concerned civil initiatives, movements and organisations. It also needs a new tacit consensus based on a new set of social contracts. All actors first of all have to make themselves as transparent and accountable as they claim state authorities, multinational

companies, global financial and trade institutions should be. They also have to develop a new attitude and practice towards horizontal (civil lateral) systematic cooperation. During the past 50 years there were many forecasts, warnings, protests and one issue movements and crossborder initiatives to discuss, influence and alter questions of public concern. These initiatives (professional, intellectual or political) were largely ignored or quickly forgotten partly because they hurt the interests of unaccountable global marketplayers, the mainstream media and public authorities, and partly because of self-imposed isolation and narcissistic ideological divisions and the shortsightedness of civil organisations, NGOs and social movements. This attitude and non-cooperative behaviour might change for the positive as the negative impacts of global challenges and crises continue to accumulate. There will be fewer and fewer convincing and credible answers given by democratically elected governments for solving them.

In a globalizing world of instant and constant communication the utilization of collective synergies is better suited to meeting the challenges than individual visions and pursuits. The acceptance of constant change and intransigence must replace the compulsive desire for permanence, which is only illusionary in any case. New frameworks and strategies need further development to assist the confrontation and management of complex and interdependent crises in a coalition of stakeholders (governments, business and civil society).

Another path leading to changing norms is a fundamental restructuring of our educational systems. We need holistic, inter-and transdisciplinary methods and interpretation of the growing uncertainties, social, political and religious-cultural polarisation, ecological catastrophies, unsustainability and amorality in the world today. We need a new approach to science and research that is embedded in, speaks to and is relevant for societies, not isolated in ivory towers of so-called objectivity. Compartmentalisation and fragmentation of 'knowledge' into 'disciplines' and higher education kept under the control of national authorities fundamentally hinders the development of the much needed new knowledge that might develop into collective wisdom that serves the future of all humankind. We need completely new institutions with horizontal and open structures that can be called Future-universities where the generation and accumulation of knowledge serves the interests of local, regional and global societies, instead of irresponsible and uncontrolled global political and market actors.

For many years, Immanuel Wallerstein has written about the two cultures of scholarship, that is science and philosophy. The gulf between these two cultures of thought was deliberate and a clear product of 19th century thinking. Science was assigned the task of looking for truth; while philosophy and what become known more generally as the humanities (history, and later economics, sociology, and political science) was positioned to search for goodness. The progress of the last 200 years has tried to reunite the search for truth and the search for goodness under the label of social science as it was established in the 19th century. Wallerstein observes, that rather than reunifying these two cultures, social science has itself been torn apart by the dissonance between the two searches.

Wallerstein recognizes two remarkable intellectual developments of the last two decades that constitute something and perhaps provide evidence of a process of overcoming the split of the two cultures, and in the terms of this study, point towards a movement of oneness in scientific analysis. The first is called complexity studies in the natural sciences, examples of analysis found in this paper; and the other is called cultural studies in the humanities. The reason complexity studies was given that name is because reality is complex. It rejects the Newtonian science (found in Table 2) that assumed that there were simple underlying formulas that explained everything.<sup>3</sup> “Complexity studies argues, rather, that all such formulae can at best be partial, and at most explain the past, never the future” (Wallerstein 1997). The universe is filled with ever evolving structures which reach points at which their equilibria can no longer be maintained and bifurcation takes place where new paths are found and new orders established, but we never know in advance what these new orders will be.

If physical scientists and mathematicians are now telling us that truth in their arena is complex, indeterminate, and dependent on an arrow of time, what does that mean for social scientists? For, it is clear that, of all systems in the universe, human social systems are the most complex structures that exist, the ones with the briefest stable equilibria, the ones with the most outside variables to take into account, the ones that are most difficult to study (Wallerstein 1997).

Cultural studies do not study culture as such, but rather how, when and why they were produced in the forms they were, and how they were and are received by others, and for what

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<sup>3</sup> “Einstein was unhappy that  $E=mc^2$  explained only half the universe. He was searching for the unified field theory that would in an equally simple equation explain everything” (Wallerstein 1997).

reasons. Thus, the study of cultural products has moved away from traditional humanities into the realm of the social sciences and the explanation of reality as a constructed reality.

