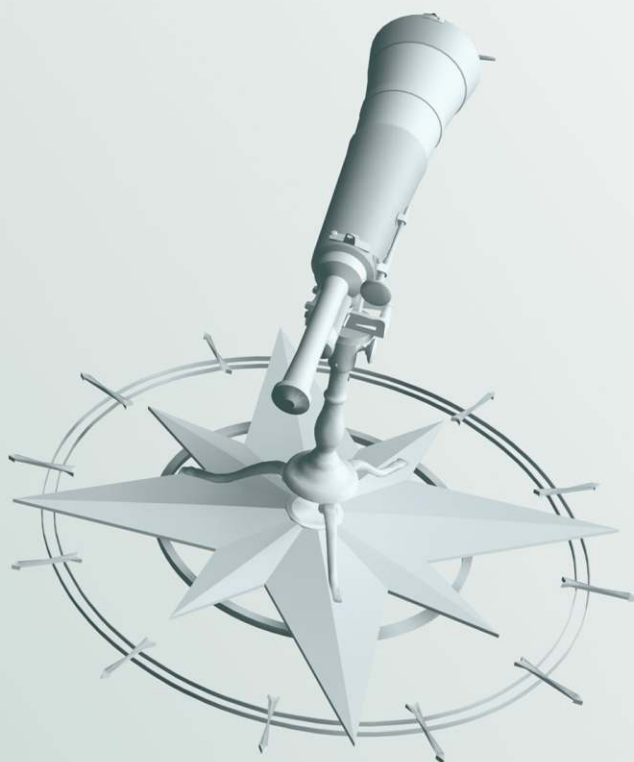


POST-CORONA PERSPECTIVE



what matters for a responsible
and sustainable future

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This is just a first translation version, improvements will follow. This is a translation of a book (in Dutch) about the Post-Corona perspective.
[www,lucsala.nl/postcorona.pdf](http://www.lucsala.nl/postcorona.pdf)

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This essay is not intended as a broad futuristic analysis, covering the whole gamut of society and science, but consist of personal notes and observations about what might be relevant. It was conceived as a note for the political circles and the government agencies that asked for suggestions concerning the Post-Corona era, but failed in coming up with a serious and solid vision themselves (so far). It's therefore limited in scope and has no pretentions to offer more than a few angles and suggestions, ways to look at what lies ahead beyond the obvious.



1 Post-Corona, looking ahead, but also mapping a sensible course

Post-Corona, the world after the crisis, how are we going to organize it? Once the worst of the aftermath has passed, a stable situation will hopefully return. It makes sense to look beyond the immediate chaos resulting from a damaged economy, a polarized general public and political landscape, a distrust in the system.

In this essay I ask questions and make suggestions, point at omissions and potential problems, but have no pretention about covering what is a very broad subject, the future of our society, economy and maybe the need to look for a new paradigm.

Do we clean up the immediate mess after Corona and just go back to normal? Or... did we learn something and start doing things differently? Can we see what happened to us as a challenge, a tipping point and opportunity for a paradigm shift? I hope for the latter, but then the question is whether society will turn out to be ready for such a change. We can formulate our ideals and make beautiful plans, but are they feasible and sustainable? That depends on the perspective. How do you view what has happened? That perspective is of course personal. And this also applies to this study, perhaps no more than a personal story, a 'narrative' and not necessarily a real reality. And with a Dutch perspective, maybe not all of the points are relevant to other countries.

My friend John Perry Barlow, co-founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation and authoritative writer on cyberspace and information once remarked that we are constantly rearranging and adapting our reality, our perception of the world and ourselves.

„reality is an edit!“

That comment strikes me as a profound truth, as everyone creates their own story, their own worldview, and even shared reality is flexible. But that does not absolve us from responsibility for the future. We have influence over that reality, and we can shape our thinking and vision from our perspective based on what we notice and what affects us. That goes beyond fixing what the corona crisis did and just adding pandemic to the list of threats that were already there, the issues like climate, energy, dichotomy, inclusivity and inequality. Letting things run their course is not a wise choice. We need to think about our future and learn from the past. Doomsday thinking and dystopian visions of impending armageddon don't help either. We have to create the future ourselves, as the writer St. Exupery reminds us.

The future, our task is not to foresee, but to enable it

This study provides incentives and suggestions for creating our future. I try to sketch here a broader picture, beyond the logical and necessary adjustments that will undoubtedly be made. Not a ready-made plan, but reflections and observations, fodder for discussion about a certain uncertain future. It is written from my personal perspective, which is obviously limited. I do not hold the truth.

In the book „Corona: Tipping Point & Fuckup“ I tried to outline how we have dealt with the corona threat so far, in the Netherlands. I am not very positive about that, it remained with panic soccer, sticking plasters and staying stuck in the „vaccination faith“. Therefore, here is an attempt to look past the corona crisis, but not without realizing the deep wounds that have been inflicted. Rather, the criticism in that book focused on what went wrong. For all the well-intentioned interventions and well effective measures, things went wrong quite often. But we will also have to look forward and then a somewhat more positive attitude might be better.

In this first chapter I will address a few key points as an introduction to the further analysis. These include:

- o The essentials, how do we deal with each other?
- o Partition and polarization
- o The reset and the idea of a tipping point
- o Democracy, rights and freedom
- o Group-mind phenomena and identification
- o Industrialization of more and more sectors, reduction of scale
- o Information as a poorly understood buzzword

Trust and wisdom

From my perspective, what we need most of all is trust and wisdom. Trust in each other, in the self-solving capacity of life and in ourselves. Without trust and self-confidence - and this has become quite a problem by now - we start to arrange things from fear, resulting in a lot of stress and mistakes. Restoring trust in society, democracy, the benevolence and integrity of others must be the first item on the agenda. That certainly also has to do with autonomy, with meaning and purpose.

And then wisdom, for me that is knowledge with love. We can't have enough of that either. Wisdom is badly needed, and then a bit broader than book wisdom because rational thinking and even science fall short of solving all problems. We need a lot of deeply felt insights so that we make decisions that come from understanding and compassion. Preferably, of course, by wise,

seasoned people who do not deny their emotions and are willing to listen and dare to ask for support.

From a religious perspective, this is a matter of grace, of a universe that has our best interests at heart. This realization has, of course, been pushed into the background by science and secular society, but doesn't the realization of a broader, but not physically touchable reality hold solace and hope? As far as I am concerned you can call that God, love, consciousness or a higher energy dimension; I see direction and meaning in creation.

Trust and wisdom are both impossible to measure, but we do know what the consequences will be if we do not honor and restore those principles. Then humanity will perish by itself. We will have to leave more room for intuition and what we know in depth and perhaps forget about so-called science and what they measure there a bit more. Above all, we will have to start working purposefully and not with the focus on even more growth and material possessions, but on progress towards a human society where happiness, development, essential resonance with nature and involvement are paramount.

Fear and acidification

Sowing and abusing fear seems to have been elevated to an art in the corona crisis but is of all times. Scare the people, then they will listen and you can turn them around and make them believe in whatever you put in front of them. People are easily persuaded by fear and stress because they are looking for solidity to cope with their inner chaos and division. The weapon of cognitive dissonance has always been used to label people as bad, disadvantaged, ugly or stupid on the one hand and to offer a solution on the other, in the form of a belief, a product or an ideology. The churches are good at it, but it is also popular in marketing. Show that with product A, service B or vaccination C you can change your powerlessness and feelings of inferiority and conquer your fears, then 'the customer' will gladly pick it up. Once cognitive dissonance has been established - and this can be achieved through the media and the Internet today with false information (lies and deceit) or correct information (who still knows what is true or real?) - people will do everything in their power to change their beliefs until they are consistent with each other. Then cognitive resonance follows: you have become convinced of being right, there is self-justification, and you close yourself off to any information that can change that.

This is true for one party, but also for the other. During the corona crisis, anti- and pro-vaxxers showed the same behavior; they closed themselves off to the other's arguments.

Fear and the stress associated with it is bad for a person. This has been conclusively proven by animal experiments and psychological and physiological research. It affects the resistance. It is perhaps going too far to say that it was

mainly the 'fearful' who were the victims of the coronavirus, but there is something to it. Fear seems to be primarily psychological, but also physiological. It can affect your kidneys but also your liver (anger). Your adrenal glands play a huge role because they control your fight-flight-freeze response using neurotransmitters, such as like adrenaline, etc. Those adrenal glands are your „emotion ears,“ picking up on the emotions of others. This is the result of an evolutionary legacy, which animals have a lot of, but which sometimes makes it difficult for humans.

Anxiety is sometimes helpful, but usually very unhealthy, leading to stress and acidification, which gives all kinds of diseases like cancer a chance and makes your nerves work faster.

We become acidic, physically and mentally. Acidification of a single person is already bad, but when the whole society becomes acidified, the stress increases and we become angry faster, less tolerant, sicker faster and more people die. We then see what is called excess mortality and I fear that even after Corona we will continue to struggle with all that stress and anxiety and perhaps also a widely compromised immunity.

Beyond the symptomatic approach

Everyone understands that we need to do a lot in the short, medium and long term to (re-)parse the effects of corona as best we can, but the danger is that we will come up with partial solutions and compromises again. It would be a missed opportunity if we are not guided by trust and wisdom now but again prioritize models, algorithms and overly rational connections with the temptations of micromanagement, symptomatic emergency bandages, quick finds and miracle oil.

Practically, there is much to be done. Of course, there needs to be a clear and comprehensive inventory of the problems, both those created by corona and what was already upon us before the pandemic. The threats in terms of environment, climate, economic stability, internet flattening, loss of privacy and division are issues that can no longer be ignored.

However, do not expect my opinion or suggestions about all those beautiful alternative plans that are now being devised. I try to outline and do not go into things like the millionaire tax, the basic income, exhaust-free mobility, middle schools, hydrogen energy, nuclear power plants, energy cooperatives, more small internet platforms with their own servers, sailing merchant ships, electric inland waterways, housing initiatives for the elderly and groups, new opportunities for organic farming, tiny houses, express buses, health insurance, smart houses, green roofs, specific tax measures, Tobin-tax2, etc. etc. Also, I don't go very much into what I think could be much better articulated by others, the need for action regarding climate, energy, overpopulation, the

water issue, biodiversity and the ecology. I'm sure there will be some very good suggestions about that, such as that we will have to eat less meat, for example, because livestock and farming for livestock are huge polluters and sources of CO2. I look forward with some hope to measures that will address all that, but won't go into it further in this study.

Us and them

Partition, a deep divide in society resulting in polarization, is nothing new. There have always been have's and have-not's, always free-thinkers and good followers, poor and rich, smart profiteers and less gifted serfs. But now it's all a touch more extreme, with the haves/rich/smart literally swimming in money and a large proportion of the have-nots/poor/dumb, despite good will and hard work, simply unable to make ends meet.

There are often multiple divisions running simultaneously, some of which overlap. There has been a lot of focus in recent years on the economic dichotomy, the elite getting richer and richer, and that still plays into it, but the more explosive dichotomy that we also face after corona is that between those who willingly embraced the policy and those who did not.

This now current social divide is a serious issue with potentially very violent manifestations. It is partly the result of box-ticking, of being stuck in beliefs that gave rise to an adapted reality.

The dichotomy in society has also increased as a result of the vaccination coercion and the QR coronapas to such an extent that there is talk of a witch hunt, of systematic discrimination. Polarization is growing and not only the hard core of unvaccinated, but more and more citizens are already speaking openly about a „responsible“ resistance to this totalitarian and illegitimate approach.

Vaccination was for a long time the only route for the government, with a secret and in my view criminal contract as its basis. Prophylaxis and treatment were barely discussed and alternatives were blocked. If possibly the long term effects of vaccination turned out to be less than favorable and would have lasting negative effects then there is certainly a chance of what could be called the 'coronat disputes', with chaos, violence and even civil war. The government's policy of blaming the anti-vaxxers (the vaccine free) under the guise of „They are now the pandemic“ is stirring up sentiment but, fortunately, is also increasingly being defused.

There are relevant concerns. Will this pandemic ever pass or will we get used to constantly poking and prodding? Will corona, like AIDS or cancer for example, become part of a new 'reality'? One hopes, of course, for a return to 'normal'. However, whether we really understand yet what the pandemic has done, not only physically but also psychologically, is questionable. It seems that there is a deep trauma here, which will continue to linger for a long time.

The corona pandemic is not quite over, certainly not worldwide. New variants such as oMicron (and this need not be the last) can still throw a spanner in the works, as was shown in December 2021. Vaccines can still have unpleasant side effects, turn out to be contaminated or less effective; the alternative press and the Internet are very concerned about this. If this is shared more widely, the flames can quickly spread worldwide or in certain countries.

It does not take much. Our society and economy are certainly not stable anymore. The stock markets may collapse, the financial house of cards of ever-increasing money creation and inflation may topple, the digital encapsulation and loss of privacy may lead to outbursts and hacker resistance, or trust in government may sink dangerously.

Reset, everything upside down or not

However, a future without a pandemic or with a manageable scope such as normal flu and repeat vaccination is bound to come our way. At least we can hope so. If we keep it positive and assume a quiet end to the crisis, what comes next?

A new time is coming with new challenges and insights and we need to set the stage for that now; develop a vision. In fact, we are due for an „Umwertung aller Werte,“ a reset or paradigm shift that goes far beyond some „extra“ or „new normal“ and the neoliberal rearguard action, which we are being served up as a „Grand Reset“ by the WEF folks from Davos. We can deny this and give the economy all the space again, enjoy consuming and go back to the old, but that does not make the dark clouds disappear!

Seeing the tipping point as positive

In my view, Corona was not only a bad time with many fuck-ups and the loss of many achievements, but also a turning point. Many people have come to realize that things must and can be done differently. The crisis increasingly became a wake-up call, a warning. It is an opportunity to tackle things properly, to create new and solid foundations, beyond the delusion of the day with graphs that don't add up, figures intended to instill fear, reports that should reassure us but in fact bring unrest. No longer will we put the „care“ first, no longer will we continue to work symptomatically with series of boosters and attempts to keep the supporters on board with more lies and manipulated facts. The alternatives will have to be taken seriously. The situations in which a minuscule parliamentary majority imposes its will on the minority are illustrative of how far we have moved away from the principles and principles that were once established as universal.

Avoiding Opportunism

It is time for a new vision, and I do not mean the opportunistic and actually somewhat childish plans and proposals such as suggestions to organize carniva (mardi gras) and professional soccer in the summer. Such remarks

reach the media and are presented as forward-looking thinking but are exactly what characterized the whole corona crisis: ego trips, panic soccer, not thinking things through and not taking feedback into account. Our institutions, such as all kinds of planning bureaus and think tanks, must be more broadly equipped and expanded to include cross-thinkers. But the wider population must also be involved. The lie of the slogan „we must tackle it together“ from the first corona period has now been punctured, but are we really going to do anything about listening to the people, the stakeholders, the people on the work floor. In my opinion, the medical, social and scientific elite should take a few steps back.

They need to think fundamentally about a society that does not just survive a five-year dip, but really offers a new perspective for the long term.

Developing such a vision is not the same as devising all kinds of specific measures or arranging practical things in detail in agreements such as a coalition agreement. And that vision must be based on sound and broad principles and not descend into mediagenic drivel full of details, compromises, dreams and wish lists that are more limiting than inspiring and often smell strongly of lobbyism.

How far do we go?

The big picture is that a reset is needed, a fresh start. We cannot continue on this dead-end road to a situation, in which we make ourselves impossible as humanity. Whether we get boiled up or start exterminating each other en masse, it doesn't matter much then. The question is, of course, how far removed this reset must be from the old 'normal'. Because it appears that we quickly fall back. If at all possible, we return to holidaying, shopping and going out. Material luxury and consumptive consumption are apparently difficult to unlearn.

Change is scary, because you never know what might happen.

Unfortunately, the inescapable message is that something must be done. As far as I'm concerned, that has to go beyond repairing the damage and some superficial adjustments to the environmental threats with all kinds of unclear and conflicting interests that play a part in the decisions about it. If the corona crisis really is a singularity, or a one-time leap to another level, a true tipping point, then we won't get there with some band-aids and an equally numbing pill or prick.

There is already a broad discussion going on about what Post-Corona should entail and all sorts of parties and interest groups claim that their solutions are the right ones. Sometimes the underlying motives are nicely hidden behind pompous language and impressive media appearances. Then even the critics

often fail to see through the bubble, but I still hope that we will not swallow everything that is served to us as a pre-cooked panacea.

Conspiracy

Take the idea that there is a global „conspiracy“ that wants to enslave us all to a new neoliberal elite. This seems to me to be a nonsensical projection, which also deviates greatly from Rutger Bregman's vision³ of man not as virtuous and essentially okay, but as a predator who is always busy with the pecking order and ruthlessly seeks out obedient and slavish customers and employees.

I don't go far with that. I don't see so negatively those so-called top people, the „illuminati“ who are supposedly secretly running the banks, the companies and the world. There are bound to be companies and conglomerates with vague and bad plans, such as what Pfizer et al. have put in our stomachs, but that will come out in the end. Also, the power of the WEF (Davos) that manifests itself in this way and enlists ambitious types as „Young Global leaders“ is only limited, there is a limit to the manipulation. Business and the banks are very powerful and do not always operate wisely, but also the influence of the big five (the internet giants) will eventually be curtailed.... We have given too much power away, there will be a reaction to that.

The real thinkers and 'change agents' I know (and they may not be the tastemakers of public opinion), are almost always religious, quite humble and often very nice people with a lot of tolerance and understanding. I've had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing a number of them, just search YouTube (on terms like coloret)). That's not to say that there aren't faulty collaborations, often operating very openly and certainly not secretly, with an agenda that can be questioned. But I think it is more a case of stupidity and incompetence, of self-enrichment, of box-ticking than of malicious intent. The explanation for many incidents and complex situations is often stupidity and incompetence; it is not all malice. This is sometimes referred to as 'Hanlon's Razor'.

„Never attribute to malice, what can be adequately explained by stupidity“

Democracy: freedom and rights, but also duties

Most stories and visions of Post-Corona begin by emphasizing the restoration of civil rights and freedom. This sounds nice, but actually amounts to 'back to normal' and ignores the major shortcomings in, for example, the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights'. When this was being drafted (by Eleanor Roosevelt and others after WW2), it was briefly considered to add 'duties' as well, but this was eventually omitted. But these are precisely what are crucial. Rights without duties, responsibilities and preconditions are hollow. It leaves too much room for interpretation, as we see around the vaccination issue.

There is no balance, it has remained too much of a neo-liberal concept, which many non-Western cultures therefore have difficulty with.

Even in cyberspace where we achieve a lot of convenience and comfort, there is hardly any balance, balance in what we get and what we bring, where the profits fall and where privacy is also invaded. A new world order, if it were even possible, must take this into account and regulate this better.

The fundamental issue, which we will continue to wrestle with after corona, is the trade-off between the individual and the collective and the choices we institutionalize in that and embed in the system. Democracy is one way of regulating that, but it has become too vague and empty a concept by now. We call things democratic that are actually totalitarian, unilaterally and top-down imposed by those in power.

We will have to rethink and reformulate how we see interests and values and what role information plays. As far as the individual is concerned, in recent decades we have emphasized 'rights' and individual fulfilment, but often interpreted this in a limited way as material success, fame, being better than someone else. You could also say the same with regard to social intercourse; this too has become too one-sided. Vaccination, for example, was made more or less a social duty, but at the expense of autonomy and agency. This erosion of the freedom and space we need to learn, develop and adapt society to changing circumstances can have enormous consequences and paralyze, for example, innovation, entrepreneurship and individual initiative.

This actually means that we have to work out the relationship between individual interest and individual values and the collective more broadly and more deeply and hold up to scrutiny the basic values of existence and being human. A task for philosophy and ethics, but with many practical consequences.

Slipping into totalitarian structures

You can also base a whole society on mistrust, seeing everyone apriori as dangerous, fraudulent or criminal. We are well on the way to that because of the whole culture of fear surrounding corona. Then you get a terrifying, almost totalitarian system with a lot of unnecessary hierarchy and power differentials; an elite and a lot of minkuks. The status quo remains, though in a new guise, the old elite remains in power in new 'branding'. No 'power to the people', but power over the people, a control society, especially in a digital context and without room for privacy.

Such a form is being introduced stealthily by things like a QR code and digital identification. It is nicely disguised with the false argument that we trade a little freedom for a lot of security. This is propagated as a new 'grand reset' ideal and 'building back better' by those who benefit or think they can benefit. And this attracts the ambitious types, the 'wannabees', people who participate for

self-interest, for status or to feel important. You often see this behavior with politicians and entrepreneurs, they also want to go to Davos, participate in the theater there.

Tolerance; group mind phenomena and identification

People have become very divided by the whole corona situation. You have pros and cons, vaxxers and anti-vaxxers, well-wishers and alternativists, wackos and rioters. The parties blame each other for their own behavior and project their own shortcomings onto the other. This division, like the controversy surrounding Donald Trump in the US, affects the whole of society, including one's own families and circle of friends. Consultation then no longer seems possible. It is not a question of power, counter-power, exchange and dialogue, but of ideology and hardened polarization. This has caused enormous damage, resulting in social unrest, distrust, reduced cohesion, aversion to democracy and the institutions, which people no longer take seriously.

Repairing all that is a huge challenge. Perhaps it helps to see that this polarization is a more or less natural consequence of tension, fear, stress and uncertainty. Human nature (with animal roots) reacts through 'fight, flight, freeze' and then seeks support from others with the same reaction pattern and identifies with their thinking. But identification means compromise, partly giving up one's own opinions and exchanging them for the group spirit. This happens in a soccer stage, in politics and in society. People close themselves off to other thoughts because there is only one truth, such as that vaccination will bring the solution. That (own) truth thus becomes a rock and dissenters are heretics. They must be fought, are blamed for everything that goes wrong and are the 'enemy'. This has nothing to do with secret agendas of the WHO or Davos, but is a vision that has spread like a virus. It seems that at the top everything is coordinated. In fact, there is a kind of indoctrination field, to which the good majority, including the top people conform, a 'group mind'. Think of it as mass hypnosis or collective resonance. This is not (yet) a rational field of research, but there is apparently some kind of connection between people that we cannot or cannot yet measure, but which causes this kind of herd behavior. So you can't blame Rutte et al. and his opponents for going along with this, because herd behavior, swarms and schools of fish are an evolutionary legacy and prove to be very useful in hostile attacks.

What might help is to acknowledge this, to build tolerance for the identifications of the other. Perhaps also by looking yourself in the mirror and seeing the projection. The 'others' are not bad people, they are just stuck in their identifications like everyone else.



The new Tesla mega-factory in Brandenburg near Berlin

Industrialization of Everything

Nowadays, the disadvantages of globalization and the flattening (entropy is what it's called in physics) through cyberspace are increasingly pointed out, but didn't that start with the pursuit of more efficiency, starting with mechanization. Everything could be faster and cheaper, but it had to be on a larger scale. We first industrialized production, then reporting and administration, and then justice, education, science and health care also became factories.

At first glance, this produced stunning results. We could make everything cheaper and faster. Prosperity increased (but not well-being), poverty decreased worldwide, we live longer, and there were fewer bloody conflicts. The world has improved, certainly in material terms. The fact that we may not be happier, can no longer cope with the misery that industrialization has brought, are becoming increasingly anxious and have lost contact with the 'other, invisible' reality, well, we'll fix that. We just have to implement the 'Great Reset' of the World Economic Forum and especially not doubt the neoliberal elite behind it. They do it for us, otherwise our would-be leaders wouldn't be so against it!

We can no longer avoid industrialization. It starts at school, because classroom teaching is simply more efficient: everyone is equal, individual qualities are secondary. Schools seem like learning factories that prepare you for obedient citizenship and consumerism. However, we encounter industrialization everywhere. We all have IKEA furniture, receive mass-produced medicines (and vaccines), drive standard means of transportation, pay automated, and have our data stored but actually surrendered to the cloud. Even being born in the hospital is an industrial process based on protocols and with no real consideration for the human being, who just has to endure it all.

This is the underlying trend, which is also at the root of the broader issues around diversity, dichotomy, climate, energy and the stagnation of science. A

Post-Corona vision must reflect on this fundamentally and determine a strategy on how to reverse this trend.

Surgery became medicine, from a holistic concept to pure symptom control. The doctor is trained in medical school to determine and implement protocols and is only allowed to think in terms of symptom treatment. The holism of the shaman, the medicine man, the healer and even the witch and the midwife was dismissed as backward, primitive and not scientific. But isn't science often a ritual, a play with minimal progress, employment for the masses we keep educating but actually distract from what is really important? Great insights are few and far between in this century (but it is still young...). The twentieth century brought breakthroughs that we are now building on. Everyone should strive for a diploma, degree or title? Whether you actually achieve anything with that becomes the question, because in the end you need more plumbers, caretakers and shelf stockers than highly educated ladies and gentlemen. The scientific system is self-sustaining, has become quite ritualized and thinks it has a monopoly on truth, as was clearly demonstrated during the corona crisis.

People became numbers and knowledge was protocolized, standardized and digitized. What counts is what is in the computer and no longer what can be invented in human contact. In essence, we are robbed of our identity and with it autonomy, control and meaning disappears, with fearful consequences for the fate of humanity.

Scaling down, self-sufficiency and sharing

The motto „Small is beautiful“, a plea for small scale by the economist Ernst F. Schumacher is one of insights that can be of great use to us in the Post-Corona era. Among other things, he stated:

To strive for a giant scale is to strive for self-destruction.

Any intelligent idiot can make things bigger, more complex and more violent but it takes a touch of genius and courage to go in the opposite direction.

There is already a clear trend toward scaling down, toward local production, toward „real“ products that don't come off an assembly line but it will go much further. Local production, for example in agriculture and horticulture, requires less logistics than flying in exotic products from faraway countries. The idea that you have to produce where it is cheapest has led to uniformity, loss of taste and quality, and has affected the diversity and thus the inherent resilience of both the biology and the economy. Globalism seems nice, but everyone knows that the apple from their own tree tastes better anyway, is not sprayed and is picked at the right time.

We are a bit fed up with industrial uniformity and we see this in how we eat, how we dress, but also in education. Parents realize how one-sided and re-

strictive „normal“ education is and are looking for alternatives, such as free schools with more room for individual development. In higher education, there is also a trend towards individual adaptation of the curriculum, but they continue to think in terms of the classroom. It is precisely the relationship between student, mate and master, the old guild model, that can perhaps stimulate the transfer of knowledge and experience much better. Individual one-on-one transfer and mentoring was the basis for further development in many ancient cultures, the idea of the guru and the disciple.

The de-industrialization that we see growing now is, perhaps paradoxically, partly due to automation, because with the Internet anyone can become a producer and seller himself, of material things but certainly also of creative expressions, of journalism, literature, art, music and whatever one can think of. You can teach courses online, do consulting work, and serve clients all over the world. That will continue, but human and physical contact, with each other, with the makers and producers, with the products themselves and not through a picture or 3D image on a site makes it all a bit more real, more fun, more meaningful.

Self-sufficiency, self-care for not only food, but also education, repairs, family care and recreation will increase. We've maybe also learned a thing or two from the lockdowns.

We will also share more, because why carry the burden of ownership when you can also borrow, rent and use together. Access to products and services will become more important than having them. Possession was important as a means of differentiation, to make an impression, to underline your social position, but in the experience economy of the future we can arrange things differently. This will require a reassessment of many economic processes and their administrative processing, particularly in terms of taxation. New business models and, for example, regulation of partial ownership of homes, land, copyrights and inheritance are needed; the civil code is in need of a major „reset“.

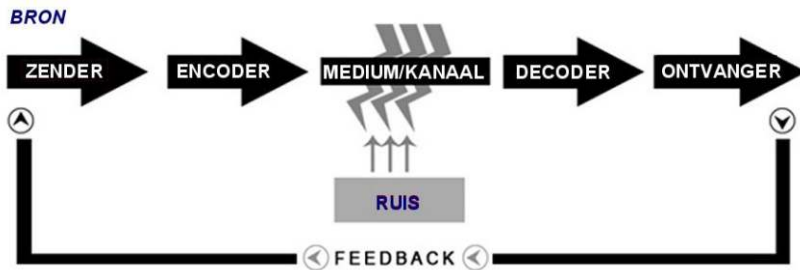
Information, the illusion of data that makes no difference

In the last century, the concept of information became more and more prominent. Informatics, digitization, artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet and cyberspace are all part of a new paradigm, beyond mechanization, industrialization and automation. People do talk about a positive Web 3.0 future, where we regain control of our 'information' and our 'resources' after accessing cyberspace services (and out of the hands of 'The big five' Internet power-houses: Facebook, Google, Amazon, Twitter and Apple), but isn't that a facial deception?

Are we seeing the concept of 'information' clearly, are we not ignoring what I stated back in the 1980s, namely:

„A bit is only information if it bytes“.

This goes beyond seeing information as knowledge and reducing indeterminacy (as Wikipedia defines the concept of information far too narrowly). It makes the concept of information contextual, in a sense always subjective and also broader than human thought. It also includes action, emotion, change and comes close to the physical concept of negative entropy. Where



entropy leads to flattening, information provides order and change, adaptation to external impulses and circumstances.

Order and change

Information has two dimensions, one having to do with order, structure, relationship, channel and 'permanence' and one having to do with change, reaction and 'flux'. In a broad sense, these dimensions are fundamental, we encounter them as passive/active, female/male, analog/digital, security/freedom or goody/ rebellious. They are not opposites, but separate dimensions that both need to be honored. Without structure nothing exists, but without movement (Panta Rhei) and development, information is also an empty concept.

Information, then, is not only an activity, as John Perry Barlow noted, but also the structure that makes manifestation of that activity possible.

The concept of 'information' or its hipper variant 'Info' emerged from communication science and the insights of Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, developed into a core concept in cybernetics (steering science) and in the digital perspective into a core concept for data processing.

Shannon and Weaver's „Model of Communication“ is a mathematical theory that assumes human communication has six components: sender, encoder, channel, noise, decoder and receiver. The cybernetics pioneer Norbert Wiener added feedback. But it was soon seen that the whole information model also applies to non-human communication, in nature but also between

machines (or computer systems). In practice, there is often two-way communication, with sender and receiver changing roles regularly.

The anthropologist and philosopher Gregory Bateson elaborated on the theory of Weaver and Shannon and saw 'information as a difference that makes a difference'. Barlow stated,

„Information is a Verb, not a Noun.“

Steward Brand saw it this way, „Information wants to be free. Information also wants to be expensive.“ There is an obvious tension in that. Cheap, found everywhere (internet) and even seemingly free (but you pay with your data), easily multiplied, but also with a tendency to be limited, made expensive and exclusive, only of use to a limited group. Think of sensitive stock market information or information that certain professions jealously protect, such as lawyers and notaries. This protected 'information' is not very safe, by the way, because with techniques such as 'block-chain' everything is going to be standardized and customization in contracts and around issues such as accountancy, registration and filing are disappearing. Entire professional groups are no longer needed and are going to disappear and that too is relevant to thinking about the post-corona society. Sharing, and this is very easy digitally, is a very different economic basis than possession. This is something that we see as a broad trend that is being embraced by the younger generations,

The value of information does not follow the classical laws of the 'old' economy, about scarcity and pricing, and sometimes it translates into value, but sometimes it does not. That is the paradox that is in 'information wants to be free, and expensive'. Exclusivity has value, but it also has a wide following. Value can also be created by giving something away and recruiting followers/subscribers. Influencers also create value in this way. Perspective and relevance to the recipient helps determine value. This also means that time plays a role, because the information value can decrease very quickly, prices of five minutes ago are worth nothing, time to market of a new product is decisive, because the 'winner takes all'. Information at the moment you need it, has value and otherwise not. This same phenomenon ensures, for example, that a cup of coffee costs a quarter at home and Starbucks charges five euros with a smile.

