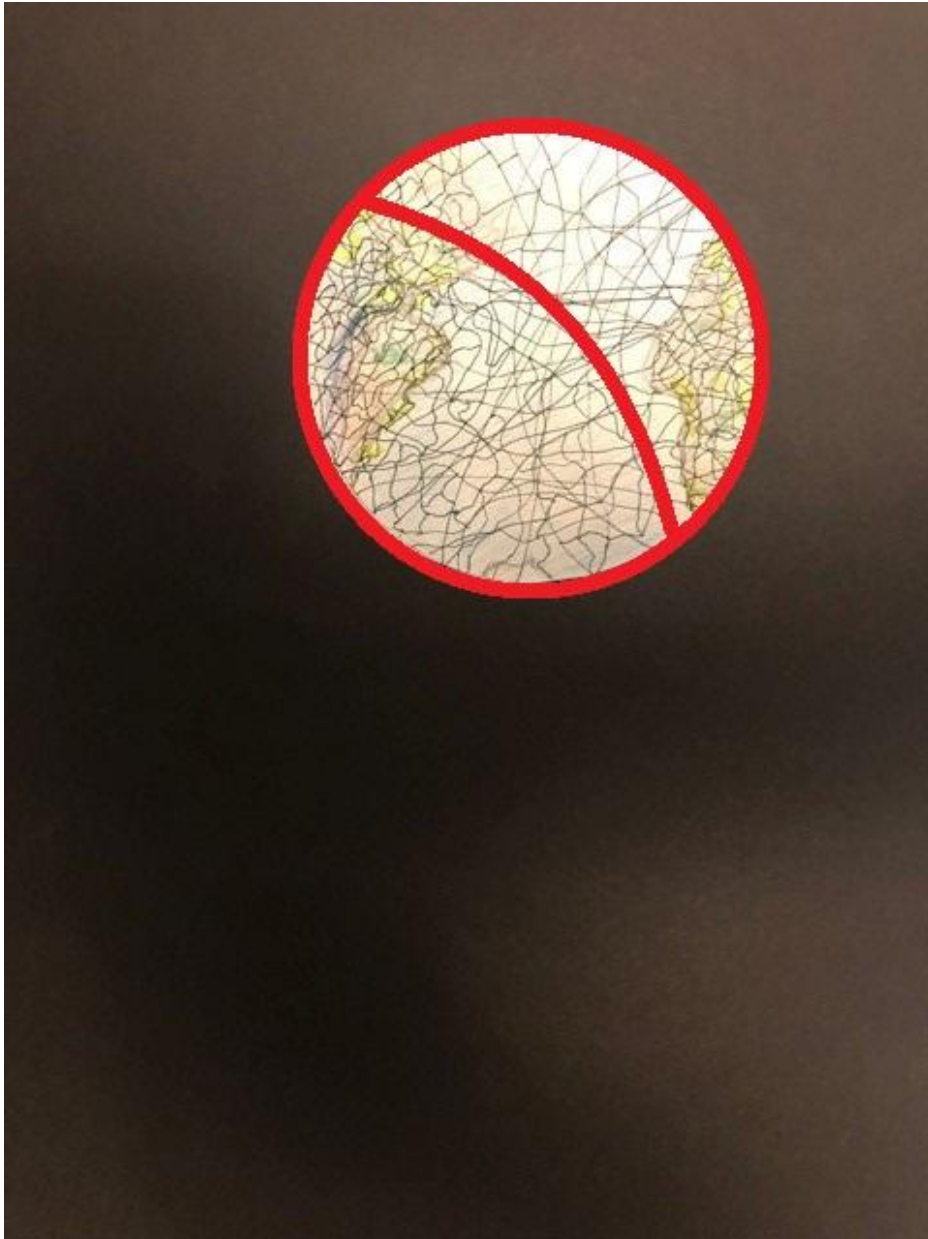


WHAT ON EARTH ARE WE REALLY UP TO?



“UNTHINKABLE” THOUGHTS?

- We must focus on both the global and the local level,
- We must make structural challenges at all levels visible,
- We must challenge mindsets hiding or distorting reality,
- We must leave the comfort zone both as individuals and as societies,
- We must be willing to consider alternative futures.

Preface – Approaching an impossible mission?

This book aims at supporting our thinking, rethinking, and discussions by presenting and discussing global challenges in a both broad and fundamental way. We need such a holistic input for finding the right compass course and for checking out our priorities in a turbulent and decisive time. I want to expand our working space for imagination, thinking, and rethinking.