With the move of natural science towards social sciences via complexity studies, and the move of humanities towards the social sciences via cultural studies, we are in the process of overcoming the two cultures through the 'social scientization' of knowledge that recognizes reality as constructed. With this movement, we are in the process of overcoming the artificial construction of hard and separate disciplines and are moving towards a unification of scientific and human endeavor, overcoming 19th century constraints, and providing the basis not only for holistic scientific enquiry, but for the basis of new, regenerative educational models.

In academic scholarship (research as well as education), particularly in the social sciences, there is an increasing recent tendency to try to bridge the fragmentary nature on knowledge to create truly transdisciplinary methodologies. New methodology is needed that is not tied to compartmentalized disciplinary categories that reflect and reproduce a mechanistic world view. Knowledge produced through the cross-fertilization of tools, information and methodologies requires a new type of university that can aid in the production of a complex understanding of contemporary global challenges.

In addition to Wallerstein, Christopher Chase Dunn (2005) and others repeatedly make the plea for the necessity to transform the social sciences and make them more global or cosmopolitan (Beck and Sznaider 2006). They convincingly argue that there is a necessity to renew the dialogue within the social sciences between activism (as public sociology) and scholarship (as professional scientific sociology). The two should not be thought of exclusive realms in conflict with each other, but rather as realms that are complementary and are thus equally necessary (Dunn 2005). Since "contemporary social change can only be comprehended in its world historical context," Dunn emphasizes the importance of taking a more comprehensive, global (and less nation-based, reductive) perspective as it yields a deeper and more accurate understanding of the larger processes of an emergent global system. He develops a typology borrowed from Michael Burawoy (2005) – i.e., professional, critical, policy, and public – that could be used to make the social sciences relevant,<sup>4</sup> applicable and

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<sup>4</sup> Burawoy's typology is summarized by Ericson (2005: 365-366) as the following:

*Professional knowledge* refers to institutionally defined and regulated theories and methods of sociology. Conceptual frameworks and methods are agreed upon. Scientific knowledge "[produces] theories that correspond to the empirical world" (Burawoy 2005: 276). This he calls 'mainstream sociology' to differentiate it from critical sociology.

*Critical sociology*, on the other hand, "largely defines itself by its opposition to

accountable in describing today's complex global realities like the crisis of and challenges to neoliberalism and neoconservatism, and the dynamics of core and periphery. The responsibility of a global public social science could be enormous in explaining global historical processes to people while actively engaging with global civil society. Dunn maintains that the institutional boundaries between contemporary social science disciplines are "annoying obstacles" to a scientific understanding of social reality as well as politically. Instead of abolishing the disciplines, however, he proposes a more effective transdisciplinary approach for both professional and public sociologists, who know the basic theories and methods of several social science disciplines.

He describes the following sub-fields for sociology as follows:

- Global professional Social Science is a field that studies social realities on a global scale incorporating the methodological tools and theoretical perspectives of various social sciences.
- Global Critical Social Science is a field that critiques, deconstructs and reformulates important global social science concepts (e.g. globalization) and global institutions and proposes critical ways of categorizing social forces, contradictions and antagonisms in ways that are intended to be of use for transnational social movements (e.g. Hardt and Negri 2004, Starr 2000).
- Global Policy Social Science is responsible for formulating global policies that plan ways and strategies to cope with global economic, social and political forces (e.g. Global Policy Institutes).
- Global Public Social Science comprises social scientists who use their research skills and analytic abilities to address global civil society and also serve transnational social movements (e.g. teaching and writing textbooks for students). Many universities have

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professional ('mainstream') sociology' (Burawoy 2005: 269–70). It is driven by normative frameworks and broader moral issues.

*Policy knowledge* is in the service of a client who defines a problem and asks the sociologist to help with solutions. It is judged by its practicality, effectiveness and usefulness to the client in making policy interventions.

*Public knowledge* appeals to broader public audiences. The sociologist is a public intellectual, communicating outside university contexts, especially in the media in public debates and fora. This public knowledge, according to Burawoy, is based on a consensus about the relevance between sociologists and the public.