In the beginning, the pioneers of the Internet but also the hackers only saw advantages in digitization and the Internet. It would give everyone access to all knowledge and reduce the divide in society. Equal opportunities for everyone. Freedom of information would become the key to a new society. To some extent this is true but the reality is that we now know that cyberspace and computing have actually fallen into the hands of the elite and big business and that the government is conveniently using it to create a control society. Our privacy

(and data protection) is visibly evaporating (especially in the corona crisis) and that limits our freedom. The freedom to learn, to make mistakes and to make intimate connections.

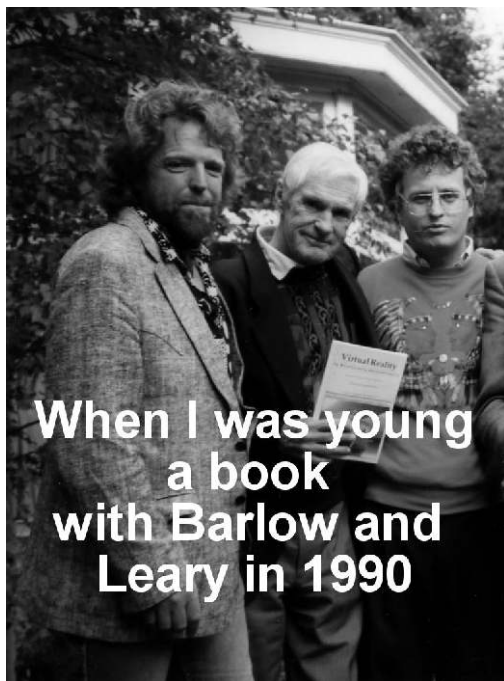
There are no laws or enforceable rules or even the beginnings of morality in cyberspace. Large countries can enforce some, but cyberspace is still a kind of wild west. Rights and certainly duties are not clear, you can spread nonsense and misinformation and usually get away with it. Cybercrime is now bigger than the robbing, stealing, and drug stuff of the past.

The materiality of information

It was shouted, again by John Barlow, that cyberspace is virtual and needs no physical base, but by now we know better. Bitcoins without a carrier do not exist, thoughts and concepts in your head need a biological carrier (pulses and chemical signals) and even digital art (nowadays we have non-fungible token (NFT) objects that can be passed off as art and auctioned off) needs to be recorded somewhere

The whole of reality with all the information it contains is a „hard“ thing, a manifested consciousness or quantum-physical collapses of the probability curve if you will, but it exists. Identity is not only the basis of the touchable, but also of an idea.

The whole question of intellectual property (patents, copyrights) has lost its physical pillars (paper, machines) in cyberspace, Barlow argues, but also lacks the moral dimension. He was, incidentally, long convinced that cyberspace, aided by encryption, would primarily serve people and democracy. In a still current book on Virtual Reality⁵, which we wrote together in 1990, we already discussed this. The discussion about the usefulness and value of (digital) data collection and storage is still topical, but is ignored by politics and science. Progress is mainly seen as more digital, more AI, more computers and more automation. Human beings as social and emotional beings just have to adapt.



**When I was young
a book
with Barlow and
Leary in 1990**

Our money and possessions we call „real“ but that is usually nothing more than zeros and ones somewhere in a database. It seems that money is the foundation of property, trade and prosperity, but our digital money can also just disappear tomorrow due to hackers or a solar flare, which can flatten our entire magnetic system and therefore all our computer networks. Our dependence on the digital infrastructure is increasing all the time so if that goes down total chaos ensues within a few hours. Meanwhile, that dependence combined with an imposed digital identity linked to our social bravery status, bank details, QR codes and health status is becoming very frightening. To government, landlord, the banks and the medical profession, you are now all they know about you, a number, a file. Your total identity, that which you really are, no longer counts. You are a mountain of data, the true information does not interest the system.

So there is a need, perhaps a necessity to arrive at a whole new vision of what information actually is and what computing, such as with block chaining, VR, data mining and AI, can or cannot achieve. The contextual and relational side is becoming increasingly important, because data by itself is noise and only when it provides structure and response does it help you. It is about much more than the binary information in computers, the cloud or networks and the economy. Our freedom is at stake, because free choice hardly exists in cyberspace. What we are presented with as information is often click-bait, selected by the platforms, the government or the criminals, who are attacking us.

In this sense, information has to do with choices, with the search for a balance between rights and obligations. We must take a broad view of this, because experiences, emotions and art are also information and are stored in our biological system, although we are often not aware of this. Pleasure, and not just the recreational commerce and distractions we are handed or imprinted with, has information value, although we cannot express it in monetary terms.

A number of important points have been made in this chapter and will also be elaborated on later. That much needs to be done and there may need to be a fundamental „rethinking,“ a move to a new paradigm is clear.



2 Normal, better normal, reset

Are we going back to the Pre-Corona situation? Many people would like to and hope for a return to what we knew and, in retrospect, actually thought was fine. In the meantime, however, society and all of us may have changed. We buy, do and think, work and learn differently, and there are troubling threats such as climate, financial turmoil, division and the environment.

So it makes sense to first take stock of the problems that are upon us and list the challenges for Post Corona society. Not a list of bottlenecks that need to be solved immediately but a framework and a vision of what the core is about.

Actually, this chapter was the beginning of my exploration into the Post-Corona state. Science, marketing books, my experience as an entrepreneur had taught me to think in Powerpoint terms, in lists and menus; reducing everything to bite-sized chunks. So when in May 2021 there seemed to be an end to the Corona crisis because the vaccination would tame it anyway, I started doing that. Useful, but also a way to get bogged down in enumerations and that vague hope of that spring has meanwhile collapsed. You realize that after a while and then you start to pick out the main points again and I wrote the previous chapter. But the enumeration and inventory cannot be left out anyway.

Inventory of problems and starting points

What has changed, what needs to be done, can we get by with better normal, with some repairs or do we need a reset? The idea, that we go back to 'normal' may be attractive to many people and politically a promise but the fundamental problems that stare us in the face do not make it very meaningful.

That's why there is talk of the 'new normal' which is back to normal with some adjustments, especially regarding the climate crisis. From the neo-liberal and meritocratic corner and especially the established elite and big business, there is an attempt in this sense to continue the existing situation with some adjustments. The metaphors used, such as 'Grand Reset' and 'Building Back Better' give the impression that the forces behind this (such as the WEF in Davos) are seeking real change. But I indicated earlier that the whole New World Order (NWO) idea can, in my view, be seen as a rearguard action of the elite who feel threatened and want to maintain actual inequality with all kinds of compromises anyway. This can be done more easily if everyone is

digitally earmarked, if everything about health, behavior, property and abilities is recorded in digital files, which are insidiously forced upon us because it is so safe and convenient.

There are, of course, a number of things that are not so easily brought back to 'normal' or even a recalibration of Western rationality in parts, such as the 'reset'. Perhaps the whole thinking about social engineering, about thinking, consciousness, and the role of humanity should be shaken up. There are serious threats and problems, in a wide area. Partly beyond our control, such as solar activity, but largely the result of the way we have treated the earth, nature, resources and human dignity. What's at play?

A: Short-term problems such as the cost of the crisis, refugees, long corona complaints, recovery of the economy, inflation, tourism and travel.

B: Some long-term problems: climate, environment, aging, (bio)diversity, national identity, economic order, financial stability.

C: Problems with democracy, the state economy and the state, on which, by the way, the member of parliament Pieter Omtzigt has made a good start with his vision of a new social contract.

D: Mental health requires attention: lack of meaning, control, privacy, autonomy, censorship, appreciation for everyone's qualities.

E: There have been lasting changes in the way we live, work, do business. We see them in the economy, in our behavior, logistics, transport, public transport, education, mostly related to digitization but also with habituation to other forms of communication, the online economy, payment behavior, increasing identification with partial interests, other forms of work, changing export opportunities, new top sectors, international cooperation, housing, ownership relations, new forms of money, block-chain contracts (bitcoin), gamification (turning everything into a game), PTSD, medical diagnostics and healthcare costs, science as a compartmentalized paradigm, the end of routine jobs, the future of the inner city, tourism, recreation, festivalization, the sharing economy, experience economy, the emotion economy, intuition and crowd-sensing. This category requires further inventory and interpretation and will be addressed in part.

In fact, we are facing a whole load of changes and therefore problems and challenges that can only be tackled with a total vision. The current division into sectors, ministries, branches and the organs and institutions of the past will have to be overhauled.

Now a complete rearrangement of society is a very radical process, which may not be possible without violence and chaos. It helps to see first, what principles and problems lie ahead of us. A few clear principles are needed, which together give the outline of a new paradigm, as a basis for policy and implementation.

To begin with, the distinction between good and evil, of course eternally a point of contention but very decisive for the organization of a society. There is no universal truth or goodness. Norms and values result from choices made, explicitly or implicitly, concerning two axes, permanence and flux, or the collective versus the individual. Both are needed, we need security and freedom, too much emphasis on one of the two makes a society unstable. In the Western model we have slipped into individual freedom at the expense of collective security, but that is not a balanced situation or exchange, both are necessary. The government must manage and protect both permanence and flux, but it can also overshoot the mark by taking too one-sided an approach. And then there is the underlying structure, how do you set that up? Managing and „ensuring“ the necessary balance quickly involves a lot of bureaucracy, hierarchy, protocols, rules and the erosion of countervailing power.

A list of further principles that have already been mentioned includes:

When thinking about freedom and rights, always realize that there must be duties in return, ensure that there is a balance in getting and bringing.

Not symptomatically but integrally, multidisciplinary approach to problems. The term holistic is appropriate but a bit too woolly

Make legislation and implementation but also collective services „proportional, subsidiary and effective“. (these are the European principles). Subsidiarity is linked to the human dimension and should also be verifiable.

Enforce and if necessary restore the separation of powers, at all levels and also with scrutiny. Countervailing power must be, balance in power!

Understanding diversity, but also biodiversity. Acceptance of differences, no uniformity for large and small, rich and poor, no general human measure but customization, adaptation to individual needs. We see this in the economy but it must also permeate science, the medical world and the levels of government.

Change is the rule and (acquired) rights (such as renting or even ownership) may have to be limited in time. Social engineering is an illusion, an ossified concept that is based on protocol-driven process thinking, on budgets, planning, on trying to fix the unpredictable, not on creative impulses and

dissociation. Ownership, for example, is the basis of permanence but it also acts as a constraint and limits sharing.

Limit process thinking, use models as a test and as an aid to imagination, not as a starting point. Bring the already used insights, models and algorithms under industrial property law, such as patents with clear rules for public domain use, as is now the case with vaccines.

Understanding psychological process control, especially the function of feedback. In this, partly due to the digital acceleration of communication processes, rest and reflection have been sacrificed to 'perverse' stimuli and irrelevant evaluation and measuring points, resulting in resonance and oscillation.

Recognizing mental health as the determining factor, physical health and happiness are outcomes. Visualize the human and economic costs of dissatisfaction, frustration, isolation.

Health and meaning begins in our minds, our immunity can be influenced both psychologically and biologically.

Understanding the need for privacy and intimacy (=shared privacy) and allowing, perhaps even encouraging, the making of mistakes as part of learning and progress.

A broader cost/benefit model for the public and private sectors that includes environment, health, happiness and sustainability (long-term viability).

Recognizing identity conflicts and identifications, at personal and collective levels. The absorption in partial interests, disconnected from the underlying identity, leads to identifications, for example with BLM or #metoo, but also science and religion are essentially identifications, traumatic split-offs from a holistic and integral vision.

Initiate supra-national cooperation regarding cyberspace, data management, privacy, censorship, allowing whistleblowing and investigative journalism.

Tailoring the dimensions of international cooperation to manageability and engagement.

Creating and encouraging controlled data and news, countering 'fake' news, not by banning or censorship but by supporting 'reliable' sources.

Steering not by image and status but by goals, content and consequences

Do not see democracy as an ideal but as a useful instrument for community thinking, giving meaning and being involved.

Recognize as a new government task the facilitation of mobility and physical encounter, as a counterbalance to impersonal digitalization. This has to do with spatial planning, culture, recreation, housing, care, transport, and the new core task of the city, namely as a contact platform.

Lasting changes:

Society and the world are ready for a major reversal, a tipping point. This has become very topical, partly due to the Corona crisis, and it is time for a reassessment of principles and the recognition that we can no longer return to the old 'normal'. I'll just put them again in a perhaps somewhat duplicate list, to make the thoughts and context clear.

Digitalization has changed many things, such as education, work, physical contact and living arrangements, housing design, the tasks and accessibility of government and services, but also brought dangers. This is why a coherent vision is needed, one that sees comfort/security/efficiency and privacy/freedom/effectiveness in particular not as opposites but as separate dimensions. That vision must not start from the past but offer a vision of the future with goals and ideals, values and virtues, that honors not only the rational but also the emotional and intuitive and even the spiritual aspirations of human beings.

Power requires counter-power and control, which is largely lost in today's stepped quasi-democracy, as well as missing in all sorts of feedback loops such as grievance procedures, civil rights, etc. A good understanding of how feedback works and often doesn't work due to imperfect feedback, due to lack of calm (the danger of suspension) and adequate and independent measuring points and sensors. Review, demonstrations, whistleblowers, accessible justice, all part of the feedback needed for a stable society.

There is a growing difference between elite and masses and the erosion of the middle class, that is a schism that increasingly divides society and makes it unstable in the long run. This also has to do with diversity; a little can be different, but too much is disruptive. Support is important but should not mean ignoring the minority.

The (European) principles of effectiveness, subsidiarity and proportionality are too often hollow words, the government decides by edict, the citizen is rendered virtually powerless. There is no possibility of appeal to test laws and regulations against the Constitution. We need a Constitutional Court, but also an institution (court) where the European principles can be tested locally, by citizens and institutions. As long as these do not exist, this can be assigned as a task to the Council of State with control by the Senate.

Nature and climate awareness is growing and that means a challenge for many sectors such as the food industry, the energy sector and the construc-

tion industry. The citizen must not be forgotten as part of the problem and solution. Subsidiarity or the human scale also means involving and holding responsible individual citizens.

Planned predictions and models often turn out to be the goal, no longer related to the actual developments. Openness about models and algorithms that are widely used is needed, but also their legal protection (industrial property/patents), for innovation and creation.

Strongly felt deficits in society, such as the need for housing, cannot and should not be solved by symptomatic measures but require a multidisciplinary and integrated approach and a long-term vision. The foundations of ownership, management, inheritance law, taxation, spatial planning, social control, inherent security, sustainability, etc. are not isolated but interrelated.

The Western neoliberal model must be challenged. It is becoming unaffordable in terms of damage to health and the environment and leads to the exclusion of groups, even on a global scale. Furthermore, it is unstable by burdening the future with debts of the present and increases dissatisfaction with the divide.

Integrity and the divergence of Law and Justice (the sense of right). The Roman-Rhineland model of law in which good housekeeping and thus a priori innocence is implicitly assumed has been partly replaced and tarnished by the Anglo-Saxon model in which everything must be put on paper and innocence, on the contrary, must be proven. This confrontation between legal systems has to do with the difference between farmers and hunters (settler and hunter societies) and resonates with the opposition collective/individual, security/freedom, analogue/digital. Revision of the legal system, both international and supranational should be a priority in light of digital and AI developments.

I will elaborate on this in the following chapters. I hope that all these lists, which sometimes overlap, do not distract too much. They were fulcrums for me in further thinking about the future and what can and should be done differently.



3 The mechanisms

Society has (hopefully) reached a tipping point and then it is useful to put some fundamental mechanisms on paper. The idea is to reduce all kinds of sub-processes and detailed solutions to a few clear points.

To begin with, we should realize, that rational and material science is quite limited. We know almost nothing about thinking, about consciousness, about how we humans relate to the outside world with our emotions and thoughts; we don't look beyond what we can measure. It's okay to be a little more open to the unseen and tangible; looking only at the rational is too limited. But there are also some more obvious pain points, which I would like to address in more detail. I will come back to some of them, such as diversity and subsidiarity.

Do not reverse cause and effect

Unambiguous causality, one thing follows from another, is a rational and logical approach that has brought us much, but may not always be conclusive. Cause and effect can have a more complex relationship, influencing each other, and scientists may see that as irrational, but it is what happens all the time.

We cannot solve big questions like climate and energy if we only look to the future and do not, for example, acknowledge that a future image influences the present and recognize the cybernetic (steering) consequences of that. Feedback is fundamental but gets little attention, which is what this chapter is also partly about.

Too often we see the organization of our society, our culture, our institutions as a cause. But then we do not ignore how they came about. That is often not by conscious choice, but because they are the result of circumstances, biological laws, causes which we deny.

Democracy, for example, would be a choice we make together. However, if we look at historical and evolutionary development, in a situation where there is a surplus of resources (technology, products) it is also an almost inevitable mode of shaping the fundamental choices between collective and individual interest. If there is less surplus, then other choices may be a logical consequence. Whether the liberal-democratic model is also a logical end point of development, as Francis Fukuyama stated in his famous essay „The End of History and the Last Man“ in 1992, is questionable; neo-liberalism did not turn out to be so ideal.

Culture is another concept in which we tend to overestimate the guiding influence of man and deny the underlying psychological causes and necessities.

Culture arises and takes shape in behavior and forms of expression such as architecture, fashion, art, etc. You can regulate this, stimulate it, develop a cultural policy, but because we often fail to assess the underlying causes properly, this does not work or does not work well and, for example, a lot of money goes to yesterday's culture, to what the conservative and older elite like. Culture is not very flexible, it is self-reinforcing, because people tend to follow the „group mind“, the fashion, the trends. The deep causes of culture are fear and the need for a social framework, surplus (space for fun things, art, the higher layers of Maslow's pyramid), climate, and there is little a minister of culture can do about that.

Industrialization is another such development, which we think is based on human brainpower. But isn't it possible that the loss of connection with the other, especially faith, increased the need for certainty and controllability and led to science, technology and thus industrialization and automation. And there is also the theory, that the change of climate after the cold middle ages led to surplus and thus space for art and science and more individuality.

If we are not open to other causalities, not only reversals of cause and effect, but also to more complex connections than $A \Rightarrow B$ like $A \Leftrightarrow B$ then we will remain stuck. Perhaps the Eastern wisdom, that time is an illusion and everything is an endless circle is worth considering when we think about Post-Corona.

Health and the pursuit of happiness, meaning

Mental health is becoming more and more decisive because, after all, the mind drives the body. And we then see this reflected in healthcare and medical costs, which are ever increasing. Thinking about and researching prevention, fitness improvement and immunity (both biological and mental) is what Corona made clear, but didn't get fleshed out yet.

In politics, talk of happiness, love, and meaning is hardly discussed. It is sometimes pointed out that we are not doing so badly internationally. Amsterdam scores well as an expat location, our health care and pensions are top notch. We leave it to psychologists and sociologists to really find out how happy, healthy and satisfied we are, but all too often this results in lists and rankings that are too general or set up from a particular point of view.

The coherence of things is hardly discussed. All sorts of things are tackled symptomatically and also achieved, but a broad vision is lacking. Mental and physical health are still quite strictly separated. The fact that people can become ill because they are unhappy, can't express themselves, no longer have contact with their environment, well that can be solved with a pill! That comes down to fighting symptoms (extinguishing fires) and we see it everywhere, in institutions and companies, in science, in the medical profession and in care, education and

defense. The whole Western way of thinking and acting has mainly become reacting on symptoms.

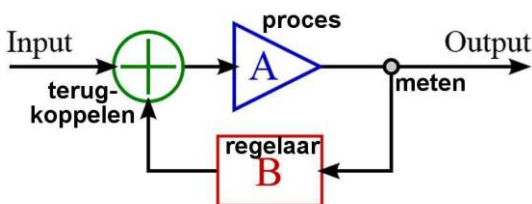
The connection between mental (psychic) and physical health is only one of the perspectives but a very important one and, to speak in material terms, a very expensive one. For we can indeed speak of a happiness crisis, which manifests itself as a health crisis. People are getting sicker and sicker, the increase of autoimmune diseases is very clear, more and more people are suffering from stress, PTSD (post traumatic stress syndrome), loneliness, extremism, dementia (Parkinson's often has to do with an inferiority complex).

The costs of this in human suffering but also in euros now and in the long run are growing over our heads.

Lack of happiness and satisfaction is a fundamental deficit, you start to doubt who you are. The identity

crisis in society, in my opinion, is directly related to individual identity and self-image, to how a person values himself and considers life meaningful or meaningless. This sounds holistic and floaty but is a truth that has been known in ancient traditions and cultures for a very long time. 'Mens sana in corpore sano' Healthy mind in healthy body.

feedback persons - copy



Feedback mechanisme

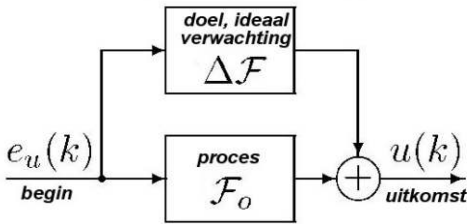
Feedback, feedback loop

The feedback loop is a fundamental steering mechanism, familiar to us in technology but also encountered everywhere in society. It is the basis for how we interact with each other, including emotionally. If a feedback steering mechanism doesn't work properly, eventually suspension occurs and things become unstable. The fundamental problems with feedback are faulty models (and algorithms), the lack of peace of mind, faulty metrics, and the creeping in of perverse incentives and feedbacks.

Accumulation and out-of-control situations arise, for example, when decision makers in a given situation benefit themselves from their decisions and there is insufficient control to counteract that. Or when the controller (authority) is biased when measuring (judging a situation).

So you can also call that perverse feedback. This applies, for example, when doctors personally benefit from prescribing certain drugs. Or when civil servants can present their bosses with favorable figures, but these have been disconnected from the underlying objective because such an approach also

feedforward



promotes their own careers in the long run. And have complaints handled by their own department. The examples of such perverse feedback are everywhere, think of the benefits affair. In a general sense, it is when there are insufficient checks and balances and a healthy separation of powers is lacking.

So this all has to do with the feedback mechanism, about which there is much

to say in technology and which boils down to steering processes based on measurements and estimates. Even if there is not enough peace and quiet (or damping) in that steering process, things can get out of hand.

The acceleration of processes and the feedback loop reinforce that danger, also due to digitalization because everything is becoming shorter and more real-time. Automatic decision processes, which are increasingly taking over the role of people in control circles, such as AI models and algorithms, are affecting manageability, especially if they are secret and not 'open'. Peace and quiet in decision making circles is then increasingly lost; reacting 'now' becomes the norm. Short-term effects are then the only point of reference; looking further ahead is difficult and time-consuming. This often means reacting symptomatically, not looking at what is fundamentally going on. One of the pain points is throwing up balls and experimenting with safety, health, climate and the environment that have not been sufficiently thought through.

Perverse feedback

If a feedback loop also contains incentives for those involved to benefit themselves, either immediately or in the long term (which can be seen as perverse), the system will quickly go downhill. Then decay and corruption creep in, absurd rewards arise, the underworld and the upper world get mixed up, and support is lost. Without countervailing power, without independent evaluations, without peace in the steering loop, things go wrong.

An alarming example is that in the US the government paid bonuses for certain medical treatment options, and the hospitals that work very commercially there naturally implemented them enthusiastically. In the Netherlands, too, the care sector and the medical bastion were given all kinds of incentives; Corona, in addition to being a human disaster, was a clear earning model for the medical world and was well defended, including the health authorities and advisors. The feedback from society and the economy was not honored, the medics determined the policy (and filled their pockets, many now believe).

Social media trends, complaints, referendums, click lines, internal whistleblowers, Wikileaks, demonstrations, humor, cartoons, literature and theater, etc. are also feedback and essential to identify wrongdoing. Thus, the handling of complaints by the complained about organization itself as is common in police, government, social care, tax authorities, etc. within the steering loop and without independent review is dangerous and even perverse.

Feedforward is another way of steering, then you start from goals and ideals and try to achieve them. That is the original idea of political guidance, and that is what planning agencies and advisory bodies should do, but they have also become victims of the tendency to cast everything in models, to leave decisions to automated decision-making techniques (algorithms) and thus the value of ideals is often lost and the human gets out of the picture.

Education

Education seems to be directed mainly at flattening, preventing backlogs, everyone is equal, talent just has to 'bend over', preferably as a baby already in school to get the backlogs. But what do we want with education? Brave slaves with all a vague 'college' degree (bachelor or so) and no work for the mediocre, or instead animate diversity and stratification in talent and let the top performers work on real solutions and challenges. They can handle the competition and we may be better off for it too.

The performance pressure in education is killing most children (and their parents); homework, tutoring and tests, their self-esteem is eroded, there is no meaning, no fun, no 'playing is learning'. So how can you find a suitable and fun job, and be satisfied with your life. That's going to further erode mental health, depression, PTSD, and the costs are staggering if you were to calculate that.

Education needs to go back to the goal, preparing people for tomorrow's society, in order to make them useful and therefore meaningful participants, to knowledge and skills. Learning starts with playing, with making mistakes, trying out choices and role models, discovering and forming your 'self'. Developing social behavior together with others, not just having to be the best on the CITO (SAT-type) test. So back to pedagogy! The whole of education and certainly science has become a ritual, with titles and 'quotation' indexes, almost a theater with especially a lot of hierarchy and bread envy.

Great discoveries still come from a few who rise in the headwind. Spending money on mediocre grazers, not unique minds, is wasteful. Encouraging innovation is not just by throwing money at it but by challenges and necessity, perhaps opposition and misery, then talent grows and shows itself.

Scale, don't treat big and small equally;

Treating everyone equally seems like a nice principle but imposing the same fine on a millionaire as on a welfare recipient is not perceived as fair. Punishing small mistakes as serious fraud (the benefits affair), giving large companies advantages that only come from scale is not fair. When we talk about a human scale, as in subsidiarity (which will also be discussed later), this means accepting that customization is necessary in all sorts of areas. Groups have been swept together, fixed sums, allowances, all kinds of measures to aggregate but the result is that nobody really feels valued, many consider themselves victims or second-class citizens and engage in passive or active resistance, evade taxes, drive too fast, and waste energy, pollute the environment. We industrialize everything, efficiency is sacred, the human touch has fallen out of the picture.

Reversing that trend is not easy and again has to do with engagement and support and is essential if we want to tackle the big problems with inequality, environment and climate.

Symptomatic versus holistic

Do you now have to see everything in the light of eternity or can you also accept emergency connections. It often revolves around the question, whether the government or institutions and even corporations intervened at the right time and level and especially around the Corona crisis, that is really a question that is on many people's minds. Did it all have to be so centralized, so supposedly safe and secure but ignoring the input from the field, ignoring the judgment of the citizens, the alternative medical world and the experts who had a different vision than the people of the health authorities and politicians? The result is that society is now polarized, the freedom-seekers versus the security-seekers, the good followers versus the anxious individualists.

Support, democracy

The idea that the people may choose was already quite limited in ancient Greece, only the elite, the meritocracy was allowed to contribute a shard, women, slaves and foreigners were not. Democracy as we know it today has become a stepped, representative meritocracy, politicians must not only be smart but media savvy and certainly not too philosophical.

The idea, that they are pursuing ideals has slipped into an approach where the so-called ideals are the flags that people wave and make promises about during election time but otherwise don't care about. The right is the left, the left supports right-wing policies, hustling and bargaining is standard, and those who obediently participate may join the reigns, the nice jobs, nestle in the clay layers of the meritocracy or the swamp of advisors and institutions, or make the transition to big business, which has become an uncontrolled power factor in

the meritocracy. Again, the feedback, the idea that ultimately the citizen or voter determines the course of action through their vote, no longer works well.

Trust in government, democracy, big business, the church and science has declined, for many already gone altogether. Now the question is, when will we reach the point where the masses won't take it anymore, will they disobey and start mutinying? With some rioters in the lead, some martyrs for the cause and then chaos, panic and collapse of the prevailing model, perhaps even of the Western neo-liberal model.

Restoring support is therefore essential, unless that collapse is seen as the only way to meet environmental, climate, inequality and control challenges in the long run. Nurturing trust, however, cannot be forced or imposed, and certainly not from above.

Support is an outcome, not a process. The road to it revolves around respect, equality of opportunity, appreciation of diversity, of everyone's contribution as valuable, of meaning and happiness beyond the material, of Kant's Categorical Imperative and Jesus' message that we should treat the other as we would want to be treated ourselves. The restoration of trust must start at the bottom, the scientists and experts need not be persuaded, support begins with the ordinary citizen.

In the information tsunami of the media, the social media, fake news, influencers and populist politics, ordinary citizens have little security anymore. There are no longer any community centers or meeting places, hardly any local media or neighborhood newspapers; the neighborhood parties, small-scale festivals, sports and culture have become closing items. Participation is a wash, cohesion and cooperation on a human level soon become wappie and terrorist conspiracy. But surely the human scale of information provision starts with family, neighbors and friends, physical and informal, not Instagram or Facebook?

False information , fake news

The firmness, which we expect from information, such as that what is in the newspaper is correct, is increasingly at risk. There is fake news, false information, phishing and viruses hidden in internet communications, even a photo or video can be manipulated in such a way that the truth is violated. We have almost unlimited access to data but we don't know if it provides reliable information (data is only information if it touches you, a bit is only information if it bytes). The idea of an epistemologically safe society, in which knowledge is therefore reliable, is increasingly lost. As a result, we become fundamentally and existentially insecure, feel inferior, drown in quasi-information and this affects mental and ultimately physical health.

Another danger of feeling unappreciated is that we seek affiliation with sub-movements, as in identification with #metoo, BLM, ethnic or religious

separatists or fundamentalists, Apple products, fashion trends, influencers, etc. and thus surrender part of our own identity as a compromise. That exchange of a sense of inferiority for an environment of superiority is what Wilhelm Reich already saw as fascism, deriving power and position from the system, the party, etc.

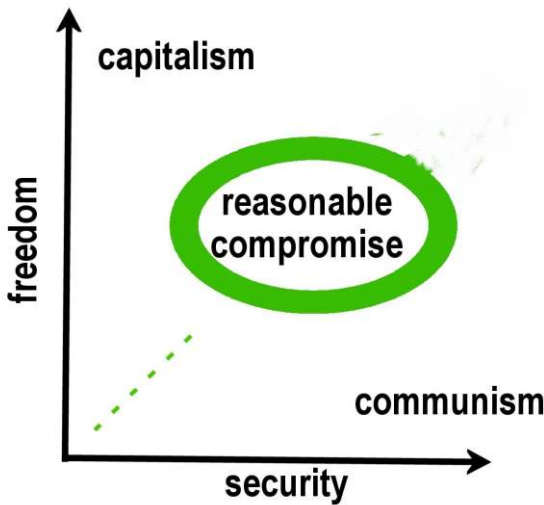
The fragmentation of political movements is clearly an identification problem. A better understanding of what identity means and how the Western paradigm, through all that stress and competition and symptomatic short-term solutions, also splinters individual identity and thus causes all those diseases of affluence, is badly needed.

Comfort versus privacy

The Internet makes our lives more comfortable, it enables us to do all sorts of things, services are easier and faster, doing business can be done from your bedroom, there are all sorts of advantages. But often we have to give up our privacy, because Google and Facebook want to know everything about you, to make money. They are free but make money by giving you the right (in terms of sales) ads and information. That does not always work well, but offering comfort is the idea behind many of the qr-code apps, but that does come with a loss of control...

Privacy is essential for people as a necessary part of learning and growing. Intimacy as shared privacy is essential to meaning and happiness. Diversity and privacy are not opposed, both are essential. Only when we are allowed to be „different“ can we also appreciate the „other. Diversity is enormously important, in nature (biodiversity) where it determines resistance and chances of survival, in our bodies where the billions of bacterial strains in our intestines and organs play a role in immunity and disease but also in society. Flattening, in physics called entropy, as we see it increasing through globalization and transparency, makes us vulnerable. Life, culture, art, society-reform, innovation-all flourish because of diversity, at all levels. There must be room for the anti-thesis (Hegel) if we are to move forward and achieve synthesis, including on a personal level. Restriction and repression to supposedly serve the common good and promote the “Greater Good” is a dangerous policy.

Freedom, that is what it is all about. The citizen is forced on the defensive, has to defend himself against civil servants, boas, the tax authorities, the care institutions. The welfare agencies, social insurance and their hired care support workers are rather pinchers and savers, who mainly have to prove themselves by treating the citizen as fraudulent and corrupt. You are wrong, prove yourself right, a reversal of a fundamental legal principle, namely that you are innocent until proven guilty.



Axis thinking

Security and freedom are presented to us as lying on one axis, and it is argued that a little less freedom is necessary to pass security. However, this is a very uncomfortable fallacy, because security and freedom are both necessary, they are separate dimensions.

Security and freedom must both be given space, not polarized or traded off against each other.

We encounter the same axis thinking and polariz-

ing more often, openness versus privacy, diversity and individuality versus uniformity and centralization. Social media supposedly offer more direct contact possibilities but in the meantime have become channels for manipulation, herd behavior and identification with limited perspective.

Loss of human integrity

The ancient Roman-Roman legal principle, I mentioned earlier, was that everyone could be expected to act as a good family man, virtuous and reliable but also flexible, appropriate to the circumstances. Law and justice may diverge, the judge weighs interests. The integrity of the parties and the citizen is the starting point; guilt must be proven. A principle that implies peace, permanence, care and fits a stable society, where citizens cooperate and not compete. This is opposed to the Anglo-Saxon principle, that parties must arrange and record everything, that law is based on custom and case law, on immutability and that law and law correspond. That has led to a lawyer culture there, a liability model that is expensive, crippling and class-sensitive, poor people can't pay for their law and so get it. It does fit with the basis of American society, which aims for progress, change, more of a hunter mentality than that of the European farmer and urbanite, and above all promotes competition. With laws that mainly protect the citizen against the government.

In the Netherlands we have gone too far in the direction of the Americans, and people feel that. Individuality and success come first, competition in

work, education, business, investing is stimulated but at the expense of the losers. A great division is growing, poor versus rich, fitting in meritocracy versus laggards, elite versus minkukels, sheep and wolves, well behaved and rebellious, pro the measures versus vaccine free.

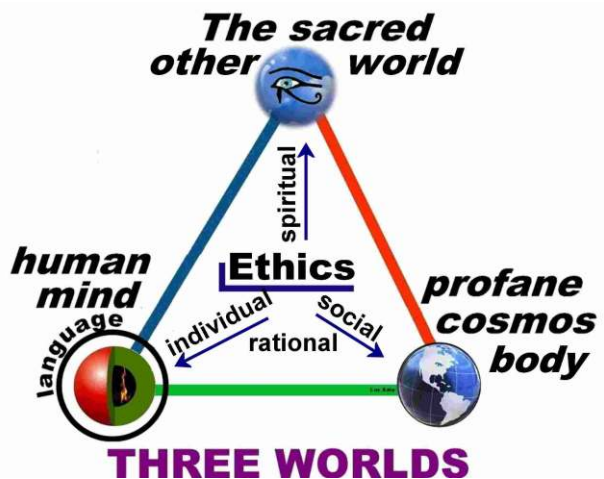
4 Questions of law, ethics, legality and justice

All sorts of things went wrong during the Corona crisis but also before that in terms of law, norms and values and ordering of society. The feeling that we live in a just society and have civil rights has been rather affected. There is no longer any question of a society, and that includes the word 'partnership', which refers to a shared interest and a 'social contract'.

If we want to do more in the future than just patch things up, we need to think about what law and legislation actually aim to do and the ethics behind it. Norms and values need to be reconsidered, not least because they emerge from a cultural and economic context, in addition to what we might call „eternal“ commandments or „natural law“.

We need to think about why we have collective laws and rules, about the relationship between the individual and society, about the subjective rights that protect the citizen from the government, not only on a national level but also internationally and certainly also with regard to cyberspace, that virtual world in which so much is happening today.

Then we can go back to Justinian, to Roman law, the distinction between *ius* and *lex*, between law and law. We can try to understand why in the Universal Human Rights there is not a word about duties. Why is centralization of power necessary, but can get dangerously out of hand as the Corona crisis showed. I want to keep it simple and go back a bit further, namely to the Greek philosopher Plato. No sweetheart, he certainly didn't want to put power in the hands of the common people, but his insights and imagery are often very enlightening. Later in this chapter I will also discuss the concept of subsidiarity and the role of identity.



A basic principle of governance and law: Plato's Phaedrus

Every society makes a choice between individual and collective interest. In the Western model, individuality is more important than, for example, in

more traditional societies, where the collective is paramount. It is always about choices concerning freedom and security, individual choices and interest versus collective interest.

A nice image that can help in discussions about ethics and morality, we find in the Greek philosopher Plato, who in the „Phaedrus“ describes the soul as a span of winged horses and a rational driver, who wants to lead them to the good and virtuous. One, the white horse, is well behaved and docile; the other, the black, is rebellious and troublesome. The „willing horse“ consists of the „spirit force“ and the wild horse represents the disordered urges. Plato saw the rational mind (the responsible one in our psyche) as the steering coachman of a pair of horses, thus giving a nice picture of the psyche and the task of reason. The driver steers toward eternal and heavenly truths such as happiness (Eudaimon); the horses’ wings indicate a vertical dimension.

Plato thus described the choices that must be made, by every human being. We all figuratively have a white horse and a black horse in a span to steer, a tame horse and a wild horse that must the cart together and achieve a I, it’s a matter of balance. They are ferent, one is adventurous and ks risks, the other conservative and I behaved but they both have to in the same direction. To be only I behaved produces rigidity, to be y wild produces chaos. That image the Phaedrus is very useful and es insight into, for example, the relationship between freedom and urity.

Steering effectively

The diagonal in the Phaedrus can be extended to social choices between freedom and security, so again tween adventure and following the s. To this end the chariot can be exded to include passengers, who incate to the rider or driver as stakeholders where they want to go; these sengers represent the interests t matter. The driver, who may be legislator, the judge, the manager the board of directors, must then



Plato's Phaedrus

*The psyche has two horses
to control, a tamed,
safe one and a
wild, creative one
white-black
collective-individual
digital-analog
social-liberal*

pull
goa
dif-
see
wel
pull
wel
onl
in
giv
la-
sec

also
two
be-
rule
pan
di-
hol
pas
tha
the
or



steer the cart in such a way that both horses pull in the same direction. This makes the image much more widely applicable and also applicable to all kinds of disputes in society. After all, the same issues are often at play there as in our minds; we have to make choices and steer.

The approach of seeing good and wild as opposites and thus exchanging freedom for security does not work well. It is, unfortunately, often done. On the grounds of security, fighting Corona or terrorism, our civil liberties (integrity rights, privacy, the ability to deviate, to be wild once) have been massively eroded. We are now also guilty until proven otherwise.

We notice this at airports and soon in more places because we have to carry an identification or vaccination/test certificate but in cyberspace it seems to have gotten totally out of hand, everything is tracked and recorded, on the sly and legally permitted or not, by governments and companies. The interests of the stakeholders (citizens) are hidden behind stories about health, danger of contamination, terrorism and increased security. That the balance of power between citizens and government (or monopolistic corporations) has totally shifted is not really noticed.

The horse cart from the Phaedrus - if we extend the image to society and politics - also revolves around the question of how we can unite the collective and the individual. There is a field of tension between the two: you cannot please everyone, compromises are necessary and rules are needed. If we do nothing, a so-called „prisoners' dilemma“ (the choice two prisoners have to both keep quiet or betray the other) arises. The collective interest is both to remain silent, the individual interest is that by accusing the other one is better off. The result is usually that both choose self-interest and both lose.

Creative or conservative

Man is self-aware and Plato understood that in this the mind plays a role but cannot ignore the wild (individual) and the tame (collective) impulses and needs. The wild, creative, the lust and the need for excitement is there but also the willingness to conform and the need for structure and rules. The whole range of human impulses and social actions lies somewhere in between those two, whether that is - in the view of the sociologist Max Weber - about conforming, cooperating, exchanging or conflict (and that's where I miss play).

Collective versus individual, social versus liberal, intuition versus rational logic, left versus right. We are trained to see it as opposites, as a polarity but they are the horses of a two-horse race, the goal counts and both are needed.

Self-awareness, the mind that directs, comes with the task and challenge of knowing what you are doing and wanting and directing that properly; that is no easy task. Adam and Eve were given that self-awareness when they had to leave paradise - that's also how you can interpret the Bible - and became responsible for their actions.

Making choices, not exchanging them

Plato's Phaedrus in a broad perspective



The driver not only has to balance and guide the horses but also has to listen to what the stakeholders want

In the discussion about these kinds of choices, people often make it seem as if it is quite logical that we exchange something. In doing so, it almost seems as if we forget that progress and technocracy are relatively new developments and, by and large, the result of individual ambitions and self-interest.

The tension arc between collective and individual may not be as old as we think. Given how little progress early humanoids made beyond making some pots and fist axes in two or three million years, we might assume that „modern“ progress and individuality are related. No individual benefit and primarily

serving the group interest - which is apparently what our ancestors did - means that innovation is not a priority. Older civilizations such as the Aborigines or the Hottentots actually changed very little and usually - apart from some ritual tasks - did not have great specialization and individual recognition for 'technical' innovations. The early humanoids probably had some kind of collective consciousness but individual achievements counted for less. Only later did progress come, about 10,000 years ago this really reached a tipping point. It seems that individual self-awareness and what we see as progress and innovation are each other's partners. Not always with optimal results, our environment and the climate issue make that clear.

Subsidiarity

Subsidiarity I mentioned in the first section but it needs further elaboration. It is a fundamental part of the in itself very clear and good European principles for legislation and implementation, namely that something must be proportionate, effective and subsidiary.

Subsidiarity demands that power over laws and regulations should lie as close as possible to those affected (the lowest possible administrative level) and to whether the government takes action at the right level and with the least possible negative impact. The idea is to maximize the involvement and say of those affected by a regulation and to avoid distancing or overly centralizing policy.

Particularly around the Corona crisis, that's really an issue that concerns a lot of people, what do we have to say about all these measures? Meaningful laws and broadly supported norms have gradually started to give way to dictates, imposed rules, disproportionate measures, fines and power-hungry behavior by the incumbent executive without much defense from the democratic countervailing powers, the media or the courts.

The term that best encircles this whole complex is subsidiarity but that this says nothing to most people and is not understood is unfortunate. This somewhat strange word (derived from subsidium (Lat.) aid, assistance) is popping up more and more but it is not understood by everyone. It is not about subsidies but about the way in which the role of the government or those in power is fulfilled and at what level. It stands for decentralization and small scale, putting the responsibility and the means of power that go with it at the right level. The English subsidiary is used for dependent but independent business units and indicates stratification, control at a certain level.

Proximity as the basis for “humane” governance.

Bringing government closer to the citizen thus has everything to do with the subsidiarity principle, which is still too much seen today as a kind of European Union coat hanger. It has a historical and rational basis that is very relevant, also in the context of digital flattening and the control of data and especially

personal data. We have left control of our personal data and what happens to it to commercial parties and to the government at a level, where we often have no insight or even awareness of who knows and does what about us. What we do on the Internet, what Facebook, Google and the like collect and use about us, but also what Digital Identity apps and tools and the digital patient file and what banks, insurers and agencies know about us has become detached from the person it concerns, the individual. Thus our privacy is increasingly an empty concept.

The Human Dimension

Subsidiarity is not just a legal principle that decisions should be taken at the lowest possible level (as close to the person concerned as possible) but in such a way that there is the least damage to those concerned. Subsidiarity means using the least intrusive means to achieve a particular goal. However, it has a much broader meaning, it is a social principle and an economic and management attitude that has to do with effectiveness, pluriformity, diversity, democracy, participation society, centralization, globalization, scale, hierarchy, stratification, autonomy and sovereignty. By following the principle of subsidiarity, the individual or group personality (identity) can come into its own, which breeds self-confidence and stimulates bottom-up initiatives and innovation. Subsidiarity is also important as a democratic principle; our stepped representative democracy actually deprives citizens of much influence, and leads to indifference and lethargy.

Even in cyberspace, subsidiarity is not a starting point

We have gradually left the control of our personal data and what happens to it to commercial parties and to the government at a level where we often have no insight or even awareness of who knows and does what with us. What we do on the internet, what Facebook, Google and the like collect and use about us, and the government through QR pass, Digital Identity apps and tools and the digital patient record, and what banks, insurers and the hackers know about us has become disconnected from the person it concerns, the individual.

The principle of subsidiarity is also important in the media. Reporting should be as close as possible to the people concerned, information should be accessible and appropriate, the rise of 'fake news' and media manipulation by a limited group ultimately affects the trust and thus the willingness of citizens to participate.

It is about appropriate and open reporting, in the right context. Reports about a tree or a bench in a small park are relevant for local residents but are usually not national news. Local media are very important for small-scale initiatives and promote diversity and participation and therefore deserve support without

interference. Social media supposedly offer more direct contact opportunities but have become channels for manipulation, herd behavior and identifications with limited perspective.

Objections to subsidiarity

Regulating things centrally and equally for everyone has advantages, there is then clarity, the rules apply to everyone equally, that is easier to organize and communicate. There are also times and situations when time pressure makes direct central intervention necessary.

Arranging everything too small and too precisely can also turn out to be expensive, awkward and chaotic. It is often a matter of weighing things up, subsidiarity brings bureaucracy and possibly subjectivity in the implementation. Civil servants abuse their influence, and subsidiarity creates little kingdoms and islands of power, especially if there is no control from above. The underboss behaves like the boss, because he was allowed to arrange it anyway!

Regulating in too much detail also means more layers in the administrative system, Belgium is an example of this, because of the language struggle the power has become fragmented and chaotic at the level of the ordinary citizen.

The importance of the principle of subsidiarity through decentralization of government tasks is evident but is sometimes used to actually reduce the say of those involved. An example is the transfer of health care to the municipalities, which soon turned out to be mainly an austerity operation.

An old principle

Historically, the principle developed in the late Roman period,. The Greeks and many older cultures thought more in top-down structures. It is at odds with the centralist approach, where the state or city (Polis/Civitas) regulates everything for but mostly beyond the citizen. It stems from the social ethics and space for spiritual individualism (authentic mysticism) of the Catholic Church, and can be traced back to Augustine (De Civitate Dei 413-427 AD) and finds a broader expression in the Roman law of Justinian (535). The principle is based on the autonomy and dignity of the human individual and that the overhead (or rulers) should be at the service of man. The Catholic Church, including in the 1891 encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* by Pope Leo XIII, *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931 Pope Pius XI) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963 John XXIII), supports the principle as guiding the relationship between the state and society.

A concept that fits with subsidiarity is „human measure“ or „equity“; making things possible at the level where they fit, sometimes that is individually or in families or one's own circle (sovereignty in one's own circle by Abraham Kuyper) and can then enhance the strength of individual communities.

Tasks should therefore be transferred to the local community (or even to the individual, household or primary care) in the first instance, then to government, first a lower level of government, and only then higher levels of government. Sometimes a higher level is needed and things can only be effectively regulated at the national or international level but with safeguards for diversity and room for small-scale interpretation.

What is striking is that in Anglo-Saxon law subsidiarity does not play a major role; there the Roman/Roman idea of an intrinsic domestic peace, for which the father is responsible as the cornerstone of society, has been abandoned and everything is regulated in detail by means of contracts and laws. However, there is the small minority of libertarians (libertines) and the motto „Don't tread on me“ with the desire to keep government interference as limited as possible. The right to bear arms is seen as a sufficient counterweight to government power.

I point out that the Corona Emergency Law is typically an example of a law, which suppresses the principle of subsidiarity, centralizing powers and sacrificing individual autonomy and control. This Emergency Law and its extensions should therefore be subject to a subsidiarity review through an official procedure or court, as laid down in a Protocol to the Lisbon Treaty (EU). But a constitutional court, as Pieter Omtzigt advocates, does not exist in our country.

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Identity

In the development of humanity, the other and the need for social contact played a decisive role. But as 'hunters & gatherers' in prehistoric times this was not such a problem, you needed each other, a hierarchy arose automatically; the hunt asked for leaders and in a relatively small group this arranged itself automatically, as we see in the animal kingdom. Individuality did not play such a big role. The collective interest was to survive and, though they were not aware of it, to reproduce with the strongest genes. You could say that millions of years of pre- and early human development thus show a form of collective consciousness (conscience collective) rather than individual self-awareness.

With civilization, agriculture and the increase in group size, more was needed. Cooperation between people had to be organized. Identity began to play a role, individual interest (or the interest of a limited group, such as the family, the village, the region) did not always coincide with the broader interest. The urge to manifest oneself as a person, artist or individual was relatively new, but it also grew and amounted to more and more competition with the other. Natural hierarchy in a group as we know it in animals is on another level.

Individual and community

It is always the other who defines us, individuality is the difference from the other and from childhood the mechanism by which we build an identity. Sociologists such as Emmanuel Levinas, Pierre Bourdieu, Norbert Elias, Ryszard Kapuscinski or in our country also Joop Goudsblom and recently Christien Brinkgreve ('The Eyes of the Other') see that other as the basis of our (togetherness); who can survive alone?

Social cohesion, solidarity, were not matters that concerned Plato or Augustine. That was not a question but a given in antiquity. There was politics and the pursuit of power but that was not a matter for the ordinary citizen and whoever seized power quickly invoked divine calling, the tendency of rulers to promote themselves to God is very clear.

We had to wait for social thinkers like Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim because it was only after a couple of centuries of division of labor, task differentiation and technocracy that the consequences of that industrialization became clear, such as the migration to the city and the need for a new vision of socialization emerged. Eventually resulting in the welfare state which now appears to be unsustainable again because we don't really want to share.

Total care is nice but also not very inspiring for the individual, the ambition extinguishes. Man can then no longer really choose between his impulses and needs and the good, the social. He has to operate within the lines like in the Chinese Social Credit system.

It remains a balancing act between the two horses. In the real world this is also the case: we want both freedom and security. And trading off is not a good thing. That's what often happens now: we take away some freedom in order to offer security. That doesn't work, because both security and freedom must be there. They do need to be aligned not traded off and set on one axis.

The morality, why do we want more and better?

Why do we want more and better, why progress or is it actually good as it is and is a defensive policy enough? Of course we can endlessly make beautiful plans, deploy technology and invest in a better, sustainable, healthy world.

But is a super-state and as much innovation as possible really necessary, or is that the only way to keep our heads above water?

The question then may be whether there is public money for that. Maybe better with less is also a good motto. Even more important is that we see what, for example, comfort and technology do for us. We can let ourselves be pushed around by technology and the fancy systems and plans, but don't we then reverse cause and effect? Pushing technology, innovation for innovation's sake, growth for growth's sake, that's building on quicksand and unfortunately we see the results too often around us. Shouldn't we first make sure that we understand what makes people happy, tolerant and respectful, what citizens actually want? That you may not need so much technology, networks and bandwidth for that at all, that is a possibility to consider, isn't it?

In the end, we come back to the human being. Understanding the deeper needs of citizens requires more than market research or elections, because the real problems often remain hidden. Every human being has both social and individual motives, a need for recognition and a search for the meaning of things. In practice, this is reduced to fairly flat goals such as more income, material things. If we want to rise above that, then a good understanding of the motives, mechanisms and morality of people and the community is therefore necessary.



This is something in which psychology, anthropology and sociology can help us but which the ancient sages also understood something about.

Maslow's pyramid

What actually drives people, the family, the group, the tribe, the city, the state? We want security, recognition, prosperity, well-being, self-discovery, Abraham Maslow put it down in a beautiful pyramid of needs. There the need for contact with the 'other world' is not mentioned very specifically but as long as religion plays a role, and it still is a factor in today's world, we cannot deny it.

So how are we going to fill those needs and for whom? Distribute the scarcity? How do you do that fairly and equitably? With rules and laws you don't make people happy without structure, trust and challenges it doesn't work either.

Spinoza's remark that the essential task of the state is freedom may be a good starting point. Protection of the freedom to be yourself but then, also according to Kant's Categorical Imperative, with respect for the freedom of the other. Then, of course, security immediately comes into the picture. The system, the order (with eventually law and rule and enforcement) must connect those opposites must be based on a sense of balance, justice and ultimately ethics. Morality as a practical ethic plays an essential role, what is the basis for this? Everyone equal, or still difference? Is it because we don't want to squeeze 'progress' by too rigid an order, sacrificing creativity to conservatism? A totally safe police state or city is not fun, exciting or challenging, but the other way around is not what we want either.

The general legal structure

There are many issues surrounding constitutional and human rights these days. Corona made this a real issue, as forcing people to vaccinate went against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, as ratified in many treaties. Not an easy matter, some argued that the common good prevailed and non-vaccinated were a danger to others, other claimed that such balancing between basic human rights was expressly forbidden (in article 30 of the UDHR). Maybe it helps to realize that human rights and constitutional rights were originally intended to defend the individual from government interference, harassment and attack on property. They were not excluding that other citizens could feel cornered and attacked by extreme manifestations of those rights, but this is a civic law matter, not something the government could prescribe, order, demand. The idea is that once the government can use arguments like health to impose measures against the bodily integrity rights as in the UDHR they could easily extend that to economic



damage, censorship, eliminating opposition and we would end up a totalitarian state.

Worldview, are we right?

In thinking about democracy, the worldview, or in fact the image of man that forms the basis of society, is decisive. That view is often that people are inherently evil, cannot be trusted and are only kept from total chaos and arbitrariness by a thin layer of 'civilization'. This is the veneer theory, propagated by Thomas Hobbes, among others, and supported by all kinds of experiments in psychology in the sixties. Meanwhile, not all of that turns out to be true, as Rutger Bregman demonstrates in his book (*Alle mensen deugen*, 2019), or at least presents arguments that undermine the prevailing veneer setup. He sees evolution as a 'survival of the friendliest' but does not go so far as to speak of a

'survival towards the fittest' (more De Lamarck than Darwin) because that would require a God image or purpose of the universe.

The Russian 'Silverfox experiment' of Lyudmila Trut and Dmitri Belyaev since 1959 supports this view of kindness as the basis of social cohesion and growth of cooperation. Foxes selected for friendliness change to friendlier animals with also friendlier (puppy) appearance and neoteny. The domesticated fox is a form of the wild red fox that has been domesticated to some degree under laboratory conditions.

The implication of this evolutionary trend, which incidentally does not preclude the possibility that, among other things, ingroup/outgroup polarization and identification can still cause humans to do terrible things, is not elaborated upon by Bregman. It goes very much against anti-racism and anti-discrimination sentiment. In extremo then, if we apply the silver fox findings to humans, are ugly people and ugly people groups less friendly and less social though more inventive and enterprising? There is hardly any research on this, except that we know quite well that beautiful people have all sorts of advantages and are at the forefront of partner choice.

But first back to what we may still believe in together, the idea or illusion we call democracy....

5 Democracy: end or means

In our Western world, we have translated the need for law and order and citizen influence over them into democracy, a model that would bring the choices between individual and collectivity to the people.

Unfortunately, that system is not ideal, especially in the reality of the Corona crisis. Are we still a democracy, or rather a centrally run state with some quasi-democratic theater? In this chapter I will discuss basic conditions, but also how we are dealing with the Internet and cyberspace in an increasingly important part of our society, where democracy is totally absent, but where the Internet and social media are increasingly becoming a factor in public opinion formation, in electioneering, and has actually become a new pillar under the system.

I have long thought that the constitution or constitution was really the basis of democracy, but that constitution now appears to be adjusted as needed and is certainly no longer chiseled in stone as in the days of Hammurabi. 'The pursuit of happiness' is a nice thought in the U.S. Constitution but did not apply to slaves, the less fortunate and women when it was established. We have moved on a bit since then but GNP and disposable income are still the very material pillars of policy. The idea that when democracies make material progress they also function better morally assumes a causal relationship but perhaps the economy is the cause and democracy the consequence elevated to an ideal. Happiness and democracy are not necessarily linked, think of a monastery where democracy is not really an issue. Democracies also wage war, torture and discriminate and know and sanction inequality. A quote from the now somewhat outdated ('end of history' Francis Fukuyama ('92):

„...liberal democracy is not necessarily the only political system that is cut out to resolve social conflicts. A democracy's ability to resolve conflicts peacefully is greatest when these conflicts arise between 'interest groups' between whom there has been a long-standing consensus on the rules of the game, and when the conflicts are primarily economic in nature. But there are other, non-economic conflicts which are much more difficult to resolve and which involve issues such as inherited social status and nationality; democracy is not ideally suited to solving these kinds of problems. “

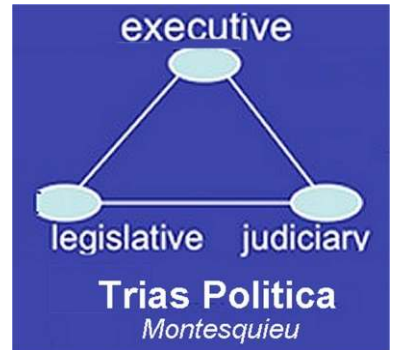
And:

„....De liberal democracy may be more functional for a society that has already achieved a high degree of social equality and consensus in certain basic principles but for societies that are highly polarized by social class,

nationality or religion, democracy can produce stalemate and stagnation.“

Democracy, representative, digital or direct

Traditionally, citizen consultation (preferably all residents) has been the basic pillar of a democratic system. That was possible (for the elite) in Greece and still here and there like in Switzerland usually it has become a representative and thus indirect consultation. This means that the people elect their own representatives who make decisions for them. Furthermore, the political power is divided among several (and approachable) bodies (powers) to prevent arbitrariness and abuse of power and the three powers are separated via the Trias Politica and a free press as the fourth power. The different organs control each other in this way. We often call a constitutional state, in which every citizen has rights, freedoms and duties, a democracy. This is not always true, it can also be an autocracy, meritocracy, consensus system or theocracy or a parliamentary system that is not necessarily democratic. The definition is therefore quite vague, as in the Van Dale dictionary:



Form of state in which the people (through representatives) govern themselves and can freely express their opinions and wishes.

Contemporary democracy is more or less proclaimed as a (Western) state ideology in which the people are sovereign or especially think they are sovereign. Both in direct form (referendums, petitions, polls) and via representation. In this way, support for legislation is supposedly guaranteed. By means of elections, citizens give legitimacy to the decisions of representatives of the people, who are often no longer consulted by the executive.

Democracy as a sweetener

The whole democracy has become a sop and is in practice very limited; elections alone are not enough, there should be participation, involvement, space for political activism. A democracy is not voting once every four or five years, it is a system of opposing forces and space for self-organization to make adjustments. The minority is allowed to speak out (free press and expression/demonstration rights etc. Not the majority who decides a system that takes into account the interests of the minority, incidentally with the risk of compromise solutions that nobody wants.

Democracy is not a licence for those elected as executive or controlling power to rule by decree for four years, listening to the voter only at election time, that is serial autocracy or even oligarchy. It is not about electing „puppets“ as

office holders to policy principles. Democracy begins with communication, not panels and debates with people in the neighborhoods and on the shop floor. But democracy also requires confidentiality, secrecy, because consultation in the open is not always productive. Democracy is a process, a result that cannot be made a static outcome.

The characteristics of a democracy are:

Individual freedom

Basic political rights

Police and defense have limited powers

Independent judiciary

Freedom of the press

Freedom of speech

Preconditions for representative democracy

If you are going on a hunt, democracy or even sociocracy (working with consent) is not a convenient approach. You need a more or less mature society to implement democracy. This includes:

Group feeling (national unity, city, party, us/them), an identity

Relative autonomy of the state, the city etc. Democracy should not be a theater play.

Economic and cultural development that allows democracy, as a stage in the evolution from tribe to modern nation.

Means of communication that are widely accessible.

Some degree of complexity, which means that not everyone is able to make informed decisions and we must leave that to elected or appointed representatives.

No governing by agreement or edict, via the imposition of decisions, with which the trias politica and the dual system ('the government rules, the Chamber checks') loses its value. No governing by diktats, tables or lobbying influence. No power shift to government (gouvernementalization) at the expense of parliament.

No (hidden) incentives (rewards also jobs etc.) for those in power, when acquiring or retaining the democratic and executive functions and positions, Participatory citizens. Broad participation in the GNP. Oil states where none of the citizens (not the import workers) have to work are rarely democratic. Involvement and responsibility should have substance.

Means of power for citizens, plebiscite, petition, initiative, binding referendum, constitutional court, agenda setting, hearings, right to demonstrate, WOB, transparent government, impeachment procedures.

A basis of trust and respectable legal principles: proportionality, subsidiarity, effectiveness and viability (as well as long term sustainability)

Acceptance of an ethical basis, namely the common good, responsibility and citizenship, a social contract. Rights and duties. Restrictions on interest groups (religions, minorities) using or sabotaging democracy for self-interest as exclusive groups (identification). There must be consensus on the idea that those who are elected to govern do so for the benefit of all.

You can achieve this through elections or using the internet for polls and votes, but under strict conditions of representativeness and security.

Basic democracy is a form of democracy in which as many decisions as possible are taken at the lowest possible level and is in line with the idea of subsidiarity.

Internet and democracy

Digitalization has great advantages, such as comfort, efficiency, access for all also disadvantages such as flattening and erosion of diversity, of local markets and local profits through globalization and erosion of privacy. The promotion of democracy, once praised by people like John Perry Barlow of the EFF as a core quality of the Internet (Cyberspace Independency Declaration 1996) has not really come into its own, however; rather it has turned out to be an instrument for mass manipulation, complete with fake news and identification with sectional interests. People in the early days of the WorldWideWeb spoke highly of its democratic potential, but more realistic minds recognized that the Internet would lead to unbridled globalization, neo-colonialism, flattening (the entropic effects), loss of privacy and civil rights, and erosion of cultural and bio-diversity. The democratic impact remained limited; polls, referendums, petitions turned out to be mainly advocacy, e-voting easily sabotaged, profiling used for fake news and manipulation (like the Cambridge Analytics scandal in US elections) and the distance between citizens and government only increased. The cyberdemocratic impulse of free information is being squeezed and turned into the suffocating dictatorship of cyber oppression.

New pillar to support agency

Given the changing view of humans as no longer fundamentally virtuous, democracy also comes to be seen in a different light, and new forms of citizen consultation are needed. The whole democratic machinery is now too based on restricting freedom, with coercion, punishment, and the deprivation of individual rights.

The approach of restricting, controlling, deciding from above, assuming fraud and bad character as we so clearly see in the Corona-crisis and the benefits affair, is actually not tenable anymore. It leaves no room for the good and responsible in each person. Can a new form of interaction between people, via the internet and applications but then secure and representative help here? Can this make true democracy and participation possible? That first seemed a beautiful ideal was lost in globalization and entropic flattening. Couldn't a system be set up that does use the internet facilities for greater participation, co-determination and participation? For control on subsidiarity, proportionality and effectiveness of governmental and institutional and unilaterally imposed measures, in the absence of a constitutional court or a legal institution where compliance with those European rules can also be enforced nationally.

Direct democracy in its old form with personal input and choice is almost impossible. Things like internet referendums do not work well because not everyone participates and not everyone is well informed. In theory, the Internet does open up new possibilities here and can be seen as a new pillar of democracy.

This can be institutionalized but there must also be room for activism, whistleblowers, demonstrations, feedback from the bottom up. In a 'Big Brother' info-society, hacktivism in itself is not so bad; a democracy of partly anonymous and critical observers can have positive aspects. It forms a counterweight to the growing power of governments and major cyberspace powers like Google and Facebook, which operate in the cloud and therefore outside any jurisdiction or legal system. Wikileaks has stirred up a lot of dust!

Cyberspace also has threatening sides, it has all been thought out in sometimes frightening detail but we have let it happen and have not thought through the consequences and covered them in checks and balances.

You can also see it optimistically, the more direct democracy that would be possible with the Internet, could include:

- Framing of consequences (group feeling, impact of outcome as advisory or mandatory or corrective)

- Representativeness (all stakeholders participate), turnout promotion

- Qualification (well-informed participants and reliable information)

- Participation, only voting is not enough and too non-committal.