While Burawoy acknowledges the overlap and interdependence among the types of knowledge, this can be better expressed as 'antagonistic interdependence' and each type of knowledge as relatively discrete.

established interdisciplinary undergraduate majors in global studies (e.g. University of California at Santa Barbara, The Global Studies Association, UCR Institute for Research on World-Systems, The Giordano Bruno GlobalShift University).

One of the drivers for a revolution in the social sciences and education is the conceptualization of a **Future University**. A Future University needs to be different in fundamental ways from today's obsolete, out-of-touch, and petrified institutions. New institutions should be 'learning' and not just teaching institutions where the co-creation of knowledge is translated into programs that promote self-reflection and self-correction, in systems, policies and societies. This way new knowledge hubs can steadily reconfigure their own capacities to include new partners and methods to assess and address changing realities.

The social and natural sciences, as well as technical innovations, should also be socially responsible. In the first place the question needs to be asked: does the research serve the interests of societies and if so, in what ways will it be useful identifying and providing relevant alternatives for the solution to problems. The **Future University**:

- 1) should not only be a teaching institution, but also a 'learning institution' that offers space, infrastructure and connectedness for creation and co-creation. The co-created, new knowledge produced and disseminated should be translated into developmental programs. That way research is connected to practice directly contributing to social, institutional and economic reforms and policies as well as to new, integrative and complex regional and city development strategies;
- 2) should benchmark social responsibility. The recent global crisis brought to the surface legitimacy questions caused by the lack of social responsibility in scientific research. Academia should become one of the strongest stakeholders in finding alternatives to the negative spirals and destructive tendencies of globalization. Researchers of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and technical innovation should ask the same questions before starting a new project: does our research and if so in what way, contribute to finding the proper answers to increasingly intertwined, complex problems and challenges;
- 3) should be built upon the principles and methodologies of inter- and transdisciplinarity. Divided knowledge undermines the solidarity of humanity and impedes development and achievement (UNESCO 2013). Complex problems caused by the pervasive global transformation cannot be understood and therefore solved without a new complex and

holistic approach and methodology. New visions of sustainability will not be provided by divisive and one-sided scientific paradigms. This presupposes a move from multi- and interdisciplinarity towards transdisciplinary thinking and research;

- 4) should be open towards all of the decisive actors of the globalizing world such as global and local market actors, including MNC-s and international financial institutions, representatives and experts from local via national to regional and global governmental institutions, as well as towards representatives of civil society and all forms of Media. The representatives of these seemingly separate but de facto in many ways interconnected spheres should be active participants of the new process of knowledge co-creation. An institutionalized dialogue among these artificially separated spheres of production, reproduction and interpretation might pave the way towards a new common language and vocabulary of the emerging global culture of problem solving. Looking for solutions to common global problems such as environmental crisis, poverty and growing social polarization needs the broadest possible understanding, the details of which can only be provided by the broadest spectrum of stakeholders. A conscious development – co-creation – of a new common language might also be an inevitable precondition for **new - global, regional and local social contracts**;
- 5) should be responsible for its own ‘human products’ – for that reason the walls and boundaries between different levels of institutionalized learning and teaching should be eliminated. This open and integrative nature of Future Universities would guarantee the effective, rapid and broad new knowledge dissemination to the spheres of culture, society, economy and politics. The broad, effective and rapid socialization of knowledge, combined with guarantees of feedback mechanisms might be the base for the co-creation of a new wisdom based society.

### *Concluding Remarks: Towards a New Global Social Contract*

It will not be easy to bring down the mental, political, and physical walls of division and separation and replace them with a holistic view and requisite behaviors. In our deeply divided world, the ideology and practice of ‘absolute sovereignty’ and the security of states (and not societies) still dominates the realm of politics. Democracy is restricted to

certain spheres of existence and human activities within the geographical units called nation states. It does not exist in institutionalised forms on global or regional/transnational levels. In political reality the idea of equal nation states as independent actors possessing the same rights is overwritten by the rule created by the biggest and mightiest actors.