- A common ethical framework

- Democratic regulation, protocols, legislation at the right level (subsidiarity).

- Secrecy, can the government verify who voted what?

- Monitoring of implementation and feedback.

- Phasing and timing, repeat polls and validity period

Linkage to representative democratic institutions, parties, courts, schools of thought, the constitution, human rights.

Embedding in education as a democratic pillar

If the above is taken into account, the Internet does give the citizen more possibilities, for expression, self-organization and as a new instrument of control. The individual has gained more power, because everyone can post, email, blog etc.

The fourth power, journalism as co-controller of the power of institutions, has become much broader, everyone can now exercise control. An empowered and well-informed citizen can therefore influence policy and implementation. Through the media, social media, parliament, through civil society organizations and through extra-parliamentary actions, with the internet as a means of communication, also among themselves. Provided that the government does not impose censorship or restrictions (or let it happen through the back door) on internet use, as is often the case nowadays, and also practises real openness itself and facilitates this in terms of procedures such as the "open government" and free access to government documents and notes laws..

Internet extends the various functions of journalism to the citizen, the fourth power becomes more democratic but also less clear. Media are there to:

- inform: report on social developments

- monitor: check whether authorities and organizations keep to agreements and live up to their social responsibility

- provide a platform for discussion and opinion: a platform for opinion and debate

- to interpret and analyze: to offer background information on political and social developments and to comment on them

- Putting issues on the agenda: putting issues on the social agenda.

- Provide space for hacktivism, wikileaks, investigative journalism, etc.

Norms and values in cyberspace

What is completely missing is cyberethics. Truth, freedom, security, in a global context and in cyberspace we certainly cannot relate them clearly to each other. We will have to go back to thinkers like 'Spinoza' who, for example, saw freedom as an essential task of the state and then see whether an ethics of cyberspace can be formulated. There is a great need for that. Just as in the time that Hugo de Groot created a framework with the rise of intercontinental shipping (the free sea) so in our time cyberspace will have to get its own ethics and legal basis.

It is a pity that in all the forums and discussions and in the comments of lawyers this is touched upon but not come up with clear suggestions and insights.

It is actually non-lawyers such as JP Barlow (EFF), Jaron Lanier, Ted Nelson, Wau Holland, Rop Gonggrijp and science fiction writers such as William Gibson who have made meaningful contributions and especially vistas here. They did not shy away from subjective views of law and think that in subjective law and the question of how do I experience privacy, truth, happiness, and freedom we may find a new cyberethics. No legal-push but subject-pull. In this sense the Internet is also a medium that still offers democratic perspectives. But it does require the development of a new framework that overcomes the shortcomings of today. Kathalijne Buitenweg wrote a good book about this: Data Power and Counterforce

Creating a new framework

There are all kinds of plans and initiatives to set up something via the Internet, but there is no clear idea. Perhaps a competition and conferences on this subject could be used to ask the creative people to set up something that would be informative, participative and probing. That would have to include and take into account tests of voter engagement, expertise and bias, otherwise it will remain manipulable advocacy as it is now with all those petitions on the internet. Not directly on a national scale but in smaller organizations this can then be tried out.

This is not a simple challenge, a new pillar must be put under democracy, for which protocols, perhaps laws and institutions must be set up. The sharing of power to implement and manage such a system requires balancing and balancing the interests of all stakeholders.

It would make sense for the development of such an Internet democracy pillar to free up resources in the public sphere but with support from private organizations.

6 The political arena

Democracy is nice, but how does it work in practice, how does politics work, how do you get people to change things, how do we create support for perhaps very necessary changes? Then we have to look at why people (voters) actually get behind a particular movement. In the USofA this is limited to two large parties, some smaller upstarts or individuals, but in most Western countries there are many parties, that have to form coalitions to establish a well supported cabinet of executive ministers or secretaries.

Voters are swinging a lot these days. It is certainly not because in the Netherlands they really trust the The Hague political clique so much. Politics has degenerated into a system of bag carriers, who in turn hire bag carriers and so on. The real rulers stay out of harm's way, it's the errand boys who are so eager to play along that carry out what they don't actually understand. The interests of the citizens have become secondary, democracy became a hollow ritual.

This is frightening and must change, but is there support for this? Politics itself and the people who managed to lick themselves into the system are not going to do anything about it. So it has to come from the citizenry, from the dissatisfied, the disappointed, those who have no faith in the current system. That group has grown and can, albeit to a very limited extent, force change through the right to vote, but who is prepared to do so? An analysis of political relations in relation to the basic institution of the citizen is in order.

Which political houses/parties survive, where does the center of gravity lie when the Corona storm subsides. The fact that society as a whole may end up in a chaotic situation is not relevant here; the point of departure in this chapter is that a more or less normal political system will remain intact. But this is done in the perspective of an interesting thought experiment, namely which currents would arise if something were to happen causing existing parties to disappear and everything to be new. No alliances, no family pressures, no old ties or wounds, no puppets; a totally free interpretation of the political landscape.

The Post-Corona Political Landscape

That experiment is an illusion, after WW2 it didn't happen either, even as there was a moment of reset. In the Netherlands (in Camp Vught) the ten interned political elite did think about how to proceed after the war and social democracy model so prevalent in the Netherlands since then took shape. But let's start from who supports what now and why. There were elections in the Netherlands in 2020 but then the almost hypnotic influence of the great hero (prime minister) Mark Rutte was a clear factor, fear still ruled and people therefore chose rather conservative and also believed in the abilities of the

female D66 (middle of the road somewhat elitist party) leader Sigrid Kaag. The local council elections in 2021 (March) are going to nuance that picture of support for the existing coalition somewhat, but there the local parties also play a big role.

Concerning the government's popularity, for what is commonly referred to as The Hague in the Netherlands (like Washington in the USofA), one can say that the support for the government and the political parties in the coalition has decreased enormously, but they cling frenetically to their 75 + 2 majority (of 150 seats) in the House (2e Kamer) and the Rutte IV cabinet will not push for new elections either. Trust in the government and the system is at an all-time low, yet there is a new cabinet with minimal support. This reveals a serious flaw in the system namely that citizens cannot force elections. This is a democratic flaw, perhaps a widely supported petition will also make this clear. A binding referendum, which D66 once favored and which can enforce such a thing, is probably no longer an issue; it would trip up the cabinet.

The debates surrounding the formation and the Omtzigt (a critical politician who is now an independent) issue have thrown thinking about power and counter-power more open, the small newcomers to the Lower House have scored well, and the actual political relationships (the mood of the people) are now quite different. The policies are getting less and less appreciation. The old and now renewed coalition is now under pressure, has just enough support in terms of seats in the 2nd Chamber, but has to succumb in the Senate with occasional support from the left or from newcomers like the Volt faction.

Looking deeper

If we take a look at the political movements in the picture after the Corona crisis, which may continue for years, and then look beyond the party lines, there will still be large groups who are floating politically, who don't know what they want, who are not yet sufficiently politically introduced, but who form a factor because of their numbers. This is certainly true of millennials and young people who are relatively new to the political landscape. The question is from whom do the hospitality entrepreneurs who have been mangled, the crisis victims, the unemployed, the disaffected, the frustrated healthcare workers, the Islam-freaks, the vaccine-free seek support? In the long run, what will happen to the self-employed and entrepreneurs who saw their business evaporate or simply go bankrupt?

Which party will they support or will new parties emerge and the old clubs go under, as is already happening with the Christian Democrats CDA? There are fundamental issues at play, besides the „reset“ and „reconstruction“ issues that will certainly be around for years and maybe decades. Energy and climate are relevant, but after the limited support of poorer continents with vaccines etc. can we still count on their support. Are the long term effects of Corona, such as

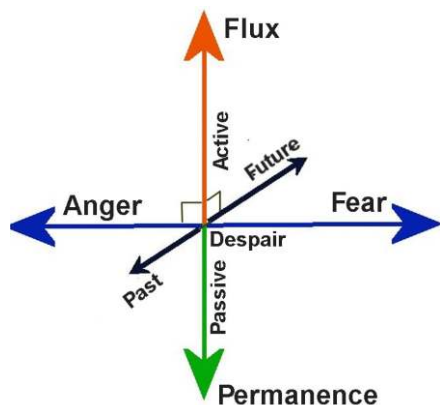
reduced overall immunity and life expectancy going to come into play? How will the super-rich, big business and tax-avoiders be dealt with, and in a much broader sense how will we translate the inequality issue, also in a political sense. If there is a period of local or global chaos then political priorities also change.

Predicting is difficult and undoubtedly paradoxical developments will also occur, for example it is not inconceivable that the downsizing of the SME sector will not lead to fewer companies but on the contrary will generate a new wave of activity. As is the likelihood that excess mortality and long-term vaccine damage will impact the economy and social life, the housing market, pensions and the entire banking system. Will pro and contra vaxxers continue to face each other or will there be reconciliation?

Innovation and activity will perhaps increase and further align with the trend toward online, personalization (customization) and small-scale and local production. The Internet and e-commerce became big, that's not going away. We supposedly grew on the waves of globalization but that trend is reversing, now small scale is interesting again. Negatively that works out as „own people first“, positively as using our own strengths.

Who feels at home where

The question is which political movement can gain sufficient support here, because the danger is fragmentation through identification with sectional interests, as a result of which, for example, the left-wing (Democrats) bloc lost out in the US, even as they managed to get Biden elected.



The contrast between the elite and the seniors with money or pensions (baby boomers) and the young is a source of division and fragmentation, even within existing parties. Much will depend on recognizable leaders and appealing role models. These are currently lacking in Dutch politics, or are we there with the waning and now somewhat pimped popularity of Rutte, the rise and now appointment in Sigrid Kaag and

the Corona bonus (victory over the disease?) of the center-right? Critical people like MP's Omtzigt and Van Haga got many voters behind them in 2020 and have serious support, with ousted ex-minister Mona Keijzer as a rising star. And the smaller parties like Volt, JA21, PvdDieren and BBB are profiling themselves strongly in the Corona period, there is growing opposition but is that enough? The Corona measures were more or less abandoned at the end of



February 2022, but does that mean an end to the polarity and distrust in the government. The trucker protest in Canada has not been ignored, similar actions all over Europe supported the notion that the people had enough of the authoritarian regime and measures.

New dividing lines

The old left-right division no longer works well but what does? Political positioning is not very rational. It is primarily an emotional issue. We vote with our gut, not very much on the basis of analyses of party programs

and often because we think the players are okay. Economic facts are also translated into emotional reactions, into sentiments such as fear and anger, disappointment, (dis)hope, flight behaviour and often identification with leaders or ideals. In this process, the hard facts do not play much of a role. Especially in a time of fake news and social media, the „consensus“ truth is a matter of interpretation and, unfortunately, manipulation. Whoever shouts the loudest or has the most convincing spokesperson, takes the win, and is in charge for another 4 years or so,

So politics is all about emotions, which we become aware of as feelings, and underneath these are the basic reactions to external stimuli, i.e. fight, flight and freeze. Such reactions have to do mainly with our emotion ears, the adrenal glands, with neurotransmitters and hormones like adrenaline and the like.

Anger and fear are the most obvious drivers, blocking can be out of fear or out of desperation.

A simplified division of a political spectrum as in the pictures could therefore be whether people make their political choice out of anger or fear and whether they then choose from their personal or social interests. This also includes desperation, but desperate people usually don't vote. In addition, the attitude plays a role, is one socially or individualistically minded, the old left-right and conservatism is of all times.

This then produces a system of axes with some clusters that fit in somewhere and social groups that are therefore also political target groups.

The third dimension, the social/individual axis is indicated in the diagram per group as an arrow to the front or back, to indicate the orientation. These are generalizations; there may well be underprivileged people who do think socially

and vote, but the majority, out of a combination of fear and anger, mainly stand up for their own interests, their ego, and their individual profit-seeking.

Not all voter groups are indicated, only those who have no clear place at the moment. This is because it is not about the people who are traditionally stuck in their choices anyway but about the floating voters, the „swing votes“. The change in attitude, as pollster Maurice de Hond also states, is important as an indication of the shifts that can be expected in voting behavior.

There are many more variables, such as whether people are future-oriented, live in the present or the past, and whether they still believe in democracy or no longer vote, but that makes it very complicated.

When the corona pandemic eventually dies out (and that may take years with new mutations etc.) then there may be a chaotic situation, but that too will eventually pass. Will people get angry or resign themselves to the situation? What do we have to take into account then?

The composition of the population is changing. We are getting older, but Corona has limited aging by the death of many elderly people, life expectancy is definitely going to decline for a few more years, although CBS assumes rapid rebound. Health insurance is going up, pensions are probably going down a bit, taxes are going up, the middle groups are going to get picked on. Possibly the total population is also declining and with that some of the problems are out of the picture and there is less need for inflow. How will people react to that? There will probably also be more criticism of the way in which the economy has been sacrificed for the benefit of the baby-boomers and the war generation, at the expense of young people and their future. People will probably call for nationalist policies, anti-globalisation and tackling the elite.



In doing so, we must not forget the positive effects of the Corona crisis. Awareness has grown, cohesion, involvement in politics is increasing despite or because of the increased divide; people realize that the current system is rattling. Subjects such as education, civil rights and questions about the meaning and significance of life gained a new perspective for many. It is to be hoped that we have really learned something from this crisis, and there will be political movements that want to effectuate that. After Corona, the „old“ parties may well disappear and others may replace them. The existing parties and certainly the coalition (s) swung back and forth a lot, did not have a clear profile and may also be blamed for what went wrong.

I am waiting for new movements to jump into the vacant electoral positions and hope that the chaos will not be too bad. The ‘war on Corona’ is, unfortunately, too similar to previous ‘wars’ (drugs, terror, rogue states) that have taken away more and more rights and freedoms from us as citizens.

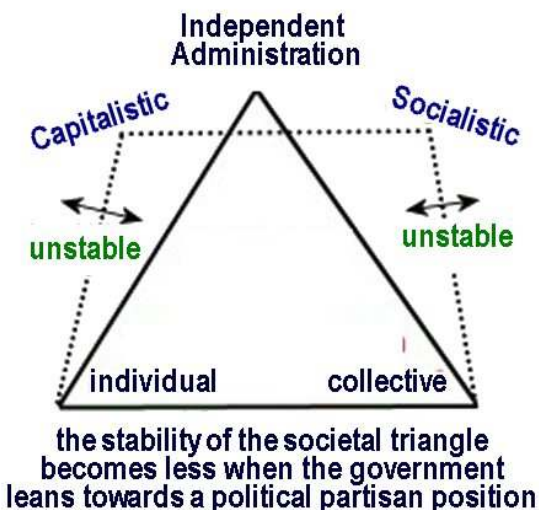
My conclusion, in fact, is that in our country and elsewhere, the number of political bigots will increase as the Corona crisis continues to wind down. People will hopefully realize that the hero worship of people like Fauci and in the Netherlands PM Mark Rutte and the health authorities and the belief in their „science“ was rather the delusion of the day.

The unstable triangle

How stable is the political spectrum anymore? Is the VVD still on the right in the sense of putting individual freedom first? Hardly, being collective and „together“ is rather left. Why is it that we no longer know whether a party or a cabinet is left or right? People work from program agreements but that is a hodgepodge of compromises. One can try to put that left/right label on it but

practice is different.

You see this governments (also at the municipal level) bending towards the collective as well as the individual in a sometimes very strange split and that is really not going to change. Also traditional social parties such as the PvdA and CDA and now for example Groen-Links in Amsterdam became (on a local level even largely) regents and chose the side of capital, the free market, the pocket money, the well-paid plush.

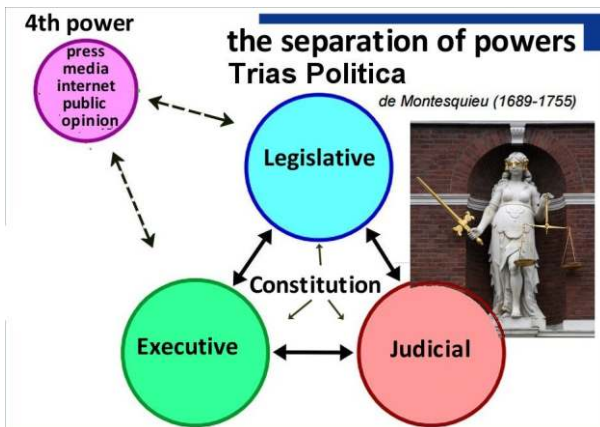


The result is that at least the common man no longer trusts politics and seeks support in populist movements. This phenomenon is of course not new but was often the cause of the collapse of great cultures and nations in the past. In a sense, government should be the stabilizing factor, the top of a triangle with rich and poor as its base, a guardian of the balance between individual and collective interest. A triangle is essentially a stable construction, we know it in engineering but Montesquieu's Trias Politica in politics is also an example. But that triangle is no longer clear, the executive branch got too much power and became too sensitive to the elite. In politics you hardly ever meet people from the people anymore, they are mostly „good looking“ and media-savvy ambitious job hunters with academic degrees.

The idea of democracy is to let the people ultimately exercise influence, but this has largely been lost. The citizen is seen as inconvenient, fraudulent, disobedient, and the control state must do something about that. Power is concentrated in clubs and institutions, little kingdoms like the RIVM (the Dutch government's health agency, like CDC and FDA) that no one can control anymore. In the Dutch Justice system, for example, the citizen is left out completely. The Public Prosecution Service (not voted for like district attorneys) and the Judiciary are a fairly elite club, with few outsiders. Elsewhere in Europe it is different; in Germany, for example, there are always civil judges alongside the appointed professional judges. Among other things, this has led to more trust in the system and a better balance between offender and victim interests. Minorities are underrepresented in the police and the judicial system, there is often a culture in those circles that maintains the imbalance.

The result is that the inherently stable triangle of a government that values and accommodates left and right equally becomes a quadrangle, an unstable situation where the whole thing can start to sway to the left or right.

My conclusion here is that politics needs to take a good look in the mirror if it wants to remain credible in the long run. What does it stand for, beyond debating and attacking each other in what should be the meeting, the forum of democracy and debate. Now it is a kind of market where one praises one's own goods and blackens others and a theater stage to score public recognition.





7 Economic inequality: dichotomy, elite & underclass

Of course, there are differences between people, in all sorts of ways, but we have to believe, if we want to be politically correct, in the illusion that everyone is equal or at least has equal opportunities. But this is not the case at all. The division into haves and have-nots is becoming more and more painful, inequality is growing, and the Corona crisis made it worse. The really rich got incredibly richer during the crisis, the bottom is poorer, has fewer and fewer opportunities and is gradually losing confidence and hope that things will ever get better. This has turned the divide, but especially the gap between the 1% and the rest, into a dangerous time bomb.

There have always been divisions, in income, in status and often that was also to do with religion, Catholics versus Protestants, Sunni versus Shia, magical versus non-magical religions; it is of all times. That has also very often gotten out of hand, it has caused wars and civil wars, revolutions and major upheavals.

Stratification and hierarchy

The growing inequality, whether in wealth, in income, in knowledge, in health, in obedience or in power, does not matter so much. There is no simple solution either, you can ban whatever you want but the divide and stratification remains. Measures like taxing intelligence, beauty, success and happiness are rather impractical. Taxing property and wealth may work temporarily, but then people quickly find alternatives to escape. People are simply different and so layers are created in society; it is the same in the animal kingdom.

Social and economic stratification, the emergence of layers and elites, is a broad phenomenon. Here I want to talk mainly about the economic divide. Of course, in the Corona crisis, in addition to the economic dichotomy, a split into obedient followers and obstinate vaccine refusers has emerged, and it may yet get dangerously out of hand, but here I will first address the problem of a wealthier elite, who apparently took advantage of the situation.

The crucial problem

The elite is under pressure, trying to regain control of the situation with all sorts of fancy plans (including from the WEF in Davos) and lots of digital magic tricks. The pressure from below, from those who feel restricted, disadvantaged, powerless and used is clearly growing. The awareness of the economically or otherwise oppressed groups who then reach for administrative (the ballot box), nationalistic or violent levers (such as terrorism or administrative disobedience) can no longer be denied or manipulated by traditional means. Chaos threatens

when those who feel unseen or deprived of prospects and hope increasingly take to the streets and start blaming the elite.

This is when the phenomenon of power distance reduction comes into play, incidentally a theory of the Dutch sociologist Mauk Mulder, who argued that power gives satisfaction in addition to the utility of power (the expectancy valence theory).

Fear and uncertainty are the drivers

In this chapter I counter the idea that it is an inevitable tendency for the rich to get richer and richer and that this can only be addressed by drastic wealth taxes, inheritance taxes, etc. I believe that if we realize that becoming rich and individuality is primarily something to do with fear and the search for security in individual wealth and reserves, then other solutions will come into focus. Perhaps it also helps to look at what the lack of trust in each other and the system and the denial of the connection with the unseen have to do with each other. Faith was always a kind of band-aid on the wound of stratification and inequality in the world. I come back to that.

Stratification in society is not a new problem but it is also a natural process in groups, and in a way necessary if there are more than 150 people, then hierarchy is the means to manage such a larger group (the 150 of anthropologist Robin Dunbar). Modern society has made the differences in status and power more extreme though, the differences are huge, directors earn hundreds of times more than the people on the floor. That income inequality has been growing especially in recent decades, after a somewhat more equalized income after World War II. Inequality that carries over into opportunity, into access to justice and education, health, life expectancy and how happy people are.

We now face huge differences in pay and wealth between rich and poor, at least in terms of individual wealth, the difference between rich and poor countries (North-South) has narrowed somewhat. The Corona crisis has made the individual differences even greater; how this develops in terms of balance between countries is still difficult to predict.

What is the value of money?

Just a little thought experiment. Suppose all European countries, under the leadership of the ECB, decide to devalue the euro, by a substantial step, your money is for instance only worth 50% on the world market. Panic, of course, but who will really be affected by such a devaluation? Those with money in the bank and the banks themselves, because their equity and reserves are worth less. But the rich, those with shares, they are laughing their heads off. Because their stake in corporations, in real estate, in art and material things has not diminished. They are still the boss and will have to deal with the situation for a while, but „at the end of the day“ they are still just as rich or maybe

even richer, the minkukels are paying the price. The billions in wealth of the super-rich are not in their safe, but consist of claims to ownership and control in „hard“ businesses and affairs.

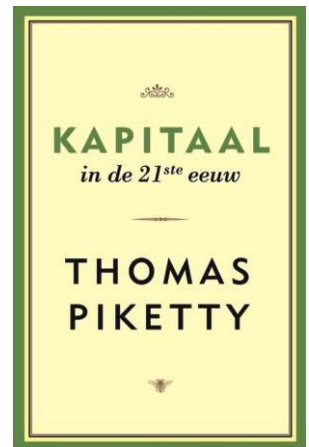
Much has been written and said about the power of the elite, about the 1%, the increasingly lopsided relationships, the divide that has now become palpable. This has of course been going on for much longer, Marx for example analyzed it and came to the conclusion that it is ultimately unsustainable and leads to revolution. But in recent years it was mainly the Occupy movement and Piketty's book that brought the matter to the front pages. The Occupy movement of a few years ago also made it clear to the West that something is going on at a gut level and people no longer simply accept growing inequality. Despite the collapse of Occupy, this still struck a chord with the masses and was picked up by the media. The self-enrichment of the billionaires, but also of politicians, bankers and job hunters are now widely reported and labeled as 'greedy bastards'.

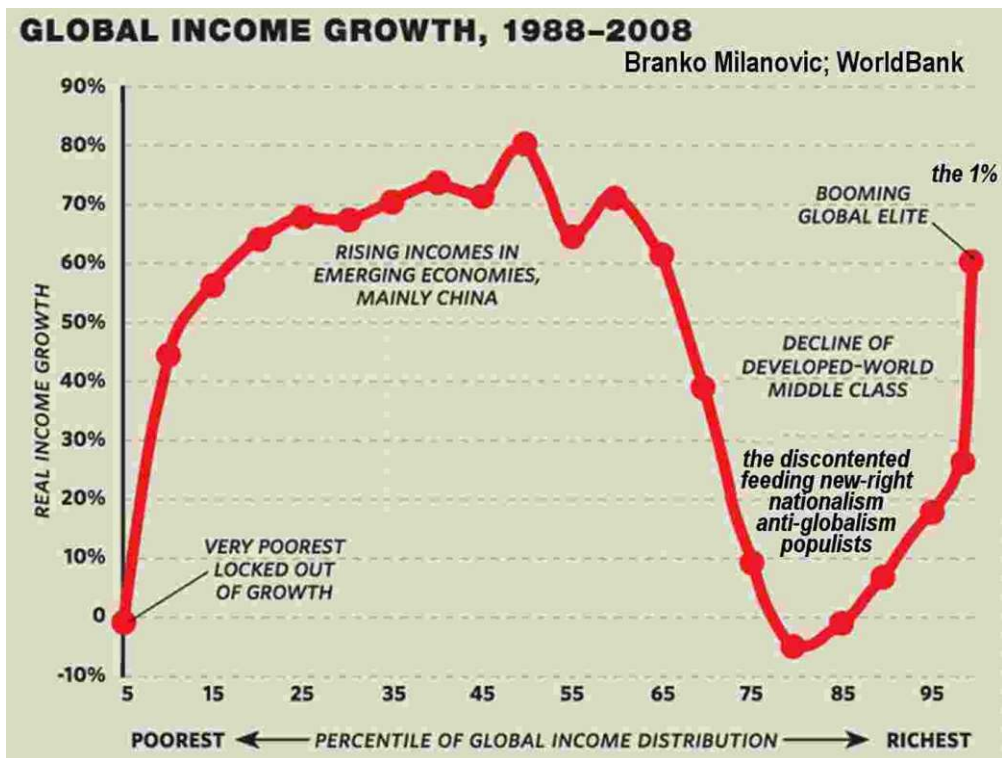
Piketty; not a great vision but an econometric review

The notorious book on capital relations. 'Capital in the 21st Century' by Thomas Piketty is an originally French book (2013), based on historical data covering a couple of centuries. It is actually very econometric and not very political but it has received a lot of attention from that angle. Left-wing politicians in particular sought support from it for targeting capital and the elite through taxation. They want to reduce income inequality, especially at the expense of wealth inequality, the rich have to pay. Of course, there is resistance to this on the part of the wealthy, but entrepreneurs also see it as a punishment and a disincentive to earn money and to build up wealth (and thus security, status and power).

Although in my opinion Piketty's book no longer holds water as far as predictions and recommendations are concerned because it mainly looked at figures from the past and indicated trends and laws but did not include developments such as the Internet, it did make the world aware of the growing inequality. This clearly began to affect politics as well, the rise of, for example, Trump in the US and the new right cannot be separated from a growing discontent and protest attitude.

Piketty's general approach was clear, rich get richer, poor get poorer. This was not a new insight, but he made it clear numerically. It is also well illustrated in the Lakner-Milanovic graph, the elephant curve, which also showed that the growth of income for the elite and the poor was quite divergent and that middle incomes were being squeezed out.





Piketty looked at it as an econometrician, rather numerically and missed some developments that did emerge clearly anno 2021, such as the influence of cyberspace. He thought too much in terms of classical return, underestimated the rise of participatory capitalism and exaggerated the power of large shareholders and billionaires. For the Netherlands, he adopted pension reserves that were far too small and ignored the state pension.

So his success with the media and in the 'leftist church' is not really well founded but fitted into the fashionable 1% thinking. The real mechanisms why societies almost always tend towards such a dichotomy between rich and poor and therefore end up being internally torn apart is more a psychological/social issue than an economic one.

Trust and distrust

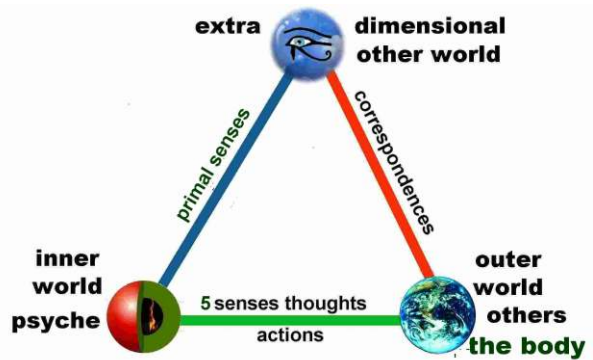
The problem of stratification and division is not only an economic issue, solvable with taxes and regulation, in my opinion it has mainly to do with fear, we have lost trust in each other, the system and the „other world“, something that has been going on since the Renaissance. We have elevated rationality and science to religion but in doing so also deny that we as humans do exist

or think we exist in three worlds. I like to portray this as the three-worlds view.

The vision that there is nothing besides the material and the mental, explains only a part of reality. The mere fact that a large part of humanity believes in some form of omnipotence (God) and cares about that spiritual dimension makes such a model meaningful. In particular, the traditional acceptance of inequality, stratification and in extremo in a caste system, is a factor here. The Western ideal of equality is not shared by everyone!

Security in the secular and rational world is still mainly something you have to arrange, you have to hoard, get richer. Trusting in the system, in your neighbors, in your network (or the Church) doesn't count anymore, grabbing is the only thing to do something about the deep underlying and fundamental fear.

The loss of „faith“ really plays a role in how we treat each other and especially want to be „up front,“ with more money, a bigger car and more security.



The Three Worlds

Need for certainty and security

The problem with simplifications like Piketty put down is that the economy is much more complex than some formulas, the need for certainty and emotions come into play. Much so-called capital is an old-age reserve, people want security for later. When that certainty is arranged in a different way, as with the AOW (social security after 66) benefits system, people will save less. You can call that virtual or even emotional capital, but ignoring it in statistics and deficit calculations, as the government and the WRR (scientific advice institution of the government) still do to some extent, is nonsense. The emotional value translates into behavior, less hoarding and more security.

The inequality between rich and poor, which has been the subject of sufficient research in recent years, cannot be denied. At most, one can argue about the scale of that inequality: is it the 10%, 5%, the 1% or the 0.1% who have the money and the power? It is also no longer a question of capital against the masses, as it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Karl Marx but also Theodore D. Roosevelt could oppose the robber barons, the capitalists who used the industrial revolution to squeeze the masses.

Today's capitalists are the rich and their coterie, who acquired their wealth and income by actively „working“ for themselves and using their insight, especially in how to use ICT and the Internet. The wealthy are still there but form a minority in the new superclass of plutocrats, oligarchs, technobonks and billionaires and those who hang around against them. The rent-seekers, those who realized the money machines created by unregulated privatization, corrupt governments and holes in the financial systems are still there, they also formed a classic group of super-rich. However, they too are increasingly using their capital to grow further and are thus very different from the big landowners of the past.

I noted, with all the globalization and scaling up of the global economy, while the difference between countries has decreased, the domestic differences have actually increased. The emerging markets and BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) have grown faster than the West and resource rich countries in particular are following that growth spurt, with almost always a few who benefit and become stone rich. The masses do advance slightly and a middle class grows, it is needed to create a market for cars, smartphones, drugs and status symbols but what they gain is actually at the expense of the middle class in the West, who lose their jobs and income due to the mobility of work.

Diversity allowed, even essential

Some difference in income, education, power, knowledge and status is productive as long as it does not become too great. This also means that diversity



has good sides, I'll come back to that. Surmountable differences, i.e. being able to get ahead through hard work and good ideas, are fine and mobility (social and physical) can help to form a natural bridge and facilitate the step up for enough individuals. Difference and diversity is necessary, otherwise society stiffens but not too much because then things become polarized. We can receive and handle a limited number of newcomers, but if their share becomes too large, things will become polarized, they will clump together and ghettos and foci of resistance may arise.

Society at large does sense that things are going very wrong and starts to react and anticipate, the preppers are but the tip of the iceberg. The rich hide in gated communities, the minorities isolate themselves in ghettos and cultural (Limburg province) and religious (Islam) fortresses, tribalism rears its head, borders are made or set, polarization and radicalization are the result and safety and order are in danger.

The problem of skewed income distribution has to do with a number of mechanisms, mostly related to the psychology of the citizen invited to individualization, the Internet, globalization and the speed of communication. The faster the world turns, in terms of communication and reaction patterns (feedback) the faster the differences grow.

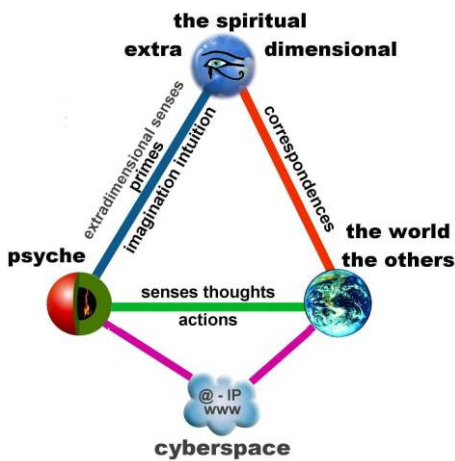
The speed of communication, which nowadays is mostly real-time (without delay) causes accretion (extreme resonance), a well-known effect in feedback loops. Knowing and measuring are dangerous in this sense, reacting too quickly can lead to uncontrollable extremes. We also know this as spiral effects: parties chase each other, with ever better weapons, extreme positions and escalation of conflicts.

Dampening the feedback

It would be interesting to see what effects a deliberate dampening of feedback would produce by, for example, imposing a delay of even a few seconds or minutes for tweets, email, chats, and messages. It is not inconceivable, that this could dampen a lot of unnecessary panic and ill-considered actions and reactions. On the stock market they already have such a delay built in, if the differences become too big too quickly. Such an imposed delay is one of the possible government measures to prevent wide panic in case of major disasters. Not a total communications halt, just some delay that counteracts the whirling and snarling caused by feedback that is too short.

The role of cyberspace in inequality.

Piketty looked primarily at economic figures and based his position on them and the laws he saw. But the future is more than the past, cyberspace in particular is changing the whole thing. The benefits of the Internet and digitization



are great but the flattening of cyberspace, in culture and economy, should not be ignored. More and more the economy revolves around services, digital and virtual things like music, media, advice, apps and recreation via a screen. But you can arrange that from any location and from any tax regime, the bond with a city or country is becoming less. As a result, traditional roles are also shifting, capital providers got a different role but also the value of for example land or a factory has changed, it is now about market positions, cus-

tomer bases, patents, market power. As a startup you no longer need money for an office or factory, or for machines and stock but you need to invest in software, app development, copyrights, marketing, PR. Talent is becoming more important, mediocrity is not asked for, people want to hire top people, use them, work with them, share knowledge.

In particular, Piketty did not see that the value of actual knowledge (such as of prices and availability of goods) is decreasing, that knowledge inequality was often the basis of (over)profit and thus profitability differences but cyberspace transparency is gnawing away at that, there knowledge is rather knowing how to use something.

Globalization flattens and facilitates new empires

The old heirlooms are no longer so powerful, it is the new entrepreneurs, such as Jeff Bezos of Amazon who became billionaires in what is increasingly becoming a meritocracy; those with talent, courage and commitment make it, the rest remain minkukel. The Internet is the economic factor that turns everything around and made globalization effective so that tracing historical lines in terms of income distribution, as Piketty does, becomes trivial.

My biggest objection is that Thomas Piketty's analyses of capital versus income do not address the consequences of modern technology, transparency, labor displacement, concentration trends; he apparently did not see the Internet as a fundamental economic shift. The Internet, in a sense, necessitates us to completely upend the way we think and talk about work, income, relationships and inequality.

Other writers such as Chrystia Freeland in 'Plutocrats' (2012) paint a more nuanced picture, certainly of recent developments and the role of finance and especially the 'hedge funds' or leveraged funds where much of the specu-

lative profits flow and the super-rich with their fascinating but also almost village-like patterns of isolation and clustering can be found.

It is in particular the modern financial constructions and poorly covered but always extended levers (on underlying assets such as substandard mortgages in the U.S.) that caused the 2008 crisis but also caused the further widening of income disparities. Privatization created new super-rich here and certainly in Eastern Europe. In Mexico, China, and India, the plutocrats who railed against the government for privileges, monopolies, and money machines are even more powerful than at home or in the US, where it is the hedge funds and Internet entrepreneurs who made the billions.

Income and wealth distribution and inequality.

The difference in wealth between countries is decreasing due to globalization but the difference between rich and poor within countries is increasing. The ratio of income from capital to income from work has begun to become increasingly unbalanced in recent decades. The rich are getting richer, the poor poorer, although there is a difference between, say, Europe and the US. The ratio is getting out of control and simply put it is because the rich (and fewer and fewer of them with more and more money) are profiting at the expense of the middle and lower classes who are earning less and less and getting poorer. Nothing new but in the old days those poor were far away in the colonies and we just looted their property without paying much for it.

Economists also say that extreme income inequality is not so much unjust as it erodes trust in each other, the system, politics and democracy, and makes it harder for civil society to climb up the ladder. A few score, but the 'winner takes all' stops broad mobility. According to the WRR, it also affects economic growth because the rich spend less and hoard more. It is a costly situation in the long run. In 'The Spirit Level' (2009), Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett describe, using all sorts of comparative statistics, that high income inequality correlates with: more teenage mothers, more violence, more health problems, more child mortality, more obesity, and so on. What are the costs of this, do we include them in the picture?

That things can get out of hand is clear, and we really don't need Piketty's rather complicated reasoning and graphs for that. However, I do think that investing is necessary for reasonable and responsible growth and that luxury spending promotes innovation and keeps culture moving. Surely without expensive stores that exist from wealthy customers there is no fashion, art, vitality. Communism was (on the outside) a flat and almost dead lot compared to the bustling economy of world cities where indeed the rich set the tone.

The general impression now is that things have gotten too crazy and the media and politicians are almost making a big deal out of it, referring to what Piketty, incidentally also together with Emmanuel Saez, dug up from the archives. Tack-

ling the rich with a heavily progressive wealth tax, however, ignores the changed proportions, the historically low interest rate (there is no longer a fixed return to be made) and the volatile (highly fluctuating) valuation of working capital.

Capital versus labor income

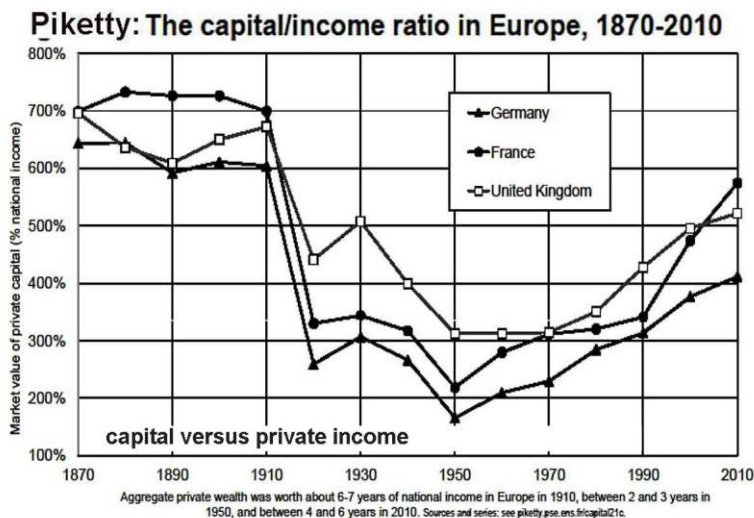
Piketty addressed the question of whether the return on capital is not becoming increasingly decisive in the economy because it is also increasingly destroying the balance between income from work and income from

capital; in other words, more rich people and less reward for work.

Piketty outlined the disturbing trend that because the capital is already in the hands of a very small minority (the 1% or 5% rich), they also know how to find or enforce the best returns and become ever richer. This is exactly what has become evident recently, on a global scale and even worse with the Corona crisis. A perverse situation has arisen, the words plunder capitalism or predatory capitalism are used.

Aren't we tackling the goose with the golden eggs this way? The problem is that you can also see it differently. Growth (although this may no longer be necessary) is often caused by what those 1% of rich people (or the innovative entrepreneurs on the way there) do and invent and that is profit-driven. They are not only the profiteers but also the engine of progress and not only money driven either. That Dagobert Duck image of greedy money piles up is too limited; many rich people also realize that this is not sustainable and people like Soros, Buffet and Gates are well-known philanthropists who give billions for all sorts of projects (not always sensible, in my opinion) but they do not really change the system.

The idea of growth is also somewhat ambiguous. How do you measure it? Growth in the economy is achieved through savings or growth in the number



Piketty: The growth rate of top global wealth, 1987-2013	
<i>Average real growth rate per year (after deduction of inflation)</i>	1987-2013
The top 1/(100 million) highest wealth holders <small>(about 30 adults out of 3 billions in 1980s, and 45 adults out of 4,5 billions in 2010s)</small>	6,8%
The top 1/(20 million) highest wealth holders <small>(about 150 adults out of 3 billions in 1980s, and 225 adults out of 4,5 billions in 2010s)</small>	6,4%
Average world wealth per adult	2,1%
Average world income per adult	1,4%
World adult population	1,9%
World GDP	3,3%

of participants in the economy (working people), but is that a realistic picture. For example, the influx of women has unrealistically distorted formal GNP1 and GDP growth rates in recent decades.

The ordinary saver is losing out

It's not just the workers who are being paid worse and worse; the low-cost lenders (savers) are also paying the price. Their bank deposits and pensions are being eroded by management costs, hidden inflation and claims by a government that is trying to fill the systematic gaps (aging). The rich suffer less from inflation because their assets

(stocks, land, gold, bitcoins) are more valuable. They have not tied up their money in the bank at low or now negative interest rates but have made it active.

Yield and speculation

Yield is a story of benefits but also of costs, risks and long-term consequences. Meaninglessness, frustration, people on the street; that ultimately costs money, often not directly to companies but to society. What is the cost of an unemployed or inflow refugee of 18, who will never find work but needs some income, guidance and care and how do we keep him or her on the right track or what does corrective action cost? Such costs we now sweep under the rug of medical benefits, welfare, care and justice but are relevant. Discontent is a cost, people without purpose and meaningful pursuits run amok, become ill, troublesome, criminal or rebellious, and that costs a lot of money.

Return on investment, in that broad view, is much more than a nominal interest rate on wealth, it is the total sum of costs and returns of that investment and that includes the costs of frustration and rebellion. Tricky to determine but not negligible.

Return as a combination of dividends (or retained earnings) and value growth (stock market value or private equity) is no longer useful as an economic barometer, because it is the 1% and their ambitious and hopeful auxiliaries who determine stock price and value, if need be through bitcoins as Tesla did.

We live on credit and virtual speculative values and „capital“ benefits more than the citizen and worker for now. But then what is capital, I wonder. The property of the super rich is mostly their stock holdings, based on stock market value. That fluctuates and then we think they are getting richer or poorer but is that really true? They often cannot or will not sell those shares and collect their profits and the dividend yield is usually quite limited.

In all of this, the stock market is a phenomenon in itself, a world apart that is seen as a kind of idle land when things are going well, as the basis of misery when things go wrong again. It's a Baron van Münchhausen story, the stock market keeps pulling itself up by the hair because the roaming pension funds simply have to go somewhere. The underlying value has been lost sight of or even, given the hidden environmental costs or costs of protection against terror, can no longer be determined.

So the underlying problem is also to make a real return. Interest rates are uniquely low, inflation is looming, earning well is only achievable with robust speculation and therefore at the expense of others. You can never make even 4% real return if somewhere there is not also saving or earning on work, commodities or energy or if there is productivity growth. Otherwise it is speculating or pottering as we did with our gas reserves.

Actually, when thinking about capital, a much clearer distinction should be made between hard returns such as dividends or rents and the price gains. Stock market prices do have some basis in the intrinsic value of the company and in the price/earnings ratio, but the prices of the big players in, for example, ICT - and there are many big investors in this field - are often very speculative. Investors, especially those who live by the quarter and unfortunately these are also the large funds, do not look for a hard and stable return but price gain and chase each other or just into misery. The profit determination of companies also does not take into account long term effects, environmental damage and the cost of dissolution.

Think of the pension funds of the Netherlands, we have the best old-age insurance of the world. These are rich and large organizations with much international stakes in all kind of corporations. They, because of the low interest and economic downturn after Corona now have difficulty realizing even a modest 4% in addition to moderate dividend and bond incomes, so they chase each other on the stock market, upping the ante, which regularly goes wrong.

The actual owners, i.e. the pensioners, also have to pay the costs of the fund. All kinds of investment constructions are also set up in such a way that the small investor rarely sees a high return. The banks, insurers and the financial world keep more than their share as costs. But, and this mitigates the criticism, this in fact maintains employment. Not that the small investors pay attention to that, they speculate and buy bitcoins, many youngsters go for that option.

Domestically, a high return is almost unfeasible, except in the real estate market, where the housing shortage and the desire to at least put money somewhere else makes prices spike, thereby driving up rents and WOZ values and with rent subsidies and rent tax for the corporations we mainly pump money around. But beware, one day vacant offices, stores and an aging population will take their toll, the term effects of the „harvesting“ or premature death by Corona will surface, there will be under mortality.

The government also still awards nice returns and tax advantages to specific companies and groups from time to time, the Netherlands plays a major part in tax-evasion schemes of the big corporations, it's seen as part of a tax heaven plot. But individuals don't get these perks. Government bonds and the like no longer yield anything, you have to pay if you want to deposit money. So our money (via the banks and funds) is often invested in risky adventures abroad and we invest very little at home, while we are actually bursting with money, from which others benefit.

What do we do with money?

Money has become cheap, the interest is sometimes even negative, but what do you do with it? Putting away a mountain of money in a bank can cost you money nowadays but an old sock is not a very safe place either. You want to invest, preferably with a return, in real estate, gold, minerals and bitcoins but what is sensible in the longer term?

We have money, the government is throwing it around and is trying to mitigate the effects of the Corona crisis, but recently it has been mainly the upper middle groups who have been saving, partly because of the lockdown and because travel, luxury and entertainment were out of the question. We are also putting money away for our old age but are we really investing it wisely? Of course, we could invest in mobility, energy conservation and the environment, for example, and that certainly brings returns, we should have had high-speed trains doing it and tidal power plants on the North Sea a long time ago.

We now put money into sovereign debts of 'pathetic' countries and let the EU guarantee it and the ECB buy those things back up. Is that return in sound currency, something we can now put money into with reasonable certainty as to outcomes?

A financial carousel has been rigged, with absurd real estate prices and tax cleverness but we have not been able to enforce a normal banking culture or healthcare economy. Government, business and the private individual all participate in the rat race, which we call rational economics but which amounts to a kind of money fair. The pension managers (on our behalf, that is) together with speculators chase up the stock prices, the underlying value hardly counts.

Me before Us, getting better at the expense of the collective!

The financial collapse that dealt such a huge blow to the US in 2008 and the world market thereafter was mainly due to illusions, the stretching of the virtual values of securities (such as houses) in constructions in the investment market. This in turn was the result of the increasing need for security among an aging population, who began to think more and more materialistically and therefore more fearfully, and were seduced by the beautiful projections of the funds, banks and the government. The times when you got your reward in heaven are well past, hell is an old age without help or pension!

It seemed so simple, we were going to invest our saved wealth, including pension money that actually makes up the largest part (80% says Sander Boelens) of the assets to be invested by banks, funds, companies and the government, in such a way that a return was created. The only problem was that this return was seen as far too limited, calculated with paper illusions, tied together with empty promises, expectations and speculations. Return became a financial construction of bubbles, real return in agricultural yields, health, the environment, meaningful work, energy savings, mobility was still somewhere in the picture but no longer decisive. The economy became a bubble, which then also burst, but have we learned anything? It is still all about settling bonuses, picking pockets, speculation and air cycling.

Especially institutional investors like pension funds drive each other crazy on the stock market, helped by a small club of ego-tripping wolves who try to outwit each other without looking after the real interests. We mainly protect the false security, the strange and enforced rent increases of 6.5% in recent years (of which 2.5% via the corporations simply goes to the state), the house prices again what to boost also the rental quote. Who can pay 50% or more of their income for rent? This is happening now, an old age pensioner can no longer live without rent subsidy, renting is absurdly expensive and that at historically low interest rates. It is protective behavior, the entire pyramid of banks, pension funds and investments is maintained at the expense of the savings of individuals and the disposable income of the masses.

It has been suggested that measures such as taxes on speculation, money movements (the Tobin Tax), environmental pollution and overconsumption

are a better way than capital taxes of restoring the balance between capital and work. Raising the minimum wage, something that is now in play in the US because many there now actually live below the poverty line, is also an option.

Pre-distribution, that is, before taxation and redistribution improve the ratios, is the most elegant solution. It sounds simple, make the minima a little richer, so less inequality, that helps consumption and reduces social stress.

So the dichotomy seems to be about employment, returns, pensions and the financial house of cards we live in but actually it is about meaning, (in)security and fear. And that also means belonging, not being excluded, sharing in prosperity and well-being.

Inclusivity

The basic idea of equal opportunities for all has not disappeared, and also gets support, there are more and more groups and movements that demand inclusiveness. It is just a pity that such movements often get bogged down in the identification with only the group, they isolate themselves. The well-intentioned activism then turns against them. They remain very visible, and get media attention, but are not honored politically. Of course, there are always groups of citizens who feel seen, count and who actually exert influence, through their voices, through lobbying, or because there are people like them in politics, in bodies and institutions. That is the de facto elite and those who want to belong to it. But more and more people feel excluded, they don't count or don't fully count. You see this everywhere, in business and government, but also in sport and culture.

Better, with less (fear)

In conclusion, the social-psychological development of the last 50 years and actually the last few centuries seems to offer more freedom under the skin there is more fear, stress, uncertainty than people think. This is what at a deeper level determines the atmosphere and therefore the economy and our well-being. We can no longer count on family and neighborhood, the social network is now virtual, neighborly help history but hooray! cyberspace must compensate for it all. Crime, minorities, education, gamification (the resurgence of lottery thinking), all kinds of trends can essentially be traced back to this, and in social media we may see a solution but that too is already over the top E-happiness or iHappiness is only relative, Facebook friends do not come to your birthday party and turn out to be much less fun in real life than their avatar in the cloud. The 'Ommetje' is still a fairly physical app but sitting on Twitter does nothing for your condition.

We believe in our own illusions and have banished the institutions and rituals that brought us back to our true nature, our soul, or allowed them to become

bogged down in materialism. Being a socialist without knowing your neighbors, being religious because we seek a safety net.

The fundamental problem, and we must work on it, is that we actually no longer trust the government, democracy, the other, and gradually no longer ourselves. Decades of nannyism, repression, taking away freedom and generally forcing people to fit into the system, have produced a people of slavish yes-men. They are serfs (inseparable) to capital and brands; they flee into cell phones, flat screens, soccer madness, branded clothing and materialism.



8 Autonomy, privacy, meaning, vitality, health

Having influence on your own life is an important factor in our mental and physical health. If this is lacking, we no longer have a sense of purpose, we start to fret, and eventually burnout, depression, worry and all kinds of illnesses ensue.

We worry about the history of slavery, but modern society has taken away from us more and more of our control over who we are and what we do and our decision-making power (agency is the English term). We are increasingly pushed in a certain direction, have to behave obediently and slavishly, follow the rules, not deviate. With digitalization, that lack of freedom and privacy has increased even more. „Big Brother“ is no longer a literary construct, we are increasingly watched, monitored, censored, „scraped“. This is sold as security but comes down to less and less freedom, rights and space to make mistakes and thus learn. They especially want to prevent deviant thinking and acting, but they do not seem to realize that constructive and innovative thinking may be lost or nipped in the bud as a result. The whole education system is increasingly aimed at making us into good citizens and consumers who do what is imposed on us.

Flattening and boredom as a result but we now have smartphones and screen games for that and social media that make us think we really have contact with lots of people. In reality, we are becoming increasingly lonely, having to work harder than ever to afford a home and getting jobs that are often not much better or more inspiring than what we attribute to that slavery past.

We are constantly monitored and supervised by ‘enforcers’ and ‘managers’ who, in the same position, are also just doing what they are told. There is the illusion that you can grow and free yourself from the status of a *minkukel*, but only a very few manage to do so, who then also keep their distance from the ordinary plebs as a newfangled elite.

The Corona crisis made it all very tangible and even led to compulsory isolation and ‘caging’; we became prisoners in our own homes or in a small room in a storage facility.

Intimacy, one of the essential human needs and only possible with a certain degree of privacy, became almost impossible. Seeing and physically meeting your family and friends was made difficult or impossible; dying alone without your loved ones was deemed acceptable. Our control over our lives and bodies became less and less, despite euthanasia and abortion, you very quickly get trapped in the protocols and rules and we welcome that too, it is so safe and

efficient! Vaccination is a clear example; a majority actually wanted that to be mandatory.

We have the internet and think we can find what we are looking for, but that comes from a limited supply selected by AI methods.

Autonomy

Our power over our own lives has been diminishing over the last few centuries. We are supposedly more social but that comes at a huge price in autonomy, expression, meaning. Our sense of involvement in government and institutions is therefore becoming less and less, we do identify with all kinds of movements, but real participation is rare. The former social framework of religion, association, guild, tribal and village life has largely disappeared. Loneliness, suicide and all kinds of mental and physical complaints are the result; life expectancy is declining while more and more is spent on care and medical facilities, which are no more than band-aids and fundamentally solve nothing.

Our psychological and physical immunity is clearly decreasing, you can see that in the causes of death in the statistics, autoimmune diseases are increasing. New diseases are becoming epidemic, like Parkinson's which has to do with feelings of inferiority, not feeling successful in life. There is, but this is not new, a health gap. People with better incomes and better education eat better, are healthier, live longer and happier.

Herding behavior is increasing, all follow fashion, get tattooed, try to stay slim or become slim, look „pretty“, cool cars, expensive clothes, all get an increasingly meaningless title, get vaccinated and throw up on wappies; confirm is what it's all about.

Vitality

Little research has been done on the reasons, why some people contracted Corona and others did not. Those who walk around healthy after 2 years without a vaccination have either noticed nothing of an infection or are just very healthy and have the good genes. You should study them; what do they eat, what do they do, what do they notice. It is apparently accepted that there are differences in inherited, natural or acquired immunity but very clear characteristics or so-called biomarkers are not sought. It remains with some general indications such as age, underlying disorders, obesity, blood group, perhaps some ethnic influences.

Why not look at vitality, happiness, a meaningful existence, a healthy appearance, perhaps even external beauty as biomarkers? After all, these are the symptoms associated with zest for life, with resilience and therefore immunity.

I think, for example, symmetry (face, physique) can already be an indication of underlying health. Psychomarkers, such as loneliness, depression, PTSD,

addiction or personality disorders (who doesn't take pills for these?) were not looked at at all. And further investigation, into abnormalities in blood values, intestinal biome, hormone balance, antibiotic history, was apparently not necessary, just prick first!

That certain groups are more susceptible to Corona but also to other diseases is quite logical, but why are these risk factors not better determined and, if necessary, those who fall under them better protected? Don't we do that because it costs too much or because of privacy? There is hardly any of that with Corona anyway and prevention is much cheaper than cure or treatment.

That failure to systematically look for „markers“ or specific characteristics is not only unfortunate; it costs happiness, health and human lives. Turning a blind eye to group characteristics, bio- and psychomarkers is the fault of science and especially the medical community, and must improve because there are bound to be more pandemics.

Of course, it is ethically a thorny issue to ask some questions. For example, whether people in love are less likely to get Corona? Whether beautiful people are less susceptible? All politically sensitive and 'incorrect' questions, no scientist would dare to ask them!

Caring for the future

Yet we will have to look into it, especially in a Post-Corona perspective where taking into account upcoming pandemics and the social divide is becoming more urgent. The whole neoliberal Western edifice is now showing such cracks that denying the influence of upbringing, nutrition, education, social engagement, voice and decision-making power on health and social cohesion is really no longer possible.

We may cling to ideals like democracy and freedom, but they are becoming hollow concepts when we look at what the citizen can do with them. Health, mental and physical, is related to that. And that for every citizen, not just the elite and the highly educated but also the underclass, whom we are now increasingly turning into „Untermenschen“ by denying them autonomy, agency and freedom, and thereby denying them the resistance and vitality that a human being needs to flourish.

9 Communication Post-Corona

If we are to run better as a society, communication is hugely important. I talked about information and communication before, but let's look at how human communication has evolved. Animals work with gestures, facial expressions and cries, humans are better at talking, but we went through sign language to a visual language, through drawings to text, to remote communication, to letters, telephone, internet and now we are doing it with virtual reality and concepts like the omniverse. Communication via telepathy is certainly there, but did not become a commercial success shall we say. Humor is a fun aspect of communication, it helps and the coyote-mind (the jester) is also older than man.

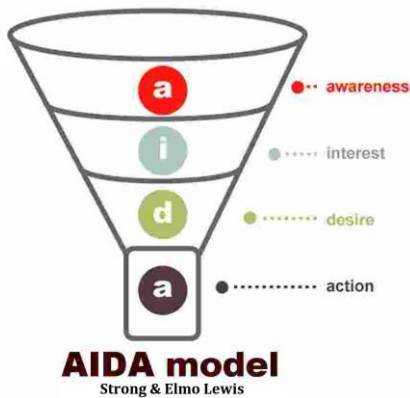
Human-to-human communication, say C2C has expanded by now, we know B2B, B2C, we can communicate with machines C2M and M2C, but they also do it among themselves. M2M. The individual and the group also have their own forms of communication. A lot has been written about all of that, I don't need to go too deep into it. Psychologists and marketers study it, come up with new communication models and write libraries full of it. I will therefore limit myself to what struck me most during the Corona crisis, namely how our leaders got their message across. Partly very effective, they hypnotized a large part of the masses, a group-mind came to fully support vaccination, but the price is a divided society and a growing anger because people have started to feel increasingly fooled.

Government and citizen

The communication between the government and the citizen, or G2C, is where it went wrong. There's a lot to be said about that, but looking back is perhaps a good way to draw lessons. All sorts of things went wrong in the entire crisis approach, not always culpable, but it became very clear that communication between government and citizens, between institutions and citizens and between citizens themselves did not run smoothly. We shout and scream and demonstrate like hell, but is anyone listening?

Choosing press conferences as the primary means of communication left too much room for the mainstream media, especially the television channels, to go their own way. The government did have influence on this, but the puppeteers were the talk show hosts, through their choice of guests, and the media were a kind of echo chamber of what was served up as truth.

This lack of real exchange of facts and opinions was partly because communication was seen by the government and those in power as a one-way street, as top-down information, in fact as propaganda for a certain action (vaccinating), and the influence of the social media was ignored for too long. This was partly because the interface (the form) was often sacrificed to the content



(the experts, the terminology, the choice of media) and partly because people did not think in marketing terms (such as the AIDA principle, making sure people listen and react). At first people swallowed it, but gradually it became more and more implausible and almost a farce.

All sorts of initiatives were launched, communication strategies drawn up, roadmaps made, even apps developed, which were often not properly picked up and understood, caused confusion

and sometimes even turned out to be counterproductive.

Precisely because it is not inconceivable that there will be more serious disasters in the near future, a reassessment of the communication models is needed. The climate is certainly becoming more extreme, there are threats such as pandemics, cyber-warfare, energy disruptions, floods, and large-scale terror attacks. Widespread social unrest or worse cannot be ruled out due to increasing divisions and polarization.

A clear lesson for the future is that communication in urgent and dramatic situations should not be a hap-snap fire-fighting, but based on clear insights into communication patterns and the recent changes therein (internet, social media, apps) in a social-psychological perspective. Issues like group-mind, mass-hysteria, herd behavior, cross- and multi-media resonance can and should find a place in an overall approach, with roadmaps, scenarios and structurally lined-up communication expertise. A sign language interpreter is nice, but if it symbolizes progress in government communication, it is a stopgap measure. More pictures, more explanations, more calm, less trying to make a pompous and quasi-scientific impression, there is still a lot to do.

Communication is two-way traffic

The emphasis on information, one-way traffic to the citizen with the tendency to become propaganda, ignores the fact, that communication is always a circular process, in which feedback is essential. The person addressed must indicate, through feedback in whatever form, that he or she has understood the message. Otherwise it will remain empty words, and nothing will change.

The top-down approach, isolation and polarization

During the crisis, the decisions and measures were mainly imposed unilaterally, those involved but also the parliament were not consulted beforehand, which caused irritation among both politicians and citizens. The expertise consulted was one-sided, often from the medical angle; economic and social consider-

ations hardly resounded at all. The idea of an ivory tower in which policy was decreed struck many people. Not democratic, not „together“!

Fear and anger are two fundamental emotions, which, at gut level, are very influential in the mood. They have to do with the fundamental fight-flight-freeze reactions. The government acted and reacted from fear, which resonated with what a significant portion of the people felt and that reinforced each other.

An inner circle of experts emerged fairly quickly, both on the part of the government (OMT, RIVM, like CDC and FDA and Fauci) and of the media (the talk shows, but also the critical media that flourished) with a limited clique of tastemakers. They more or less expressed the same opinion and gave no room for alternative views. The anti's (driven by anger) did not invite the pro's (driven by fear), and vice versa, a strongly polarized media field emerged. The way in which Maurice de Hond, with nevertheless clear statistical qualities and insight into the importance of ventilation, was demonized makes this very clear.

The polarization and lack of communication between the parties created unnecessary bad blood, people took absolute positions and accused the other party of fake news, deception, manipulation and propaganda. Words like vaccine damage and tribunal were bandied about, as it turned out later because of the shadowy contract with Big Pharma. A questionable but effective aspect of the communication strategy was also the constant repetition of questionable positions, when a bit more flexible approach would just make it much more credible. An example is the naming of the PCR test as the „gold standard,“ when it is clear that it is not a perfect test, but it is the best available at the time.

Poor communication, no marketing approach

People kept repeating, perhaps from the idea that even the worst lies eventually sink in as true. No alternative views were presented, they were blackened, they were wimps, incompetents, whatever their qualifications. One kept to a limited club of insiders also in terms of spin doctors and PR advisors. The government tends to do business with a limited number of parties, also in terms of communication. They are bound by tendering rules and traditions that make it difficult to pursue a decisive policy and involve smaller-scale and less institutional communication parties that can operate tactically and in a more topical manner. And if (social media) influencers were used at the last minute, it all went horribly wrong.

A limited message, not looking beyond

The one-sidedness is what surprised and irritated me most in retrospect. That emphasis on vaccination, that opposition to alternative options, it was a sort of faltering LP. Perhaps explainable in retrospect, there was a contractual ob-

ligation not to mention that and never to mention that, on pain of exclusion from future vaccine deliveries. In my opinion, this was outright blackmail and it was very unfortunate that people signed up for this and kept it under wraps. Too little has been done about prevention, about life-style suggestions, about apps that could help people to increase their resistance. The walking app „ommetje“ with 1.6 million downloads and Netherlands in Motion (Max) were favorable exceptions. The government should have claimed much more space on the public media to entice programs about healthy eating, living and exercise. Prevention and resistance building has simply received far too little attention.

Engagement

The AIDA scheme is all about getting the recipient of a message (the customer) interested and involved in what may concern them. That went well wrong, people did get vaccinated and went along with mouth guards and lockdown, but doubt remained. That was fed by social media, neighbors, family, conversations and what you saw on the news. It was effective, because vaccinated people became convinced they were right, their social behavior was clearly influenced by the propaganda, one can even speak of a kind of brainwashing.

But was this done in consultation? No, the citizens, the employees in health care, the public sector, the police, the police officers, they were not involved in the policy, they were not asked to do anything, just to execute and enforce! Primary care was bypassed, very unfortunate and with probably a lot of additional casualties.

Most important and a lesson for the Post-Corona times, feedback is essential in the communication process, especially where it concerns exchange between government (and institutions) and the citizen. That is a two-way process, with feedback as an essential component. Complaints, whistleblowers and demonstrations are also feedback.