The cognitive sphere of this world is equally dominated by separation: knowledge production and distribution is realized by so called 'disciplines' which usually guarantee the maintenance of a fragmented and one-sided academic picture of the world. This is why mainstream social sciences or academia as such has little to nothing relevant to say about the complexity, nature and potential impacts and consequences of damaging and intertwined processes we usually call 'crisis'. In fact we are in the midst of a great global transformation without adequate explanatory and intellectual tools. Nation state authorities are themselves having trouble understanding the complexities of their own positions and potentials of both conflict and cooperation. All these creates a dangerous and fragile *Weltzustand* in a world without global leadership and well-functioning, accountable and predictable international economic, financial, and political institutions. The world system is unbalanced and reached the phase of bifurcation.

There are, however serious signs of fundamental change both in the functioning of the world system and in the way of thinking about it and analyzing it. Since the breakout of the global crisis in 2007, there is an identifiable new set of social and political movements, protests, networks and individual initiatives that are formulating the core of a democratic global civil society. Revolutionary developments in ICT, the very new phenomena of social media, gives space for entirely new versions of self-mobilization, expression and the sharing of opinions and for transnational, regional or global deliberation. This new family of anti-systemic players is not yet crystallized but is gaining a new level of self-awareness, self-understanding and self-confidence. Their criticism has reached the official sphere of dominating institutions; their new vocabulary and narrative is more and more often echoed from international institutions such as the IMF or the World Bank and their representatives. In other words, we are witnessing a cognitive revolution whose outcome is yet unpredictable. Powerholders and opinionmakers have an increasingly hard job to maintain the ideological, intellectual and institutional pillars of the old world order. The new paradigm of a possibly more democratic and just future world order can already be identified in the thinking, behaviour, networking, and associations of the new players.

We can and should make efforts towards re-unifying or integrating artificially separated elements of the whole (one-ness) in the different spheres at one and the same time:

In our cognitive sphere of existence representatives and believers of complex and integrated thinking can pursue inter- and transdisciplinary research projects and re-configure existing institutions such as universities and research institutes accordingly or simply create new ones like the one we call the Future University. A new ethical base for social sciences is emerging worldwide and has begun to seriously influence academic discourse within international institutions such as UNESCO and the UN. For institutions under nationstate surveillance, a breakthrough seems take longer and be more troublesome, but cracks can be identified in the walls of old and obsolete knowledge factories as well. The need for new thinking and acting is growing worldwide. The concept of the Future University could integrate the fragments of these conscious or often unintended efforts of redefining the meaning and role of knowledge, academic research and scientific innovation in our lives.

In the sphere of real politics and action the changes are more obvious and dramatic. From the late 1970 s the world has witnessed the emergence of new social movements, civil society networks, protest and resistance against dictatorships and authoritarian rule. The new way of thinking and strategy of civil society was based on nonviolence and open, rational, and continuous dialogue with authorities representing power systems. This new civil culture of self-mobilization has reached a global dimension and global consciousness today. Strengthening networks of civil initiatives, movements and organizations can pursue public dialogue with global players if they find the right strategies of cooperation and coalition building and withhold their narcissistic-individualistic attitudes. On the basis of this new thinking and acting, complex and global strategies can be built which can result in a new social contract on all – global, regional and local – levels. This might lead us towards the notion of species consciousness that binds us all together with the other life forms on the planet we share.

How we have used and abused the Earth's physical resources in the pursuit of economic performance and profit at the expense of ethical values and societal and environmental well-being is the narrative of our societies that explains how we got to where we are today. We need to re-engage with our capacity to wonder by intuiting the resonance of a world alive with energy and a relentless spirit of creativity. A world of instant global communication, where time and place are no longer central, is a world less suited to individual visionaries and more to the synergy of collective action. The new narrative explaining who we are and why we are here is in the making. It has been proposed that humanity is finally reaching the level of consciousness. Scientists are studying the effects of our combined consciousness in, for example, the Global Consciousness Project. They say that "Large scale group consciousness has effects in the physical world. Knowing this, we can intentionally work toward a brighter,

more conscious future". The construction of a new narrative to take us into the future requires the input of each of us, and the time for action is now.

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