10 Post-Corona Macro-economics

Society has various levels and economists take them into account. As a science, economics is concerned with the choices and behavior of people, businesses and governments in consuming and producing but also studies the whole of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. It is about more than supply and demand, price and market, questions such as why, for whom and how, also come into play. The idea that scarcity is the driving force in the economy has largely been abandoned; increasingly it is about emotions, experiences, values, and the impact that economic activity has on nature, people and humanity. From an almost exact science it has now become a social and behavioral science, with also a normative dimension, some things like growth are desirable or not.

Macro-economics is not concerned with individual choices but with the wider society. That's where things like Gross National Product (GNP or now GNI and GDP), budgets, state financing, stability, inflation, employment and market forces come into play. These do influence us as individuals, but have their own mechanisms. This all seems very rational, but it is becoming increasingly clear that macroeconomics is also more emotional than was assumed. For ordinary economics, this was already clear; we buy and deal more based on emotion than on rational arguments. But in the Corona crisis, the whole healthcare issue, a macro-issue after all, was so emotionally inflated and made the only measure of policy that the rest of society was sacrificed to it.

The economy took huge hits, we went into huge debt and although it seems to be rebounding, there is a lot of „underlying suffering“. When we get rid of Corona and we can function „normally“ again, all sorts of measures will be needed to get that broad economy back on track. Many of these will simply be repairs and short-term emergency bandages to help the most affected sectors such as hospitality or tourism get back on track.

In the long run, what does the decline in trust in government mean? Are we going to cheat on taxes more, be civilly disobedient, innovation decline, become lethargic? How much is the increased depression and decreased resistance going to cost us? And who should pay for it, the elite, the middle class, the elderly or do we blame it mostly on the youth?

How do we deal with trends such as self-sufficiency, small scale, local production, sharing economy, „own stuff first“, protectionism, the demand for „real“ and authentic? All much more emotional than rational and with solid consequences for the economy, also on the macro level.

We cannot avoid these more fundamental questions. For it is clear that the bottlenecks such as unlimited growth, further divisions in society, environ-

mental damage, resource depletion and money as the only value basis must be scrutinized.

The big problem, however, is that everything is connected to everything else. If we are going to lash out at a specific problem, we must also include the balance and the connection with other areas. The danger of symptomatic partial solutions is obvious. The example of gas extraction in Groningen is clear: it brought in a lot of money and now we have subsidence problems, but when the need arises we turn on the tap again.

The fundamental contradiction between individual self-interest and collective interest comes up again. Utility maximization, getting the better of it, but for whom do we strive? Do we go for the greatest common denominator, the greater good, and is it a pity if you can't join in, or do we try to minimize the misery. Not an easy choice, just like choosing between innocence or guilt as a starting point, in our country we saw this painfully bounced back with the benefits affair.

The neo-liberal idea of a self-regulating free market is an illusion, some regulation is always needed and there is always lobbyism, influence, market power or corruption. Production and valuation is no longer limited to physical things, ideas, inventions, opinions, scenarios are also part of the economy, while the value of shares, real estate and bitcoins is largely virtual, driven more by emotions than rational arguments. Labor is no longer a matter of muscle power but of brainpower, management, innovation, entrepreneurship, risk taking. Reward has gone from pay to work in cash to a matter of promises and future pleasures, in promotional opportunities, options, pensions and insurance.

No miracle cure

There are therefore no simple panaceas; it really doesn't help, for example, to start introducing a basic income for everyone just like that, to introduce a tax on capital movements (Tobin tax) or a millionaire's tax, to ban livestock farming, to start building nuclear power plants or to restrict travel abroad. The consequences of such interventions are often very different from what was expected and also require international coordination. Coming up with measures too quickly and not thinking them through properly often creates problems. The well-intentioned stimulation of electric cars, for example, did not work out well. People made use of the loopholes and possibilities in the regulations in order to obtain their own benefits, not to save the environment.

That does not alter the fact that we must think about an integrated approach and accept that there will be things we overlook.

The energy problem

I am a lot more optimistic than most people when it comes to energy (global warming is another matter). Maybe that's because I'm an engineer after all and

have seen what you can solve by thinking carefully and trying some things out. @Body Text = Sure, we still use way too much fossil fuels and generate substances that adversely affect the climate but things are moving in the right direction. Alternative energy sources, sun, wind, geothermal, hydropower, perhaps also alternative forms of nuclear power, tidal energy; there is plenty of research and investment going on, and the technology is getting better, more effective and cheaper to produce.

Firm steps are still needed, especially to make intermediate storage of energy possible with better battery technology, hydrogen, even iron powder; work is in progress. In time, energy is going to cost much less, become more environmentally friendly, and is also going to help us not solve climate problems but at least increase our resilience. With enough cheap energy, we can cope with cold and heat, albeit with adjustments, but surely there are regions, where people already have to live with temperatures above 40 degrees or below zero?

Cheap energy from solar cells, for example, can also help reduce inequality in the world a bit. A continent like Africa has enough sun, can use its energy for better agriculture, better logistics, desalinating water, creating inland lakes. Why not irrigate and reforest the Sahara using those energy sources?

We should also look beyond those windmills and solar farms. As a country we lie on a sea with the largest tidal difference and flow in the world, every 12 hours and 24 minutes the water level goes up and down a few meters. At Vlissingen it averages about 382 cm, at Hoek van Holland it is only 169 cm but at Delfzijl again 299 cm and the water moves (flows) horizontally. There are already experiments to generate energy with it, they work with a kind of large ship propellers under water.

Tides are an unprecedented source of energy, which we mainly owe to the moon and will not be exhausted. So filling up the North Sea with windmills is not the only option, but there has been little further exploration. When Amsterdam privatized its port in 2013 (it was just privatization but wasn't allowed to be called that) I tried to stop that through a referendum, using the argument that they should also look at this kind of alternative energy. That didn't happen. The Port Authority and its then rather corrupt management concentrated on coal and fossil fuels and has more or less reached a dead end as a result.

Agriculture

The Netherlands is quite a top performer in terms of agriculture and agricultural technology, our horticulture is productive and we export a lot. For decades, the focus in agriculture has been on higher yields per hectare, using artificial fertilizers, pesticides, genetically modified crops and this has succeeded. More food per hectare than ever is being produced and as long as there is hunger in the world that seems to be a good thing, only we are feed-

ing most of it to animals that we then eat again, that could be reduced. The bio-diversity of the world has been seriously damaged by the massive and large-scale agriculture and monopolies of seed and pesticide suppliers.

There are too many mono-cultures and they are vulnerable, not self-healing and have a global price depressing effect, the farmers themselves are not much better off. The massive scaling up and mechanization has fundamentally impoverished the soil, the greater yield comes at the expense of taste, vitamins and immunity value. Reducing biodiversity is one of the great dangers in the long run, it affects the resilience and the reservoir of self-repairing genetic information and is often irreversible, species and breeds of animals and plants become extinct.

The entire bio-industry is under attack, because we want healthy, biologically balanced food, we are concerned about emissions and climate effects. Meat eating should be reduced, because of the climate and the terrible conditions for the animals but also because much of the current meat supply is just not healthy, pumped full of antibiotics and fed the wrong crops.

That all sounds nice and is seen as threatening by farmers. They don't want to go back to an approach that involves less yield and more care.

Pricing based on actual and realistic costs

But there is also another aspect, if we look at the food supply and the whole logistics and retail in a somewhat broader framework. Are costs in terms of the environment, in terms of long-term health effects, in terms of social damage to the producing communities, in terms of the climate, being passed on fairly? A „fair trade“ label is nice but we still fly the stuff in. The whole logistics, lugging food around, chilling, freezing, storage, processing, packaging and marketing are more determinants of the consumer price than what the farmer gets. Also, only a portion of the production actually ends up in our stomachs because it is selected on appearance and shape, there are sell-by dates, it is rotated at the auction and in the store the customer is persuaded with bonus offers and two-for-one hassles to buy too much and it then disappears in the garbage bag.

The one-person household would benefit more from customized portions, better targeted marketing, more attention to actual needs, less messing around with kilo-crunchers and volume deals, less mass and more local and small-scale. In this way, less would be thrown away and enormous savings could be made throughout the chain. The supermarkets' market power is far too great and too concentrated. A few buying groups dictate the prices, squeeze the suppliers to the bone, and manipulate the consumer. Not to serve their customers in a healthier, better and cheaper way, but purely from a profit motive.

The message is actually quite clear, it is time to review the foundations of our economic models. A „new“ economic science is needed; the laws and graphs and accounting techniques that I once learned in Rotterdam, fifty years ago now, can go to the dump. Psychology and ecology should become a mandatory item in that so popular MBA course. Business Administration is an Alpha subject, not a Beta study, I think.

11 Work, idleness, AI and automation

Before Corona broke out, the economy was doing relatively well and unemployment was declining in the Netherlands and worldwide; there was a demand for people in technology, healthcare, hospitality, catering and entertainment. I'm sure that picture will remain after Corona for some time, there is a lot of catching up to do, there are a lot of victims (died or with permanent symptoms) and certainly entrepreneurs want to get back to work and need people. A big diversion like the Ukrain war may spoil the picture, but that will pass, too.

There will be some growth again, the recovery plans are going to help people get jobs, there is still a lot to do in energy and climate, in insulation and environmental measures, alternative energy, etc. In the long run, however, further automation is a threat to jobs. Not only a challenge to what we see as „human“ and meaningful, but also an attack on that human need for meaning and achievement. We can deny the impact of this, happily embrace the growth again, other work will come, what is wrong with one half making itself useful to the other half in care, in parcel delivery and logistics, in call centers, in the catering industry? Nothing, but that's also how it was in Athens in its heyday, but there they just called more than half of their inhabitants slaves.

It's not just about automation, increasingly we are using computer power and software to make our lives more comfortable, to help with complicated choices through, for example, pattern recognition and Artificial Intelligence (AI). We have now figured out DNA a bit, but are striving for even more socially engineered humans or cyborgs, through selection and non-organic consciousness. Yuval Noah Harari, a gifted and highly readable historian, but not a great visionary in my view points to this development in his book „Homo Deus“ and seems infected with the WEF (Davos) virus. The elite of mr. Klaus Schwab portrays and promises a future of no personal wealth but happy co-existence, but with an intact elite running the show. AI and singularity prophets like Ray Kurzweil see the computer overshadowing the human, but are those projections really that realistic when we realize that with all that digital magic, we haven't really been able to parry the Corona virus after all.

I don't see the big breakthrough to a new relationship with technology, because I noticed that we are still hardly advanced in understanding what „thinking“ actually is, how consciousness works and how are we going to „emulate“ this in software? AI sounds great, but as long as I am still presented with irritating advertisements and irrelevant pages by Google and Facebook, the pioneers in terms of data mining, the whole concept of personalized and targeted ads is still very naive.

The scientists who believe they can see how we think with MRI scanners are mistaken. Our brains, contrary to what neurologists like Dick Zwaab ("We are our brain") thinks, are in my view no more than a tuner, which makes contact with a broader field or dimension of information (negentropy).

What remains is of course the reality of scientific progress and increased computer number crunching, you can do all kinds of routine tasks faster, better and seemingly cheaper with smart technology and that trend is hard to reverse because we don't properly account for the real costs. Meaning the costs of keeping the people who will be out of work busy, healthy, and preventing them from breaking down (themselves or society). No Metaverse, Netflix, gamification, festivalization or basic income will help with that. We will really have to return, in a Post-Corona perspective, to the eternal questions of philosophy and theology: why are we on earth?

Robotization and automation: usefulness and threat

It may seem for a moment now that there is plenty of work, a whole army has been drafted to fight Corona, to test, to prod, to care. But that will hopefully pass, will we deploy them to fight a new enemy? That could be Russia, another pandemic, drugs, skewed thinking, the wappies, that kind of occupational therapy is of all times.

What do we really do with redundant workers, who can't keep up with the times, whom we have cut out through automation or rendered unemployed by moving factories to low-wage countries?

That is the big problem for the coming years, maybe we have some respite because of the aging population but denying it is not wise. If we continue like this, in addition to the already wealthy upper class with wealth and a super-class of big entrepreneurs, plutarchs, creatives and knowledge workers with special talents, there will also be a large group without work, meaningful use of time and thus potentially an underclass. It is the dark side of progress, what do we do to remain happy and still have the feeling that everyone counts and matters?

As a country (the Netherlands) and as Europe - with also a gaping aging problem - the solution lies not in further divisions (old/young, poor/rich, own people/alien people) but in better sharing. We need to think now about what we are going to get people out of work or sharing work to do. Do we try to keep them sweet with bread and games, hypnotize them with what modern media and cyberspace have to offer in terms of entertainment or do we start thinking about what meaning, being human and being involved actually means?

And do we provide replacement work? No, those are empty stories, we also save on culture, care, attention, cohesion, love. Cyberspace eats away at margins, eroding profits and also jobs. The work of highly educated people is also disappearing; nowadays there is a greater need for professionals than for

white-collar administrative workers, who are becoming redundant as a result of automation. Consultancy, notary services, all kinds of legal services, administration, registration, there is work only for the best. The routine will be automated using AI and blockchain technology (which standardizes, for example, logistics, contracts and transactions).

The argument against this somewhat doom-and-gloom scenario could of course be that technology will always bring solutions, new activities and new opportunities. Cyberspace is part of the problem but hopefully also part of the solution. Isn't some adventures in cyberspace, if need be in virtual reality (VR) and the Metaverse the ideal solution to keep people busy, with digital bread and games, occupational therapy and 'always on' distractions? So why not trust in progress? Aren't there environmental, global warming and inequality challenges we can work on?

There will be new work, won't there?

The big question is to what extent will the Internet and modern technology take the work out of our hands and minds? You can look at it positively. After all, did the car put the coachmen out of work, the copier the printer, the digital photo the photo industry, the smart meter the plumber? That's how it's always been, saw the economist Simon Kuznets (economic growth and income distributions as a function of industrialization) and showed that it may have been a little less for a while but always better in the end. It can all be solved, there will be whole new industries with work that we can't even imagine (mining engineer on the moon, sex worker and therapist online?), new recreational options (and drugs), we can start to fill our free time nicely, let the machines do the work. We'll think of something, we'll get creative! That's how it's always been, Kuznets observed.

Hasn't life become much easier? No more slaving away in the fields, no more mind-numbing assembly line work, all happy, right :-)? Computers and the Internet have of course automated all kinds of unpleasant routine tasks. We can order, pay and handle all kinds of administrative matters electronically, but then we have to go to the gym because we don't exercise enough.

We save time and money and life becomes easier and more comfortable but here is the sting; it is clear that this has also cost and will cost jobs. The Internet is the great job eater and flattener. Labor has become shiftable, to low-wage countries or machines, and inequality between countries has decreased but between the poor and the rich has actually increased. Knowledge and skills, once the means to distinguish yourself, you can buy them anywhere, in Mumbai or Kinshasa they also have internet and smart birds and they cost less!

Hope springs eternal. There are of course a few winners, self-made billionaires but they leave little room once they succeed, because winner-takes-all is the silent sharer in the great cyberspace globalization game. It could all turn out

better than expected, we can start filling in our free time nicely, let the machines do the work and we'll think of something, we'll get creative! Will there still be work left, will we find other meaningful occupations, creative activities or will it be idleness, the gym, gaming, stalking the neighbors, going on vacation anywhere and everywhere and passively enjoying what others make for us?

The time perspective can be thought of differently. The most negative scenarios see massive job losses in the five to ten year timeframe. Perhaps that is too pessimistic. The self-driving car will also stay away for a while. For now, with an aging population that retires and requires care, there is still work to be done.

In the long run, however, we cannot deny that cyberspace is undermining traditional work, and the nice slogan „The New World of Work“ (HNW) doesn't help there either. In practice, this concept means reorganizing (=saving), relocating or outsourcing work. It makes the worker more dependent and fragments and atomizes the task content, thereby reducing involvement and pleasure.

Touchless work disappears, the cloud takes over

There will still be work for people who flap their hands, the pickers, box fillers, the handymen, the plumbers and auto mechanics. But we don't train people for that; everyone must be prepared for knowledge work, entrepreneurship, being creative. We don't want ordinary routine work anymore, we'll get Poles for that, although they want that less and less.

In itself, this is not a problem; machines for peeling bulbs, picking shrimps, cutting asparagus, washing buttocks, sweetheart robots, robocops and cyborg soldiers will come along, robots that can handle this and do not get tired. They may not be there yet but it can and will come, while people will continue to sit at home.

Shouldn't we start thinking about the whole education system, those little factories that mostly train children for professions that will no longer exist? The whole educational system is increasingly aimed at flattening, at all graduates, bachelors or masters degrees but if there is no more work for that, what do we do then?

Work for specialists and top experts will probably remain and entrepreneurs will see new opportunities, but an ordinary job or especially the „touchless“ office job that has nothing to do physically with people or products is in danger. It is gradually being saved and automated. Work is disappearing, robots, machines, computers are doing the work and bringing the merit. But this does not go to the ex-workers, at most the government can then levy taxes and start redistributing.

We still invest like crazy in automation and technology but that is not aimed at creating jobs, it is aimed at saving costs.

Let me make that practical. In the Wieringermeer it is Microsoft, and in Groningen Google is building enormous cloud facilities, server parks that serve to store and process what others no longer want on their computers. This in turn requires a lot of energy, so wind farms will be built to provide power, not to houses but to these kinds of installations, heavily subsidized and environmentally ill-considered.

These kinds of investments are received with cheers; people shout about employment and progress, as a small country we manage to pull this off! In fact, after the construction phase (and the investment and subsidies of hundreds of millions, even billions) it is about work for only a few hundred people, who take care of maintenance, cleaning and some management, really no top jobs.

It's a kind of virus. Those fancy cloud computers from Microsoft and Google do replace servers and equipment at large and small companies, smaller providers and individuals. They see or expect big savings because they no longer need management, maintenance, energy, replacement, depreciation, etc.; they now leave that to Google and the cloud and it costs a lot less. Especially less in people and work, that is clear. In our country alone we are talking about a few hundred thousand smaller servers, because every small company, broker, administrative office etc. has or had a server. So they are disappearing, everything is going to the cloud, nice and global, uncontrollable and kept out of local taxes. But this trend costs the work of the computer companies who installed, sold and maintained the existing equipment but also received some income from suppliers such as Microsoft where one paid for licenses, etc. This is all going global, untraceable, and promotes further divisions in society.

The cloud, that beautiful invention, sold as super secure and easy (although quite disappointing) saves billions but mostly in work. So count your blessings, this is not a win-win story. Then we are lucky to be by the sea (because Google and the big platforms are also here because of the undersea cables) and still have a little work left!

AI can make people redundant

In the coming years we will see that driverless logistics (trucks without drivers), healthcare robots, mobile data and automated medical monitoring and treatment will require very nice investments in ICT but for drivers, letter carriers, assembly line workers and farmers on tractors there will be no more work. Are we going to pay them or put them in camps? Now that there are almost robot soldiers (via Boston Dynamics, which emerged from MIT research, was then owned by Google, then Softbank Japan and is now part of Hyundai) police robots will not be far behind. These will not look like 'Terminator' cyborgs but like smart automated supervisors and neighborhood watchmen who keep an eye on things and use software to make decisions about intervention and enforce-

ment. Chinese-style social control (which is so beautifully called social credit), with the QR passes we are already well on our way.

That camera on the corner will be an almost self-thinking security unit, which can query large databases for profiling, check if something is wrong somewhere and possibly take action. By refusing you money or perhaps by stopping your implanted chip or blocking your car, bank balance or public transport chip card. That there will be some innocent victims, well that's called 'collateral damage', you shouldn't whine about that, the end justifies the means!

It all costs work, especially work for hands and routine tasks but meanwhile the rich and the smart get richer and the collective debt burden and social inequality grow disproportionately and things start to falter dangerously. It has been suggested that there is no other solution to this problem than very broad inflation but that is not comfortable either, that is stealing from the small savers with bank deposits and thus often again from the pension reserves. The alternative in 2022, very low or negative interest rates to stimulate the economy and investments, does not work either; nobody wants to borrow money because there is no real return in sight. But letting inflation explode with higher interest rates is also dramatic, because then most countries will go bankrupt!

Ned Ludd: away with the machines

Do we just let it happen? Well no, there are plenty of protests, the hackers are making a strong case, and people are moving. The divide, together with the looming automation/robotic wave, is certainly cause for concern about widespread social unrest in and beyond 2022. Governments are already taking this into account, internment camps are being prepared and set up as „home security projects“ all over the place, and digital identification has to do with this as well.

The young people whom we burden unreasonably with student debt and who cannot rent or buy homes from their meager starting salaries, supported by unemployed middle groups and computerized farmers, drivers and factory workers, may be up in arms. That's what the research firms and futures



watchers are also predicting. The truckers' actions in Canada show what can happen.

Aggressive protests against technology and job losses have happened before, the Luddites (under Ned Ludd) destroyed looms and machines in England between 1811 and 1816. Those who are against computers and want to destroy them are referred to as neo-Luddites.

Basic Income

In view of the expected developments, particularly in terms of the availability of meaningful labor, solutions have been proposed. In his book 'the second machine age', Erik Brynjolfsson outlined how we are going to lose most routine work to robots and computers.

How are we going to solve that? We could do so with an economic system, where the results (profits and savings) of that development do not unilaterally go to a small minority and plunge the rest into poverty. It could make sense, giving everyone a basic income. The idea is somewhat older but Rutger Bregman wrote about it and scored worldwide with the idea. Politicians, too, are now looking at that kind of redistribution option, even as .taxation, rebates and benefits have become something of a quagmire.

How high, for whom, how can you introduce that? That's a matter of finding out and trying. The amount should be a little less than what people with work would earn because ambition should remain for those who want more, but enough to live on. The taxation of those who still want to work with a basic income must make working attractive and keep it that way.

The website www.basisinkomen.nl puts it this way: „Basic income is a fixed (monthly) income that the government provides to every citizen, without any income test or work obligation. The basic income is high enough to ensure an existence as a full member of society.'

It is worth noting that it would apply to every citizen, perhaps it would be more feasible and sensible to introduce it, for example, by limiting it to people over 55. That would eliminate a lot of red tape and the often nonsensical and perceived punishment of job applications for the elderly.

For the introduction of a basic income, a new balance must be found between work for money, work for others (volunteer care, social projects), basic income and taxation because it must remain affordable. It would mean a very fundamental change in our economic model and also rattle the old ethic of „if you don't work you won't eat“.

In view of technological developments, it is an option that must be seriously studied and perhaps also tried out. In doing so, we must also recognize the danger that a new underclass of basic income earners will then emerge, who will and must live out of order. This can lead to exclusion from, for example, living in the big city, top medical care, educational opportunities and means new

ghettos and opportunity gaps for children of basic income recipients. If a basic income is going to mean that those who find it sufficient can only live (poorly) in the remote provinces like Achterhoek or Oost-Groningen, and not partake in modern city life, that is a dangerous development.



12 Markets, Marketing

What is the economy going to do, not as a big principle, but just practically, what will happen to my job, my business, my trade, many people wonder. The financial system is extremely shaky, inflation and even hyperinflation is imminent, stock markets have risen absurdly but very shaky, people are putting money into illusions like bitcoins and blockchain currencies, which run entirely on emotion and represent no underlying value except a lot of wasted energy. Where is there still money to be made, because automation is on the rise and healthcare and hospitality are also limited and appear to be able to be automated quite well.

You can predict to some extent where you can still earn money after the corona crisis. Safety is certainly a market, we have all become fearful and there may be a period of considerable chaos ahead. Safety also in terms of health, if there is one sector where there is demand and where fortunes will be made, it is the immunity sector. In itself no more than another title for the trade in vitamins, supplements, elixirs, diets, courses, sports equipment, the whole relax industry; under the banner of immunity it sells better!

If the more negative scenarios come true and the population and life expectancy and general health status start to decline then that will also have consequences. The housing market will collapse, employment in healthcare will increase, but also the need for „automatic“ hands at the bedside, online diagnosis and medical care. The medical world will turn upside down, hospitals might have a very different set-up. Trust in the doctor is already waning, but will an AI diagnostic system, preferably online and based on voice analysis and smart-health measurement devices, restore that trust?

Customization, adapting to individual needs

With automation, we first achieved standardization. Your T-Ford only had one color, but now for a car you can choose endlessly and customize everything individually. Standard products in the supermarket are hardly there anymore or as a separate category for thrifty or poor customers, you can now choose from ten or more kinds of peanut butter, hundreds of desserts, types of bread, snacks, all in all sizes and colors. All of this costs extra money, but consumers buy into it and become attached to their product choice.

This freedom of choice requires more logistics, more packaging, more advertising, more offer leaflets, more consumerism, more waste. It is advertised as more healthy, more exotic, more „special“, with more distinctiveness for the standardized citizen who does not want to put the same thing on the table as the neighbors or the previous generation.

And this trend continues, in primary education it is still standard, but then come the packages, the choices, you can completely „personify“ your masters or bachelor degree, customize it. Does that lead to scientific, creative, economic benefits? Does it make you happy because you get stuck in your choice package, does it not limit real choice later in life.

Realistic prices

Economics is often about price, not value. We want to be cheap, value for money. For virtual goods, and real estate, fashion, stocks and entertainment, trust and emotion often determine the price. We have become accustomed to phenomena such as brand addiction, FOMO (fear of missing out) as a sales tactic, cut-price items, irritating two-for-one offers and discount jokes and bonuses to convince the customer.

But those costs and that marketing store do not take into account what we do to the environment, to animals, to people who have to make it somewhere far away for a rotten price, and to the climate, all now and in the long term. We transport like crazy, there is no tax on flying, you get kerosene where it is cheap, you replace marine diesel oil with filthy asphalt sludge, the polluter usually does not pay or pays very little. We do not take into account the costs of removal, preparation for reuse, environmental damage, health damage, climate effects (CO₂) and „sustainability“. Waste processing has become a very profitable industry in itself, but sometimes it just dumps garbage without considering the future.

The future is not part of the price of products

We talk a lot about recycling, demolish entire forests for the paper used in reports and analyses, but do the supercooled or otherwise fruits and exotic vegetables at Albert Heijn include how many extra kilometers they travelled, their CO₂ footprint, etc.? That would be nice, something more specific than vague Fairtrade labels and quality labels. Awareness, if we know how chickens grow up to be condemned to starvation we are willing to pay a bit more for better treatment and therefore better meat.

These kinds of considerations and initiatives to make costs more realistic should receive more attention in the coming period. The government can do something about this, but companies themselves also have a responsibility. The annual accounts of companies should include an account of what else their products or services do, to what extent they participate in the circular economy (reuse) and the social impact but that is, if anything, often not very concrete in practice.

Market power

One of the problems that needs to be tackled with vigor after the Corona crisis is market power, the fact that certain parties are supremely powerful in a

particular market and can often also play the entire column, from manufacturer to store. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was already clear that the industrial revolution had created such concentrations of power and monopolies that something had to be done about it; the government had to promote competition and start regulating it. This happened in the United States in the oil industry, Standard Oil was broken up, and later also in telecommunications.

We all know about market power, we know that we pay a lot for monopolies, if there is no alternative you have to. In this respect there is often no room for a second supplier, winner takes all. But even if there are only a few suppliers, one can, with or without agreements (because these are illegal), control the market, both to the consumer and to the suppliers. Retail chains such as Albert Heijn do this and are also called to account by bodies such as the Netherlands Authority for the Financial Markets (ACM), but they cannot do much about it either.

The government: market player and player of the tax organ

The government plays an important role in the developments after Corona, and that goes beyond support measures, paying off the debts incurred and taxation. The government is often the first customer of new services or products and can thus stimulate innovation. The government can steer, because a lot needs to be regulated and regulated, also to prevent or remedy problems. For example, home delivery is starting to become a scourge. Restricting tourism is possible, but operating without or with less tourism is a drain on the economy (here and elsewhere).

Digital government is advancing. The government itself is using the Internet more and more. There is more online government contact, complaining can often only be done via the Internet, also tax returns, online planning and processing of health care, online application for permits and filing of complaints are encouraged and often enforced. Government tax measures, such as extra taxation of environmentally unfriendly products, making unhealthy products such as sugar or online home deliveries more expensive, and thus stopping or driving trends.

The tax burden will have to increase even more to cover the shortfalls caused by Corona, and it will hurt especially at the bottom of the income pyramid. That is not where the growth of the past decades went; the poor remained poor; they were juicers, and remain so. The citizen soon finds himself with an income-tax burden of 50% (even 55% for the middle group, see Omtzigt in his book on a new social contract) and on top of that VAT, energy levies, property tax, local taxes, mandatory insurance. By then, disposable income has already become very limited, and rents and fixed costs are almost impossible to afford for many (this would apply to 2.8 million households). This dichotomy is also evident in marketing, what can someone spend at the bottom, who already has

to go to the food bank? Luxury, that is for the rich the upper middle income and that can be dangerous. Companies and organizations, which too clearly target the elite, can lose the trust of the general public, think of banks, insurers, the vacation industry.

Globalization and the Internet threaten diversity, culturally, biologically (genetically engineered standard seeds) and in terms of product range. The local retailer, manufacturer or service provider cannot compete with the big players, is too expensive, too slow, cannot generate enough publicity and goes under. This added value is important, because it gives zest to society, helps build local identity and thus cohesion. To let the small entrepreneurs and the middle class perish would be a big mistake, and in the long run would mean surrender to monopolistic and global corporations.

Post-Corona Marketing

Even after Corona, markets remain and things, services, media, beliefs, government decisions, and recreational options must be sold or invented.

A number of things have changed permanently, of course, such as work patterns, education, medical facilities, purchasing behavior, media visibility, image calling, online meetings, privacy loss, „authenticity confusion“ data acquisition, lead generation, online advertising and product placement, customizing/targeting, apps, logistics, dropshipping; there has been a substantial leap to further digitization and an online society (economic, social, emotional). But will the experience economy, fun shopping, impulse buying, the sharing economy, festivalization, gamification, influencer economy, social media and word-of-mouth marketing, media access and mobility (recreational, family, work, physical meeting) really change fundamentally? Are we going to value other products, other services, share more than own, buy environmentally conscious, live healthier, exercise more, deal more effectively with appointments and travel, multi-task more or less, organize our hospitality visits differently, complain more, abuse the internet loopholes more such as free returns, there are more questions than answers.

The Internet connects but also divides people and through globalization and flattening of competition has eroded diversity and profit opportunities. Social awareness seems to have increased, a certain „helpfulness“ has grown a tendency to share information for no profit and other forms of collaboration such as crowdfunding, sharing vendor reviews, giving tips or creating manuals.

The divide between rich/elite/two-earner and poor/inkle/ minority is increasing, the Corona crisis has made meritocracy much sharper. Not old money entrepreneurship, education, and commitment determine who succeeds and who is left behind. Who can buy a Tesla or has to make do with an electric bike, and yet pays heavily for it! This reduces the diversity and thus the self-healing capacity of society and increases the threat of revolt or chaos.

A different approach to market forces

If you want to participate, you must have an 'online presence' and a 'brick-and-mortar' point of contact or delivery location remains important. On-line visibility (on your own site, paid, with influencers or in independent media), broad PR positioning of the brand and relevance to the customer are important and generate opportunities, but how do you use the data, what do you do with data on preferences, buying behavior, creditworthiness, and is that allowed under the privacy rules?

Authenticity, amidst a sea of fake news, questionable bargain pushers, hidden product placement, and doubts about the authenticity and integrity of suppliers, media, and government, is becoming increasingly important. Building trust is expensive, takes time, and it goes wrong quickly, we also see in politics. An honest and consistent way of doing business is becoming increasingly important.

Marketers have long been hammering away at the need for the Internet for contact, for lead generation and how to focus the AIDA strategy. This is even more topical now but a bit more refined because now everyone has a website, payment and ordering options.

New markets

Cyberspace of course also has whole new possibilities, advantages and models to offer that do have consequences for the whole trade and brokering business. New markets, new products and services are emerging. One can think of sharing and bartering, from transportation to equipment, houses (B&B), to companionship, sex, care, education, expertise, etc. By the way, a nightmare for the tax authorities! Working from home also brings prospects for revenue, from coffee to office furniture, massage, backup services, security, shared cars. The benefits, such as being in charge of one's own time can be more productive, less travel time is lost, better work-life balance, less dependence on transport and location are contrasted with lack of informal, physical contact and therefore possibly less, innovation, knowledge sharing, discipline and privacy (24/7, external monitoring, sneaky assessment), security risks,. For the employer, it brings lower costs, more choice, easier to choose from a wider range of flex workers and specialties but also less insight into productivity, protection of data and expertise, less loyalty and loyalty and costs for mystery checks and real time monitoring.

New services, which do not run directly over the Internet, also have opportunities. For example, more filling of the need for physical contact, through shared space offices, new opportunities for the inner city, festivals, event marketing. Friday afternoon drinks may need to be shared via zoom but also come in locations across the province.

A clear growth market in the sham world of cyberspace is to start selling trust, by offering services in terms of PR, media presence, influencers, arranging likes, postings, outsourcing handling, arranging 'presence'; with the danger of manipulation.

Relationship building

Digital marketing is the discipline with which the online marketing objectives of a company are realized via online and interactive media, channels and concepts. It is aimed at realizing (stored and real-time) customer knowledge and delivering added value for the customer, with profit for the provider of course. Essential is building sustainable relationships with (potential) customers by being in dialogue with them.

It is about personalization and effectiveness but also has to do with problems of crossing privacy boundaries. But also the overload of data that is rushed in, the lack of means to analyze it properly, the switching of consumers between online and offline and back again (the omni-channel customer), new forms of evaluation and criticism by consumers themselves through social media, and the abundance of choices that make customers headhunted (no simple limitation, you get everything on your screen).

The emotion economy: feelings do count

Do we buy something on rational grounds, or because we find it fun, beautiful, status-enhancing? Do we shop to find the best deal or because it's fun to store, to see, to feel, to try and then to be able to take what we've bought with us immediately? Do we want to have something in order to own it, or do we rather seek experiences, want to feel good, experience something, perhaps take risks because we lack excitement in our lives.

Economists have long assumed the idea, that man was a homo economicus, a thrifty rational decision maker who planned to maximize profits. Our behavior is rather emotional, impulsive, we buy and decide (mostly) on the basis of emotions, often unconsciously. Factors such as wanting to belong, FOMO (fear of missing out on something), wanting to do better than the neighbors (and showing that) because we are addicted to buying, bored or think that this or that product makes us 'better', so to disguise our inferiority complex. The latter has to do with cognitive dissonance; you think you need something because it is better, prettier or stronger.

There is an inner conflict, often instigated by the organization that wants to sell you something. Some organizations take advantage of this. The churches have traditionally kept that cognitive dissonance in check for their followers but in politics it also works well and in marketing working with emotions has become a true art, with Apple as a clear example.

In marketing, the insights of the emotion economy play an increasingly important role, one looks wider than a good price-performance ratio, one takes

into account emotional preferences and phenomena the asymmetric time horizon (consume now is better than save tomorrow, pay tomorrow or next year better than today). We spend a lot of time finding information, but we don't take that time into account and drive long distances to find somewhere a few euros cheaper. And for financial services and products we are no longer rational at all and our emotional time horizon plays a powerful role in our decisions. When it comes to survival, as with medical decisions, people are not so calculating at all but clearly very emotional. Actually, the bottom line is that purchase decisions often depend on psychological value, over rational economic value. We are more likely to buy this or that make of car because of image and charisma than because of a clear consideration of technical factors.

Emotion manipulation as a tool

There are seven laws of emotion economics; it is illustrative how, for example, Apple deals with them.

1. The law of loss aversion. The psychological aspect of loss is more than twice as great as the psychological aspect of gain. You can't go wrong with Apple products because they are user-friendly, not cheap, and you don't hear much about malware and viruses on Apple.
2. People have asymmetric risk attitudes. In the profit domain, people are risk averse. In the loss domain, an individual actually prefers risk. Apple buyers like to see themselves in the profit domain, are risk averse and want to pay for it.
3. People prefer the middle ground. Apple always has fairly expensive and fairly cheap solutions but knows that its customers usually choose a middle solution.
4. People have a self-control problem, and make impulse purchases that may not be wise. Apple provides nice services and accessories that are expensive but easily sold with them.
5. People are financially illiterate and can't calculate, the deals that Apple offers via providers are sometimes not useful or good at all, and Apple squeezes the providers but also the providers of apps, games and music (by 30%) considerably (and is also called to account and fined for this!). That older and discontinued models in terms of battery quality may already be partly less, you hear nobody about, people want to have an Apple thing, and if new is too expensive then just a store daughter, refurbished or second-hand.
6. People are disaster-prone and deny the possibility of disaster, who really makes conscientious backups or has all different passwords?
7. People filter information asymmetrically. People like to hear information that confirms what they think anyway, and close their eyes to information

that contradicts their opinion. Appreciators have come to believe that Apple delivers the best products, and don't want to assume otherwise. And there is more, however, and that is what the emotion economists are not yet looking at closely. For example, Apple very deftly exploits the us-them feeling, you either belong or you don't, you identify with the brand. They learned this, by the way, from their first PR advisor Regis McKenna, who was behind the famous Mac commercials but also had the Apple logo kept in the picture as a kind of subliminal compulsory.

The exchange of the inferiority feeling of its customers with an inferiority environment c.q. product image or the principle of cognitive dissonance plays a clear role in the Apple approach. For Apple buyers, status, especially in the eyes of their peer group, is very important. They do not have to be able to prove, like the hardcore gamers, that their thing is faster or more powerful, the envious glances of the environment are enough confirmation, do you already have an iPad Air? For that, they will line up to get a new iPhone12 first. Having (and showing) is more important than using! Impress, pretend to be better than the other, the winner takes all!

The new marketing models

Globalization and cheap transportation options but also government support for e-commerce exports has brought new opportunities but also threats. Everyone knows Alibaba or AliXpress, everything from China, cheap and often free delivery, fortunately now without VAT benefit. How can they do it, there is no way to compete with that. And it grows and grows, the industrialization of online retail is also clear. Delivery is becoming a mega-industry, requires adjustments in the whole of spatial planning and traffic measures. It has to be faster and easier, people are also going to arrange local storage so that one-day-delivery, same-day delivery or even shorter becomes feasible. The

black-shops in big cities for quick-deliveries are a portent of how things can go.

The government has a role and a responsibility in this as well. Under pressure from the middle class and self-employed, drop-shipping

The Dropship Model



from China and the logistical waste caused by too cheap and chaotic shipping can be tackled in particular. This should be done at the European level and can then have an impetus for local and online-based e-commerce.

Also, the monopolizing effect of affiliate marketing, with kinds of suppliers gathered under one brand and platforms such as

al.com and amazon.com, that is not good for competition. Such an all under one roof construction may bring more customers, but you have to stand out in terms of price or terms. It limits the local customization and service that the small business owner can offer if reasonable margins remain. That entrepreneur now thinks he will find protection and „exposure“ under such an umbrella but pays thickly for it and has to compete even more and with more colleagues.

New marketing constructions that make use of the Internet often mean that something has to be surrendered. For example, the use of endless menus as we know them from the telephone is quickly counterproductive, we want a human being on the line, not a computer. Of course it sounds nice, outsourcing your complaints department and after-sales to a call center in India seems like a nice way to save money but as soon as the customer notices it, it affects the reputation of the brand. And the reviews and comments go around virally fast!

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13 Diversity, inclusivity, discrimination

Once upon a time there (The French Revolution) was the ideal of liberty, equality and fraternity, but that is increasingly being replaced by „diversity, inclusivity, equity, belonging,“ a much more demanding and coercive row. This is no longer an ideal, but must be enforced through quotas. In a certain sense they are also contradictory, because including everyone reduces the differences within a group, company, university, it becomes a flattened mixture, an entropic nothingness, from which the highflyers quickly run away. Equal access also sounds nice, but often turns out to result in favoring certain groups at the expense of the most „silent“ majority. We all want to belong, but to what extent is that rather the need for identification, for which we gladly accept compromises, in terms of behavior, culture, norms and values. You then provide a piece of identity, and that has repercussions, for example, on your self-confidence and emotional stability. Psychological complaints are the fastest growing category in terms of health and cause of death.

In a Post-Corona perspective, we will have to be careful that the screamers don't get the upper hand. Ideals are nice, but when they are used as a steppingstone to mask feelings of inferiority by aligning with an environment of superiority, be it a brand like Apple or Nike, a political movement or an action group, we are sliding towards a fascist situation. At least, that's how psychologist Wilhelm Reich saw it.

Equal opportunities for all is nice, but we are not all equal, have different talents and needs. That is fine, because we can learn from each other and move forward together, but then we need to take a broader view of the concept of diversity in particular.

Diversity; buzzword or essential for growth and change?

It is becoming a bit of a catchword but the concept of diversity is one of the key concepts in thinking about change. The dark side of it is that discrimination against minorities is of all times, we can try to eliminate it, but that often backfires. Measures such as more women's rights and quotas for women in management have unfortunately also led to a different ideal image of the successful woman and this in turn affects popular role models, educational choices and career planning, but also causes pressure on those, who do not choose this. Counteracting discrimination seems simple, but it has consequences for diversity, for the freedom to choose or not to choose something.

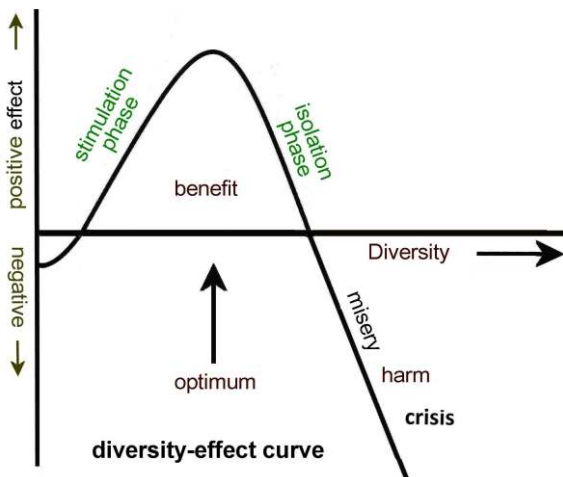
If there are no differences, nothing happens; without challenges and incentives, not only society but also nature will stand still. But if there are too many differences, things go wrong, things break down, systems and organisms

don't survive, and that includes people. In practical terms, a little stress is useful, too much stress makes you sick and that applies both to physical stress by, for example, toxic substances in your environment and psychological stress. This also applies in the economy and in education, equalizing everything is counterproductive, then competition, ambition, challenges disappear and progress stagnates. We need a headwind to make the kite rise.

Diversity in culture, manifestations, DNA in genes, in science and in society is therefore essential. If everything was the same nothing happened, from differences something new emerges. In thinking we see this as Hegel's thesis, antithesis and synthesis, in nature and in our bodies, diversity forms the secret weapon against unexpected threats.

Differences are needed to get things moving, to cause dissociation (looking at things from a different perspective) so that we can choose from alternatives. Difference is necessary and not just negative, without difference there is no energy, no development, no ambition. Just look at income difference, some difference between rich and poor promotes development, innovation and ambition, thus entrepreneurship.

If we formulate the positive effects of diversity as utility or value, you can graphically represent it in what I call the diversity curve, or more precisely the diversity-effect curve.



The diversity-effect curve: difference makes a difference

Indeed, we can also link difference and inequality to utility, effectiveness or other qualities. I developed a graphic representation to make clear what the role of differences is. In an actual situation this naturally produces a very specific curve, but from

a general, and somewhat smoother, model a lot can already be learned. It is then a curve which first shows a negative effect (rust rust), then rises, peaks and falls again, gradually shows negative utility and then finally a chaos, a crisis situation.

There is, if there are no differences, no diversity and everything and everyone is equal, also no incentive and things do not move; that is negative, rest rust. With a little difference, there is movement, there is utility, value, positive effect. That grows to a maximum and then, when the differences become too great, the utility diminishes. At some point the friction even becomes so great

that a negative effect arises and that then tends further toward crisis (revolution, uprising). Then a transformation can still take place, a catharsis like Karl Marx foresaw as a result of the industrial revolution but usually one does not want to let it get that far. One can, however, try to reduce the differences

through policy measures, taxation and education.

So in this view and model, diversity or inequality first has positive effects but it must not go too far or it will get out of hand.

Social science also interferes with diversity, in issues such as backwardness, refugee influx, the integration problems of minorities and of course the poor/rich dichotomy and now the pro/anti-vaxxers.

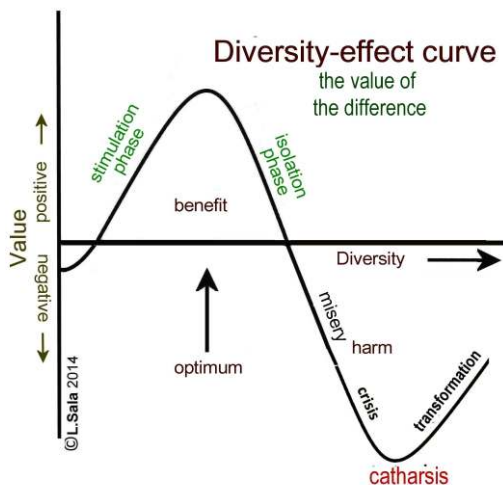
On the one hand one wants to see the benefits of diversity but also warns against di-

chotomies such as that now the position of the poor, anti-vaxxers etc. is deteriorating to such an extent that it will have negative effects, maybe even lead to chaos and rebellion.

The inequality we now see in income, opportunity and status is not in itself a bad thing but if it gets too severe it is also potentially a poison bomb, which in recent decades, unnoticed and now noticed in the crisis, has continued to proliferate and can therefore now become dangerous, both by the threatened (the poor, disadvantaged) and the rich, who feel the storm coming.

We encounter this diversity-effect curve in biology, in psychology, in chemistry, in the theory of evolution, but it is also important for the analysis of income differences but also for democracy, business processes, evolution, innovation and education as a tool to clarify what difference makes a difference.

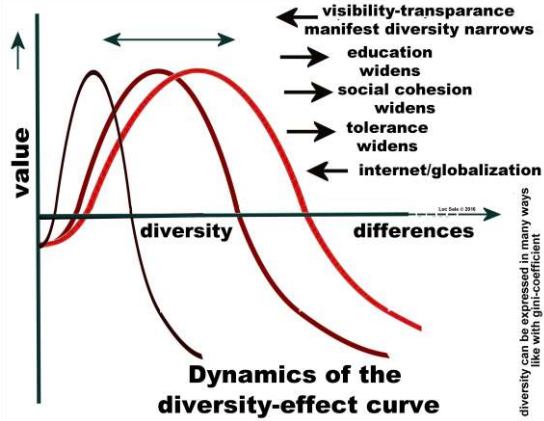
So it is interesting to determine how, for example, integration of newcomers, minorities, age groups. Up to what value (you can use percentage, difference indication, or difficult indications like the Gini coefficient for the horizontal axis) is there a positive effect, where does it peak and when does it disappear, and how fast does it get out of hand after that? The values of the curve vary from situation to situation but the general picture remains. It is of course important to determine the values, the slope, the optimal point, etc. in the actual situation, but understanding the curve is a start. Integration, housing al-



location, subsidy and permit policy, language policy, minority participation, education, SME policy, it is all about dealing with and managing diversity.

So processes that work as that diversity curve indicates are found everywhere, not only in sociology and psychological processes also follow a similar pattern. A good understanding of the phenomenon also helps to understand innovation and creativity; a little stimulation (diversity) works, too much blunts and leads to closure and exclusion and ultimately to chaos.

But, and this is what makes this curve so interesting even without further numerical detail, how does the usefulness of diversity change under the influence of external factors or wanted adjustments. How do influences like the pandemic, cyberspace, education, taxation affect this curve? Cyberspace (and



makes the diversity curve more likely or the

information society), for example, compresses the curve horizontally, as transparency makes differences more palpable. Possibly utility also decreases or increases vertically but that's not the point here. So with this horizontal compression a crisis arises more quickly. Education, which increases tolerance for differences and social mobility, shifts the curve to the right. In this way all kinds of effects and measures can be made transparent.

You can also extend the diversity curve a bit further. Perhaps the resulting chaos is not so negative after all. A crisis and a moment of catharsis (an uprising, for example) may eventually lead to a change and transformation. Then a new situation results, a real change. In a society that may be necessary but the status quo forces will then try to prevent it. The normal policy is not to entail dramatic crisis situations and violent societal transformation.

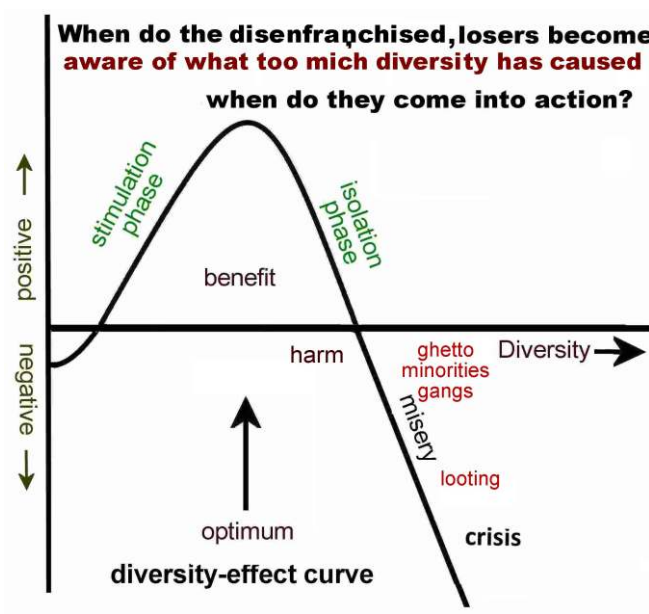
Diversity policy, and it may well become a priority in Post-Corona society, thus amounts to making meaningful use of the good and bad sides of diversity and deploying defenses against rigidity and social isolation on the one hand and the chaos and radicalization that arise when differences are too great on the other. Such policies may be the only way to counter growing inequality and if it is perceived as unfavorable, unjust and bad.

These are crucial questions; when is diversity still productive and when does it become an impenetrable barrier and the basis of all kinds of misery, resistance,

isolation? The relationship between groups of people, in terms of language, race, background, knowledge, income follows a kind of basic pattern, we can handle a little 'new' or 'different' and even use it positively but with too much it gets out of hand.

Now this all sounds like a somewhat academic approach to what is really a realistic problem, and one that has become a global issue. It's not only the disenfranchised in the Western world, like the poor, the red collar workers, the truckers, but the billions who lost their livelihood because of Corona and the economic effects.

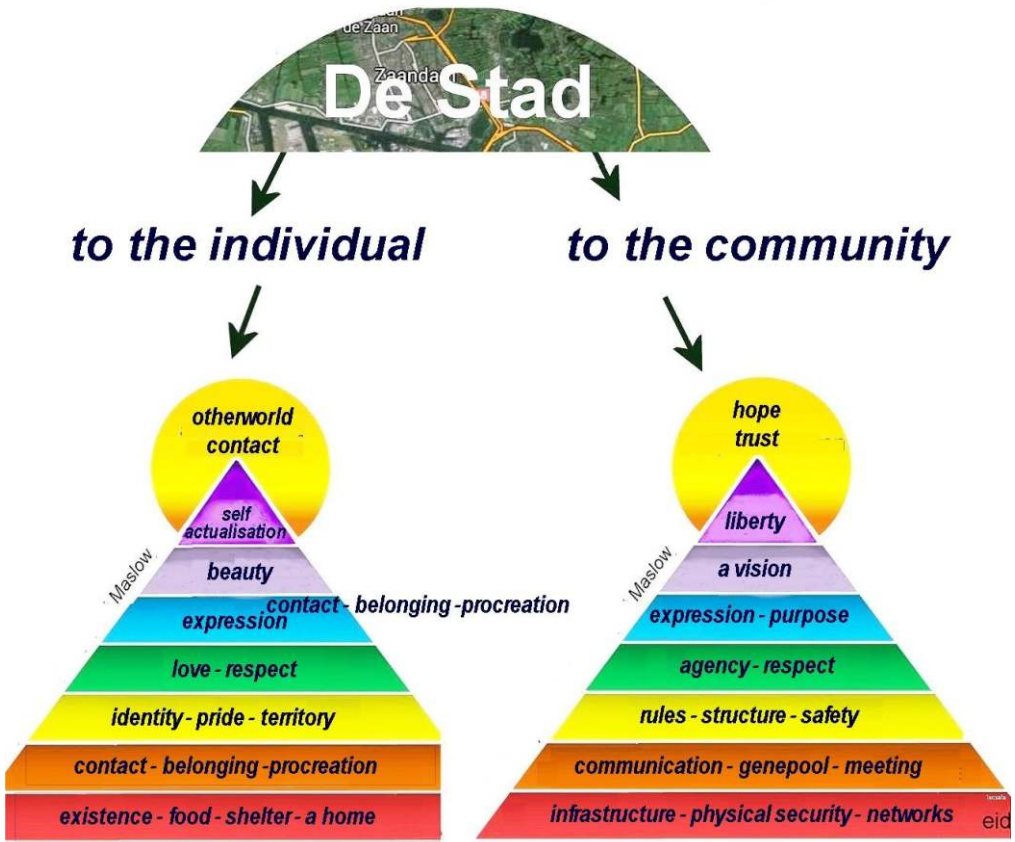
One can reason endlessly about diversity, biodiversity etc. etc. in practical situations but it is good to start with a place where diversity so clearly comes into play, the city.



14 Changing the function of the city

The changes after Corona will be felt worldwide but close to home, in the daily living environment, we are going to notice it most of all. For example, what will happen to the urban environment, the shopping streets, the offices, what will happen if online working, online education, online buying and almost instant-delivery remain the norm? The silence through the Corona lockdowns was, in the beginning certainly, a relief to many. People praised how quiet it was in the city then with hardly any tourists, no nuisances, blue skies and little air pollution but for a while that was a fairy tale. Meanwhile, people complain about a dead city, everything closed, nothing to do and there are more and more holes, businesses that close. But more and more delivery services, on bi-

What offers the city?



cycles, scooters, more and more young people with a fat backpack from one service or another.

Will the old residential/shopping image return or do we really need to start thinking about what the function of a city is and how we are going to fill it in, administratively, practically, in terms of planning, rules and zoning/environmental plans.

A city has to be alive, busy, bustling. It is simply unrealistic to think that a city can survive economically and socially without people, traffic, visitors, tourists, meetings, hotels, exhibition complexes, etc. The Corona crisis has already changed a lot, partly a temporary thing like empty stores and a stricken hospitality industry but the fact that more and more vans and scooters drive around delivering things or meals to homes is perhaps permanent.

The city will have a different role

One of the most important changes for the ordinary citizen, as a city dweller or visitor, is that the function of the city is shifting. The city is increasingly becoming a physical contact platform, the place where people come together, seek entertainment and go out. Working, learning and the hospital can all take place at home or in the periphery, but the central role of the city is increasingly about physical contact.

We are certainly not going back to the „old normal“ because too much has happened and the crisis has only accelerated certain developments. It was already clear that, for example, the role and influence of the local government, the city council and especially that of the mayor were already increasing before the crisis. They were given more tasks, received more money from the central government (which was not very generous with it) and can locally and in more direct contact with citizens regulate urgent matters such as the environment, energy, mobility, care and diversity better and with more involvement, proportionality, effectiveness and „subsidiarity“. The mayor, whether elected or not, plays a central role, not only traditionally charged with order and security, but as a point of contact, as the visible leader, the recognizable „civic father“ as Eberhard van der Laan was in Amsterdam.

The role of the city, serving the individual and the collective

Everything needs a structure, stability, but also space for movement, change and response to external stimuli. In the city the basic principles of permanence and flux meet. The city (physical or digital) is the logical place for social and physical interaction; the contact platform where morality (as the basis for dealing with the other) must be lived, takes shape.

We have to and want to reach out, do our shopping, make contact, go out, enjoy culture and atmosphere. This can be done to some extent with the Internet but physical contact offers more and the city is the platform for this. In the near future you will no longer need to go there to work, to learn, to ap-

proach the government or even to live. Making contact and managing diversity, that is what the city must now essentially provide. But in order to achieve this, moral choices have to be made and interests weighed up. Subsidiarity at the local level is essential if the citizens are to feel at home and connected with the city. With the risk that there will be so many partial regulations and exceptions that it becomes chaotic and small centers of power arise. The Brussels district in Belgium is an example of this; too much division of power does not always have positive results.

Organic growth

Growth brings more complexity and more need for regulation and management of differences. Putting aside external threats for a moment, there is the following thought. You can also think of a city as an organism, which seeks balance and equilibrium and by itself does respond well to sudden disturbances like Corona. Just like a human being, a city has more or less resistance, can survive and adapt. That resistance, however, must be nurtured.

If a city like Amsterdam were full of happy, sensible people, we would automatically start implementing the stuff and systems to match. In marketing, this is called pull; do not force solutions (push) but look at what people need. Let the question arise from the people, the citizen, as a solution to problems that are now or will be. This does not mean that it is not possible to take a broader view and that technology can play a role, including technology that does not (yet) exist and can help against emerging threats.

Every society, therefore also the city, is essentially determined by how one deals with the contrast between freedom and security, individual and collective, as related in an earlier chapter to the development and necessity of law and the law. In the city of the future, it is no different.

The Connected City: a vision of the future

Cities have traditionally been the places where people come together in a somewhat larger context because concentration of people makes possible things that cannot be done on a small scale, such as a market, specialized professions and security through numbers, joint constructions (city wall) and structure.

The concept of civilization comes from the Latin word *cives*, which means citizen. Since about 10,000 B.C., cities have emerged. The earliest excavations of what was then a kind of *civitas* (city), with communal spaces, have been found in southern Turkey. Around 4000 BC a real civilization wave set in, with writing and trade. Since that time, cities have fulfilled all kinds of functions. They were safe fortifications, crossing points (the Dam, the Tricht), market places and offered a concentration of facilities such as for trade, storage, education, care, religion, culture, justice, postal services and administration. Cities are centers of

power for governments, offer martial booty (to enemies), genetic diversity (choice of partner), entertainment and social mobility.

Cities became from marketplaces, to centers of handicrafts and of local production such as of beer increasingly workplaces in the industrial revolution such as for shipbuilding and textiles and later for computing. The focus on defense and a location that was easily accessible but also central and safe was gradually lost. Cities began to grow. People moved from the countryside to the cities, either for work or to escape the oppressive atmosphere and control of the villages. This is a trend that is leading to ever larger mega-cities worldwide but may now be reversed with home working and the online economy.

Cities have always been concentrations and intersections of contact, both physical and virtual. Ports, bridges, dams, roads, passes, train tracks but nowadays also airports, sewers, cabling, radio networks and the Internet hubs form the basic infrastructure. We share these facilities because it is economic, efficient, because there are economies of scale, it is convenient or necessary or just beautiful and fun. Institutions, universities, hospitals, government offices, the business community wanted to move to and in the city.

The city was and is a magnet for fortune seekers. Seeking opportunities for improvement is a human trait and the city has much to offer in that regard. In addition to being the place where the better incomes can be earned (in China, people in the city clearly earn more than the underprivileged rural people), the social structure and the availability of trade, fairs, markets, education and all kinds of facilities of a city is the basis for its attractiveness. The city offers social mobility, opportunities for improvement, escape from what is often perceived as a meager and restrictive situation in the countryside.

More and more people, worldwide, started living in cities in recent decades. Whether they found happiness there and whether their situation really improved (in terms of income, housing situation, life expectancy and happiness) is the question. Returning to the countryside permanently was exceptional. In fact, only affluent seniors would consider it but they certainly will not go back to the primitive situation from which they perhaps once escaped. The new home working can stimulate the migration out of the cities and to the periphery.

The Corona crisis has made it clear that it may not be necessary to live in the city at all, because working, shopping, recreation and schooling can now be done online. You may want to go there from time to time, feel connected to your family, friends, go to your favorite restaurant, to 'n party, theater or the cinema you may also want to live elsewhere to escape the crowds and stress, the unhealthy environment; that is certainly a consideration.

The city is about connection, about social interaction. That remains and the city therefore certainly still has a future and the changes in terms of function

are slow. We will probably continue to have overcrowded inner cities for a long time to come and, certainly globally, the cities will continue to grow.

However, the traditional roles and functions of the city are being eroded. The connected city of the future is a place that brings people, things, machines, robots and resources together, hopefully in harmony.

Technology and people will not be in opposition to each other but together will provide an especially human living environment. Let's leave the city for the cyborgs, robots and artificially self-aware computers to the SF writers and techno-fanatics, the AI believers like the Ray Kurzweils of this world. They predict from a materialistic view that human talents may one day be replaced by computers to the extent that we no longer need people or human characteristics, so to speak. A fearful and dystopian perspective, it seems better to me to concentrate on what being optimally human can entail and the role that the city plays in this.

The Internet makes our lives more comfortable, that is clear. Yet there is a growing pain, in this virtual communication we miss the contact, the physical, the physically meeting and experiencing the other, the culture, the architecture, the services and the atmosphere. The economic and physical necessity coupled with a psychological one. Contact with each other, gaining experiences (shopping, going out, continuing education, social, etc.) and sharing (goods, services, companionship, culture) is becoming increasingly important. The city is and will remain a magnet but for different reasons than before.

It is less and less about growth, a city like Amsterdam for example will not (be able to) grow much larger. The housing shortage is not only a matter of more houses but also of perception. We are living bigger and bigger, taking up more and more square meters of living space per person, and there are a lot of empty stores and offices. But focusing that alone on the numbers, outside demand (expats) and the shortage of buildable spaces has led to skewed growth, tightness and high prices.

Cyberspace and social media are ultimately flattening, we do more or less the same everywhere, use the same language and culture and therefore ultimately all become more of the same, the diversity and identity is lost. This is not yet so noticeable, but for example the shopping stock, architecture, city planning, facilities, advertising and public transport in all world cities converges to a vague mediocrity.

In order to retain some unique 'identity', people erect super-high, super-large or frenziedly 'different' buildings - which fit poorly into their surroundings and context - in order to stand out, the Rem Koolhaas approach. The flattening of the identity of one or 'the' city is clear, everything looks alike, becomes a „franchise“.

The city must supplement or compensate for what we are losing in cyberspace, the touchability. This is possible if modern systems of communication are integrated to this end with the physical infrastructure, transport, distribution of energy, water and waste products, and with care and entertainment. The idea of the 'Compact City' - an old Amsterdam concept from the time of Luud Schimmelpennink, among others, together with the White Bicycle Plan, and the concept of the Digital City was also pioneering at the time - argued for much more integration, sharing and doing things together. The idea of the compact city is already quite old, it comes down to (re)combining all the functions of the city with and within each other, so that more can be done with the same and essentially limited space and ground. Living, working, education and recreation closer together, with more mixing and therefore more cross-fertilization, integration and cohesion, less transportation between work and home and a safer environment. The old idea of the mate (sociability) who is apprenticed to his master fits in with this sort of compact city.

Of course there are also disadvantages; it is more difficult from an environmental point of view, there is nuisance from noise, goods traffic and production, and not everyone wants to give up the idea of a quiet residential area to live in the middle of the turbulence.

Providing physical contact is or will be the central function of the city of the future. If we cannot easily shake hands and look each other in the eye, it will be a dead city. The one-and-a-half meter society is a social disaster. Cities that arrange the best physical mobility and contact opportunities for visitors and residents have an advantage in this. They offer a better living environment, attract the creative talents and thus have more future value and current attractiveness

With modern techniques and more expansion in depth and height, we can allow more people to live, work, recreate, study and design the compact city (an old hippie ideal) together in a reasonable way but more is needed. We will want to fulfill the essential needs of humans, for contact, for physical experience. We can leave that to entrepreneurs but we will have to think about a framework, about broader measures, decision models, about change (building and demolition) and about the ethics of living together and in turn express that in rules, plans, policies and modes of implementation.

Municipal bodies are close to the people, administrators at the local level tend to be more pragmatic and less partisan, seeking solutions and compromises on a human scale. The responsibility of city governments in this regard is clear, they can regulate infrastructure, transportation, and physical cohesion on a local scale by investing, providing direction, or promoting initiatives of others. Benjamin Barber's book¹ was a forerunner in positioning the mayor as a defining figure in this context. Mayors, according to Barber, would

come to play a more decisive role in society, even more decisive than national governments. They can concentrate on the practical side of living, housing and working, have much more direct involvement with security and influence the broad liveability and therefore attractiveness of their city for the poor, middle classes and rich. In this way they have an influence on what sort of people will live in 'their city' and how they interact with each other. This is where the opportunity lies, as well as the duty to ensure that the differences between rich and poor do not get so out of hand that not only ghettoisation but also revolt and violent polarisation are prevented. After all, the city must remain a vehicle for upward mobility.

At the moment people are still looking a lot in the direction of even more technology, even more technical solutions, even more internet and digital initiatives. People are thinking in terms of 'smart city' and that undoubtedly makes sense because issues such as energy use, the environment, care, education, teleworking, safety and more efficient management can surely be improved a lot with technology but it is necessary to look further. Integrating smart city initiatives with human needs, striving for a human city, a warm city, a happy city is possible and in the long run much more important than forcing everyone into some kind of Big Brother technology utopia.

Smart City

There are initiatives all over the world to improve the city, often with the slogan Smart City. Amsterdam but many big cities like New York are doing a lot of this. They are experimenting with smart-city solutions and seeking inspiration and innovation from outside. There are all kinds of initiatives and options such as digital citizen consultation and involvement in problems, crowd sourcing, crowd monitoring, crowd funding, administrative participation through social media, local media, neighborhood wikis.

However, the emphasis is often on using technology even more to improve the services and functions of the city and especially of the urban government, to make them more accessible and transparent (Accessible and Accountable). What is often missing is the integration of the physical and virtual. It seems that 'smart cities', with everything nicely linked, are going to solve many problems but that approach is limited in a way. We cannot, for ecological reasons (the global climate and city climate) without the smart solutions with the internet-of-things, home automation and automation but a smart city is not yet a living city.

Using the citizen to signal and help manage is one thing but real involvement requires more. A nice little park where the urbanite then does no more than sit around Facebooking does not solve pressing problems like loneliness, social isolation and polarization. Perhaps it would work better if that park offered precisely no wifi or mobile access!

Efficiency is not yet effectiveness, and human effectiveness is often at odds with so-called information. Reporting complaints about the living environment via the iPhone and a special number 311 places the responsibility back with the city and deprives citizens of their right and duty to do something themselves or to ask other citizens to do so.

Loneliness, also or especially in the city

A village used to be a social unit; people knew each other, supported each other, although there was undesirable social control. But in the city, you can just drift away alone. All those fantastic websites for finding information have not reduced loneliness, but may have increased it. The time-honored counter is gone but haven't we done more harm than good by doing so? Broadband fiber optic internet access sounds nice but what if you are illiterate or not digitally literate? Or too old to install the new technology properly?

Local media

I have always been a strong advocate of local media, that is radio and television but also neighborhood newspapers, discussion platforms, debate forums, pamphlets and venues. These are small-scale, local communication channels, very important for the sense of belonging, of counting, participating and exercising influence for the citizen. Local media can support and give substance to the roots of society, to being involved in democracy, to the sense of belonging. Let the people have their say, express their opinions, criticize, in their language and in their way, aimed at a small group or the whole community but especially not over the heads of the people. The frayed edge, the minorities, the agitators, the malcontents, through adequate access to local media, they can speak their minds.

Not the pompous, rational and scientific approach of the 'big' media, the national television, the talk shows and documentaries, but simply letting the people speak. The problems of the street, the neighborhood, the initiatives, complaints, dissatisfaction but also the nice things may have a place. Local media organizations, such as Salto in Amsterdam and my own television channel Kleurnet at the time, can be the platform for this, not controlling but facilitating. Without the restrictions imposed on the 'big media' in terms of copyrights, formats, use of language, commercialization and censorship. This calls for generous and independent funding, but without the political obsequiousness that is more or less expected by the subsidizer.

Local media are much more important for cohesion than is usually assumed. Especially at a time when internet communication, blogs, vlogs and influencers are taking over the time-honored tasks of paper media, support and appreciation of local media is essential.

Sharing, an economy of the social

Social means that a human (or animal) tends to live in a group. We do so for all sorts of reasons, safety, efficiency, possibility of specialization, sociability, choice of partner. We are social because we are dependent on each other but paradoxically also to be able to distinguish ourselves, to climb in the hierarchy. Socii in Latin means partners, connected, with something of using each other, depending on each other.

With neighbors there is a relationship that is more than social, there is a sense of belonging, sociability, obligation and service that is somewhat diluted in the concept of social. A social society takes care of those who are less fortunate but does not oblige to contact, the social service (now very aptly the Centre for Work and Income) gave you money but no sociability or contact. Proximus is the Latin word for neighbor. So the word proximate would actually be clearer than social. In fact, it expresses mutual connectedness.

We need to bring together and share resources, means and capacities, which is an ecological necessity but also the magic formula for connection and innovation. We can thus save, do more and better with less and, as an added benefit, connect and stay connected with others.

Sharing a schoolyard together, for example, waiting for school to go out, is traditionally a social benchmark. Parents get to know each other there, often the circle of friends for the coming years is formed there. People share the care for the children, arrange parties, sleepovers and exchange caregiving tasks. Sharing a boat together, a lawn mower, a washing machine or exchanging or trading things through initiatives such as Noppes (these are LETS or Local Exchange Trading System), these are social encounters.

Sharing as a commercial activity is still something different from sharing in a (possibly cashless) credit society, as David Graeber saw in „Debt, the first 5000 years“ in older cultures. Virtual debt, intangible and social credit, favors, relationships, they often play a much larger role in a society than we think. Money may be the bridge between society and the market but not the only one.

With the Internet and IoT (Internet of Things) (and it's getting better with 5G), that sharing economy (sharing economy is an ambivalent word) can take on an even broader dimension. A market is emerging for B&B, boat rentals, private cab services, healthcare services (including sex), supplementary education, home growers (not just weed), babysitters, garden rentals, party venues and whatnot. A market where large parties such as Bol.com operate, sometimes in a way that is not entirely clean (for example, they charge 15% extra on shipping costs that individuals incur). Also the commission arrangements are sometimes more in the interest of the platforms than of the people who share their work or their home. Everything can be done over the net. The mostly illegal Dark Web trade (as with SilkRoad) in drugs, weapons, papers, etc. is an example.

Strangely enough, that is mainly based on trust, one pays for stuff with bitcoins and just has to hope it will be delivered.

Middle class under pressure

The established middle class does see this trend towards mutual trade, exchange and sharing sometimes as a threat and the government fears tax evasion (especially VAT), black money circuits and security problems (fire, incompetent service providers, criminal exploitation). It is, partly due to the growing accessibility through the Internet, an unstoppable trend. Regulations, guidelines and boundaries for the sharing economy should be set with room for experimentation, an alderman and perhaps even a minister for the sharing economy is no superfluous luxury.

Sharing is not only economically interesting; there is a psychological need to meet physically, possibly with an intermediate step via technical media. This is necessary to reach an agreement and a physical necessity if we want to exchange, swap, share and do things together.

Contact patterns; monitoring all and everything with less privacy

Every city dweller or visitor uses the city in his own way. At home and subsequently in terms of transport, route, locations visited and activities, we develop patterns of use. There is often a certain regularity in this. We are used to going to work in a certain way and going out often follows fixed patterns. We go to a regular pub and have a fixed spot in the park while our shopping also often follows a standard pattern. There are deviating situations, but we often do that en masse, such as at a demonstration or when the weather is nice. Then we go like lemmings to the beach or the parks. It's not just about getting around; our consumption, purchasing behavior and contact patterns are often fairly fixed and therefore predictable. It can be used by the government or commercial parties and that can be an invasion of our privacy.

These travel and spending patterns are, if we forget about privacy for a moment, fairly easy to follow because almost all of us have a cell phone and we pay most digitally through a system that can be tracked. Even our entry into the city (because of the old diesels) and also parking information is already marketed by municipalities and actually almost everything we do is known or can be followed and perhaps even influenced. This is not something for the future, we want to connect and integrate everything. As an example; gasoline prices per pump are regulated remotely in response to what competitors are doing and current sales data. The traffic services that provide congestion information also work with current travel data.

The government also participates, and perhaps rightly so. It is already being used on a large scale, for example on Queen's Day. Crowd control by the police works with such technical means. These techniques allow us to reduce

congestion in normal situations or to control it through measures such as signage, peak pricing for public transport, differentiated and dynamic parking tariffs. As 'always on, everywhere' becomes increasingly the norm, pedestrians and cyclists can also be directed in this way.

It all feels like enormous manipulation but the economic and environmental benefits to government and citizens of all that tracking and steering are also clear. Traffic jams are expensive time and gasoline wasters. We are looking to optimize movement and so why not accept the comfort of help with purchasing decisions and contact options? And what is the role of the government in this regard, surely they also do advertising and send us messages, useful or not, e.g. alarm warnings by SMS? Surely this is in everyone's interest? Or is it not?

The fragmented, segregated city.

The big city is increasingly a mishmash of cultures, languages, which seems unmanageable; you can't forbid people to come and live or work there. A healthy city requires managing the diversity in who lives there in terms of family size, income, culture. Do not mix in too much 'other'; there are limits to the absorption capacity of a neighborhood or district, but start from a compact, mixed population. Not just row houses but many more courtyard-like neighborhoods, more communal facilities (sharing economy of power-hot water-washing-wifi delivery points-exchanging) and spaces for working, receiving, lodging, babysitting, parties, manufacturing facilities (fab-lab), sharing facilities etc. Practical directions can be given, dealing with housing allocation, accessibility, contact opportunities, the integration of smart-city functionality into ordinary life, planning, transport modes such as public transport scaling, individual public sharing transport, electric, self-driving, autonomous transport.

The combination of living, working and living together is still relevant but can be scaled up, with more ecology, more connectedness, more contact between generations, more sharing on a personal level, more shared responsibility for communal greenery, security and care. This is not just a matter of tackling physical projects. Permit policies, building codes and the legal constructs for care sharing, cohabitation forms, front door sharing, splitting or linking of housing units, financing, stakeholder participation and entry/exit arrangements need to be challenged.

The way in which almshouses and former convents operated, with sometimes very restrictive rules but a common goal and apparently sufficient power to survive, can provide inspiration here.

These are all considerations between the individual and the collective, but wouldn't it make sense to make it possible for the residents of a particular residential project (neighborhood, building) to abide by agreements that somewhat restrict their civil liberties? Is it not conceivable to make physical coupling and decoupling of dwellings (for informal care, new parent constructions and

forms of cohabitation) a basic principle in new buildings. So by always planning passages (potentially) between dwellings, front door sharing and a flexible interior layout. More sharing means more contact, less loneliness, less care and happier people. In an aging city, seniors are an important group.

In London the inner city has become unaffordable and the workers live far away, in Paris the banlieu is a ghetto. The same threatens Amsterdam and, to a lesser extent, Rotterdam; the rental policy and the lack of cheap housing is driving ordinary people out of the inner city, expats and the new knowledge elite are taking their place. Although it is increasingly about the contrast between rich and poor with rich two-earners in 'gentrification' neighborhoods where the yuppies have pushed up prices. The original residents had to leave. There is also concentration in other clusters, for example, there is still a clear ethnic segregation going on.

Not that a white ghetto has developed within the Amsterdam canal belt, everything is still mixed together there, with many expats and (still) many social housing residents in the low and middle groups.

The rental market is stagnant because no one wants to or can move, prices have risen extremely, there is skewed living and the elderly stay in much too large houses for lack of alternatives. This is really not because of the landlords, they only profit from it. It is the corporations, which in turn are used by the government as an alternative source of income, that have driven up rents and prices. They must therefore, more or less forced to keep their heads above water and pay off old excesses and commercial experiments, sell the attractive houses dearly and charge unaffordable rents for the rest, not based on reasonable depreciation, interest costs and maintenance.

Recent policies such as raising the (rent) points and moving to WOZ value as the basis for rent reinforce the vicious circle whereby purchase prices are determined by a shortage. The corporations play along in that game, they profit from higher prices for sale and thus rent and thus buy again, it chases each other.

The big city centers are attractive, for expats, pensionados and also for rich and well earning families (if there are white schools) with often intergenerational support (inheritance, mortgage support, 100,000 euro scheme). However, it is becoming more and more expensive, the underclass is slowly being driven away to suburbs, the countryside, Vinex districts, Almere, and eventually to Heerlen or Oost-Groningen when the rent subsidy is phased out.

Here it is also important to realize that the division into rich and poor, in low-paid work and top incomes will go further and further, and the centrifugal effect of globalization, swinging everything to the poorest outskirts also plays a role. Less work, robotization, self-driving transport, the demand for „ordinary“ labor is decreasing, wages are flattening, this is an imminent but

difficult to avert development. Plans such as a basic income for everyone do not counteract income segregation but actually reinforce it, with the result that the growing group of minima are forced to leave the city. That a basic income is in the air with ongoing robotization and automation and not working becomes normal is apparently on the agenda or secretly in the interest of the status quo elite. But there are dangers to it, it makes the divide stronger.

Then it's a matter of waiting for trouble to start, in the sense of bread revolts, radicalization and revolution. You don't have to be a Marxist for that, that development is quite universal. The intelligent poor, formerly the middle class who are also driven to the minima situation, organize that; they are well educated but feel the difference with those who did get into the upper class, earn well and can (or are allowed to) live in the city. That resistance, radicalization, violence is not a matter of poor, stupid wretches is also evident in the radical Islam movement.

Preventing income segregation and maintaining a middle class may well be a more important task than working on ethnic disadvantage and segregation, and the two do run together now but need to be properly distinguished.

Happiness, power and freedom

Being happy and judging your happiness (usually retrospectively through surveys) appear to be quite different from each other, so happiness is debatable but it is what we all strive for and can actually be seen as the collective goal. Imposing this repressively as Bhutan does is counterproductive but investigating happiness in the city seems a priority if only to clarify the differences between cities and to be able to steer towards more confidence, more happiness and more well-being.

The freedom NOT to participate

Participation is such a buzzword, everyone MUST participate, welfare is now called participation, a kind of modern serfdom and an imposed almost slavery existence for those who do not contribute. Even though this may not be necessary in the long run or even if there is no work, withdrawing from 'working for a living' has now been labelled anti-social in a kind of neo-liberal jargon.

However, it is important that the choice to withdraw from choosing or participating is also allowed, if you are willing to bear the consequences. There is a tendency to want to train or educate everyone to be a resilient and individualized citizen, but in doing so, the freedom to remain free from government and to protect one's own privacy is eroded.

Freedom also means that a person may choose NOT to participate, not to become digitally resilient, not to choose, not to influence, not to interfere with others. In a city, the liberated or those who make themselves free, those who

flee the straitjacket of convention in the frayed edges often turn out to be the change agents, the artists, the social innovators.

There are good reasons to stay aloof, psychological as well as ethical. The time-honored libertine „don't tread on me“ is a good starting point. A government that forces its citizens, even with the best of intentions, into an unnecessary straitjacket and invades their privacy runs the risk of resistance building up, under the skin, which can, however, manifest itself in forms such as the terrorist 'lone wolf' syndrome that people now fear so much.

Participation is not a duty but a right. To enforce participation with a false and unnecessary social argument that amounts to repression and is perceived as slavery or unethical austerity means loss of moral credibility. The dividing line between cautious encouragement (nudging) and abuse of power is sensitive and requires wide margins of safety, also because personal fascist behavior (using the majority environment to mask personal feelings of inferiority) lurks.

For many citizens, especially those on the wrong side of all kinds of stripes, the abuse of power (corruption, official arbitrariness) that they experience from the government and the implementing bodies is one of the major fears and pain points. The benefits affair made that very clear again, but Corona also quickly became a control issue. Historically, that has also usually been the cause of less than organic upheavals.

15 Physicalization, festivalization, the event economy

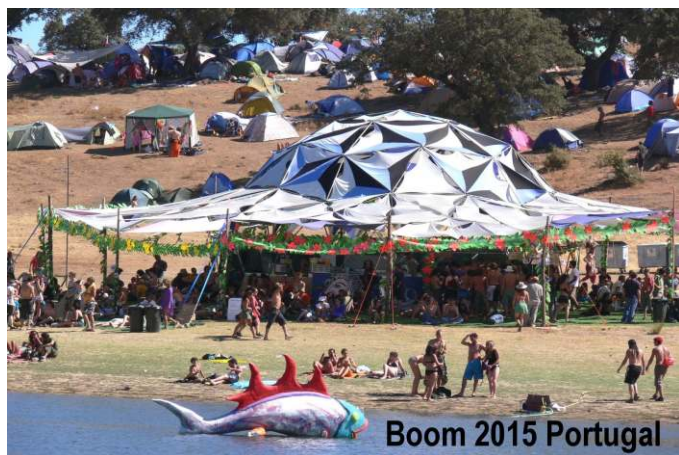
Going to festivals was already a trend. There were festivals in huge numbers, on all sorts of themes, large and small, with music or not at all. All together to Pinkpop, Lowlands, Black Cross, Boom, Glastonbury, Burning Man or just with a small group and much more intimate. It became a whole industry and a lot of money (and resources) went into it, it fitted in with the experience economy and doing exciting things, different from normal. When it was no longer allowed, it became an issue, people missed them, and this lack was magnified, people started to demonstrate and take to the streets. Through all those lockdowns and isolation we became more aware of and felt how being together and physical contact is indispensable, you can't Zoom alone.

Now that's not news, we've known for a long time that we can't actually live without occasional physical contact, without meeting others, physically being somewhere in nature, feeling and touching. This is a natural need. We need social and physical contact, to stay healthy, to experience and deepen our spirituality, because of meaning and pleasure in life, to maintain your network and circle of friends beyond those chats and emails.

That was already becoming a problem because of the digital contact culture, smartphones, social media, Netflix and the whole virtualization but Corona made it very clear how limiting that can be.

We want, if the weather allows it, to go to festivals, concerts, go out into nature with each other, camp, play and play sports with each other. This trend towards festivalization and eventification has been going on for some time now; worldwide the number of events has grown explosively. In the Netherlands we were certainly a forerunner in that area. The festival culture and DJ scene here

has developed quickly and widely.



The new physicalization

Social media and mobile telecommunications have radically changed the contact patterns and contact needs between people; after all, we are always online and accessible everywhere. However, we lost depth and intensity, the

physical contact was no longer there. The Corona crisis has made the consequences painfully clear; the lockdowns and physical isolation have led to depression, loneliness, powerlessness, feelings of meaninglessness and rebellion for very many people. The costs of this in human terms but also financially, are enormous and will continue for a long time. Festivals, but also culture in the broad sense, theater, going out, sports, pubs, it is certainly also about physicalization as an antidote (antidote) to digital isolation. And also as an escape from the privacy stop, because where can you still meet others undisturbed, experiment with intimacy (shared privacy) and live out freedom (to be yourself). Lebensraum, right to expression, right to make mistakes, we have surrendered too much on this.

Spirituality should not go unmentioned either, traditionally big festivals like the Indian Kumba Mela, the Hadj, but also pilgrimages, processions and church services are physical. Modern man may seek other forms and interpretation, but depth and spirituality is certainly a factor.



TAZ: temporary autonomous zone

A broader view of the festival business, the event economy and physical gathering in any form is needed. More appreciation for the social impact, for identification processes, group mind processes, group identity, the renewal and new élan that can come from „safe togetherness“, the ritual aspects of coming together, etc.

An important concept in get-togethers is the degree of safety. Can you express yourself freely, is everything not fixed, can you go loose. Hakim Bey (Peter Lamborn Wilson) came up with the idea of a so-called Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) to describe situations where people can experiment relatively safely and autonomously with being together, with playing, participation and group processes. That concept is very much appreciated in the festival world, it is often one of the starting points (next to ecology and of course going along with what the target audience is looking for).

Without cooperation and contact, science and the hle society are also dead. Social renewal often starts with meetings where people feel safe and free, where new plans and suggestions are not brushed aside.

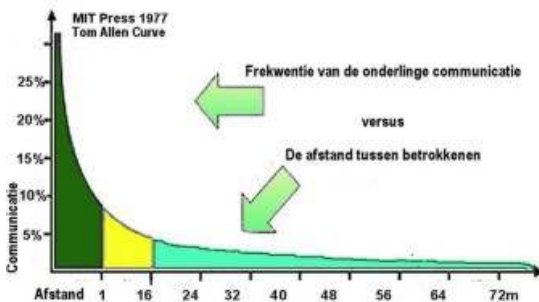
Searching for „real“, excitement, escape from the grind

We think a lot, communicate supposedly (who is really listening?) but at the human level there always remains an underlying need for physical contact and mobility, for exchange, networking, shopping, going out, enjoying diversity. In the face of all the robotization, automation and technological alienation, we seek 'authenticity', the human touch and the human encounter.

For all the threats of alienating telecommunications and cyberspace, the antidote lies in physicality (meeting each other physically, being together physically and experiencing) and authenticity. Feeling, seeing, touching, education by living people, meeting each other in the pub, on squares, at parties, events and

festivals with like-minded people, that is what we need to counterbalance the one-sided and increasingly virtual cognitive information and 'thinking culture'. Communication and distance are related, closer means more communication (the Allen curve).

This has practical consequences for society, spatial planning and the entire cultural sector, which



we can or should already take into account. Which we will certainly also have to develop in the long term and in a Post-Corona perspective, visions and translate into practical terms.

Not symptomatically, not subsidizing an occasional concert, neighborhood party or festival or clearing a pasture, but an integral and broad approach is needed. Every municipality should make room for it, in the planning, in the physical facilities and in conjunction with residents and local middle class.

Tribalism

Being together with like-minded people because we like the same things, share certain insights or ideals, are members of the same club or movement, it is an evolutionary legacy, but given the developments we can also speak of a revival of the tribal feeling, tribalism. Sometimes we do this with thousands, sometimes with smaller groups. You belong somewhere, you dress accordingly, you

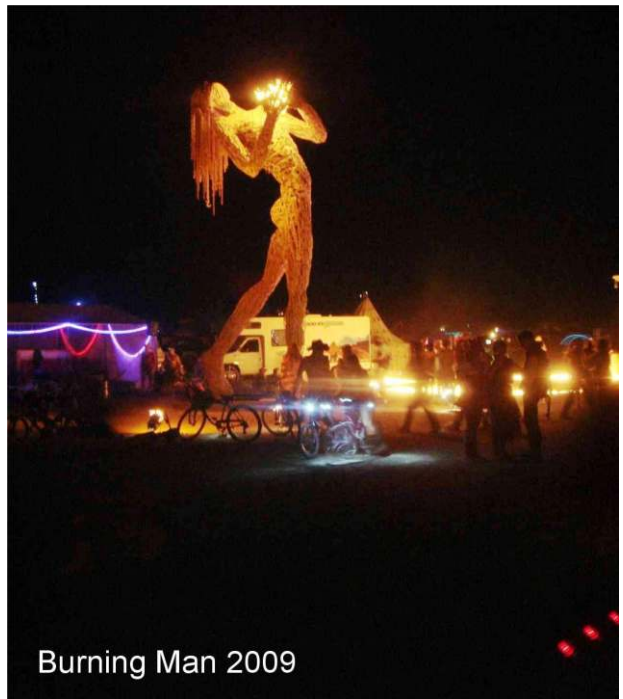
go along with the eating habits such as vegan or vegetarian, you adapt and go along (for a while) with the fashion, norms and values. You meet your friends there or make new ones who you then contact again later via social media. Entire communities arise. The 'burners', people who have something to do with the Burning Man festival in America, are a good example of such a new 'tribe'.

The festival business and the 'outing culture' has taken off and will surely be picked up again soon after Corona. It has become a whole industry, the fairs of yesteryear have now become big events, the campsites became recreational facilities, all kinds of theme parks came into being, but also temporary festivals somewhere outside or right in the city populate the agenda. A lot of people are involved, a lot of technique is needed, tents, installations, toilet facilities, but also surveillance, first aid, control of drugs, a whole sector that dried up due to the crisis.

Responding to the need

You can only look at the catering industry, at concert halls and the traditional events, parties and celebrations, but you can also see it much wider; the entire recreation and entertainment sector from the coffee house or senior citizens' club around the corner to Christmas markets, carnivals, experiential events, congresses and mega-events such as the Olympic Games, European Football Championships, Koningsdag, Pink-Pop and Sail Amsterdam. An integral approach to fighting nuisances such as alcohol abuse, parking pressure, noise and criminal or extremist influences is certainly needed.

It is the entrepreneurs in this industry but also the government that can and should steer the further development of this practical physicalization and eventification. The traditional concerts, theaters, professional exhibition organizations such as the RAI and the party industry do not present major problems, but festivals are more difficult. It can get out of hand, especially music festivals are getting bigger and bigger, and there is also a tendency to flatten



out, with more and more of the same types of events taking place at the same locations. Municipalities are aware of this and make demands on the content and approach (theme) of events, it must be somewhat original, just music, partying and drinking and swallowing pills, that is too limited.

Here lies a challenge. Until now (before the crisis) the event industry was mainly tried to regulate and forced to more and more security, safety, hygiene, limiting (noise) nuisance, parking spaces, fire safety, etc. This pushed up costs and the industry began to complain, you can't organize anything like that anymore. Of course, that was not the intention, because events, exhibitions, congresses and festivals bring people to the city or the location, they bring excitement and income.

Now that a restart seems possible, for the time being with restrictions such as tests and vaccination requirements, it would be wise for the government, also at the national level, to take a look at the whole eventification trend. Just as in the past every village had to make room for a fair, processions and other celebrations, now every municipality should draw up an event plan, designate locations, provide basic facilities and start facilitating in a broad sense. Coordination is needed with other events, other municipalities, also on a regional and national level; this should also be placed as a task with a national body or ministry. It's not just about rowing events in, but to steer critical ones. For example, the cruise industry seems impressive, big cabinets with thousands of visitors. But what do they end up spending in the city? They eat on board and at most buy some tourist junk, souvenirs or eat an ice cream. Venice is losing out as a city!

This is not just a matter of laws, regulations and licensing policies but of accepting that this is a growing trend and industry, where a lot of money is involved and there are many socio-economic and socio-psychological facets that need attention. Going out is an outlet, important to prevent loneliness, it is a cultural platform, a place where new trends in music, fashion and expression arise but also where new rituals develop, which offer people and society cohesion and meaning.

Science does not yet look at it this way, there is now only some attention to the business aspects, the organization, the staff. the drug use and the impact on the environment. Festivals can also be seen as an essential alternative to digital de-physicalization, as a psychological health factor, as a contact option (broadening the gene-pool somewhat) and as a place where especially young people can experiment with their behavior (essential for learning and change).

Physicalization in a broad sense will prove to be an important factor in the Post-Corona era.



16 What do we want to know!?

I have pointed at a number of issues concerning a Post-Corona society, not trying to offer a comprehensive overview but mentioning some relevant concerns that I feel are relevant. This is just a personal and limited perspective, but there is one topic I like to finish with.

Do we want to know the truth about what Corona was all about or do we believe what the government and so-called science has put in front of us? Do we want to know and maybe punish the lies and deception? Numbers and statistics have been used and abused in sometimes tenuous ways during the Corona crisis. Fake news is almost standard, you no longer know what is true or not and who to trust.

It seemed to be more about supporting the official policy or a particular position rather than coming to a real understanding, something we are seeing again now around the war in Ukraine. All sorts of things were supposedly being investigated around Corona, we were fed statistics no end. However, questions such as the real effectiveness of the vaccines or boosters, what „recovered“ entailed, why breakthrough infections still sustained, were there side effects and loss of immunity, they were not asked. Much was kept secret, because that was agreed upon or would only tarnish the position of the „scientists“ and suppliers. Why was the double-blind control group of Pfizer and Moderna quickly also vaccinated anyway? Why were all kinds of tests not carried out, not when there was time pressure, but also not afterwards? Why didn't the test groups look beyond age and gender to include blood values, health history, ethnic background, wealth, etc. These questions were not asked. This is the fault of the manufacturers, but also of the government, the agencies and the scientists who hardly protested or were too easily silenced.

Why didn't the health authorities set up a cohort from the beginning that was followed in terms of bio- and psycho-markers, looking at comorbidity, medication use, health status, diet, life-style, type (MBTI etc.), psychological problems. We might have found out about the excess deaths and what vaccination had to do with that. Why did they concentrate on the symptoms, on the effects in health care, on the sick only and not on the question of why people didn't get sick. If you examine how people perceive the measures, but not how that is related to social position, medication use, psychological condition and what else can you think of, then the authorities have been asleep or didn't want to know.

The lack of vision as to what might be relevant data is so obvious and bad, that a thorough vetting of all those agencies and administrators who are engaged in collecting and managing figures is sorely needed. Let them have to

answer for themselves, in hearings and courts if not a tribunal and not get off the hook with some limited self-investigation.

The relevant questions

Two types of questions are involved, and they are also related.

Do we want to know everything about ourselves (our quantified self) that concerns us, and do we allow others to know? In the Corona crisis, everything about us, not just medical data, ended up in all kinds of files, our digital identity was further fleshed out and we slipped further into what Shoshana Zuboff already called „Surveillance Capitalism“ in 2019?

Do we want to get to the bottom of things, do we want to know everything and get it all to the surface, including our health, our intelligence, talents and shortcomings? Then we can also indicate whether a certain group has more opportunities or is more at risk, will die faster, is more susceptible to certain diseases, in short, we are going to classify and thus discriminate with all those facts that we can distill from the data mass.

These are practical but also ethical questions. Do we want to stick to keeping the responsibility for what happened to ourselves? After all, we believed all the stories, or are we going to investigate and hold others accountable? So are we going to deal with the guilty or is maybe a policy of truth and reconciliation, a „forget and forgive“ approach more sensible? The polarization already led to a rift in society, a deep division. Isn't it better to accept each other again, not to seek revenge or retribution, but to work together, to have harmony, to understand? Do we want to live in ignorant peace with each other again and not bring anyone before a tribunal?

To conclude, there is the open question of what kind of data we (personally, the government, the medical world, the insurers, the marketeers) should keep logging and acquire in the future. What data are not only relevant, but essential, for the community and for the individual? Are we going to test everything, put everyone under a scanner and examine their DNA, behavior, diet, capabilities, attitude, life-style, even socially, as they do in China, knowing everything about everyone and everything? The technology is there, the computers (AI) and networks (5G) can handle it. There are bound to be organizations and companies that see the potential and can monetize such data, think of the insurance companies and pension funds and the criminal world.

Is keeping general or individual statistics about life and well-being ethically responsible? Everything is possible, we can link everything, we can force the data like from our credit and loyalty cards, our Corona passports and the mountains

of data that Google and Facebook collect, of course well anonymized, and let an army of data-miners loose on them. But are we aware we are touching fundamental ethical issues. We need a policy for that, a vision that goes beyond the sometimes childish fuss about privacy and really looks integrally with a deep understanding of correlations and causal relationships, but also assesses the consequences.

I envisage an agency or national statistics coordinator who controls and maybe even manages all the planning agencies, the statistical bodies, and private data collectors.

Will we become numbers and traffic jams, not people but cases? And that brings me back to the exclamation and question mark in the title of this chapter. Because do we really want to know all that, do we want to measure and know everything, analyze chance and our fate down to the bone. Do we not thereby also damage hope, trust and perhaps even the purpose of our lives, the adventure of self-knowledge and inner growth?

Then I remember the for me, as a physicist, fascinating theorem with which I want to conclude:

To measure is to know a bit, but to forget the whole

It was my pleasure, thanks for your attention.

Luc