I have for a long time tried hard to understand the world around me. I am not an expert in any subject or academic field. I am not an economist, historian, philosopher, or futurist. It may, however, imply some advantages not to have a too specialized background, or to have too many dependencies to current politics, economics, academia, or media.

To try to understand the world is maybe a task too ambitious for anyone. Nobody can really claim that they are qualified to have an opinion on the totality of the world of today, nor where it might be heading, or where it should be heading. Still, I have a strong need to try as hard as I can, within my capacities, to scrutinize the basic global problems of today in a systematic way, at least at a principled level. I do not at all claim to have all the answers. I primarily try to point at structures and mindsets that can be a starting point for systematic thinking, rethinking and discussions.

I do not claim always to be an original mind. I am inspired by, and lean on, many important contributions. Still, I think most of them have a narrower perspective than what I find necessary.

My claims and questions may often seem utopian. Rebel thoughts challenging mainstream mindsets, however, are needed to bring about major changes in mindsets. At the same time, I have great respect for what is needed for practical implementations.

To be able to handle the question “what on earth are we really up to” properly we must for some time go behind what we are told from holders of power, media and politics. Politicians, media, and other sources of information most of the time consciously or unconsciously simplify, obscure, or distort reality – not to mention the enormous level of informational noise bombarding us.

We need new questions, and new ideas. We must dig both deep and wide. I try to make my contribution, although at a very principled level. High level goals, and frameworks, however, that are taken seriously, drip down to more practical levels and measures. They are also important for an efficient and holistic implementation in due time.

Research in many fields often tries to describe and understand status and then project further development. More basic questions about the basic rules of the game are often forgotten. Academic fields are also often narrow ones.

I am concerned about the seriousness of our global challenges. We must dare to be honest. What is considered as normal (business as usual) must be seriously challenged. We must stop pretending at all levels.

I am not writing about people’s lives, experiences, feelings, thoughts, and hopes. What I am writing about, however, provides the frames for and percussions into the diverse lives of billions of people worldwide.

I discuss Trump’s “Make America Great Again” agenda in a postscript chapter. It represents an extension at an extreme level of the same challenges as previously observed over a longer period. These basic challenges, however, still remain after the dust from Trump has settled.

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Seen from distance – *How are we doing? Where are we heading?*

Humanity has decisive choices. We can focus on our fundamental existential challenges, or we can follow rather short-term and random perspectives of power and influence mostly looking for the easy way out seen from our own limited perspectives. Where is the wind blowing today?

Is the way of the world something that is just happening or is it something that we are an integral part of?

To be a human individual is often difficult. To be in a position in society implying responsibilities for many other people's lives is definitely difficult. It is often necessary and right to take a pragmatic stand. It is, however, still important to have ideas about what is good and right, and for whom this is the case. We must have an idea about the right compass course even if we are not able to follow it all the time.

To try to find the compass course we must view the earth and human society from a mental distance that is sufficient to see behind the daily continuous disturbances, and the numerous actors consciously or unconsciously trying to divert attention from, fog lay, beautiful paint, or distort reality.

How are we doing? Where are we heading?

Humanity is facing severe challenges. Recent developments, that are seen as self-evident, mean that very many of us have better living conditions than anybody has ever had. This is, however, not the case for everybody. We must ask basic questions regarding this development. Things are happening ever faster. This is an inherent reason for caution.

Seen from distance we have several challenges threatening our very existence with somewhat different consequences and time horizons:

- Humans occupy far too much space and destroy nature at a fast pace,
- Humans are heading out of their basic roles and frameworks,
- Humans are confused and uncertain in information chaos and lack of values,
- Humans face large and increasing differences in living conditions and prospects,
- Humans have threats of mass destruction hanging over their heads.

Humans quickly influence climate and ecosystems negatively, thereby destroying the very foundation of nature, including humanity itself. Flooding, wildfires, extreme weather, vulnerable freshwater resources, heating and pollution of the atmosphere and oceans, hunger, new diseases, reduced diversity and reduced basis for flora and fauna, are some of the consequences. Rapidly increasing population particularly in the poorest countries adds to the challenge.

Fast development regarding biotechnology, artificial intelligence (AI), and new possibilities because of enormous amounts of data related to human behaviour (Big Data) mean that we must rethink what a human being is, can become, or should be. This technological development is also the basis for comprehensive mass surveillance and manipulation. Military technology is integral part of this picture.

Humans produce, gather, and have access to enormous amounts of information. They can also communicate without severe limitations. For the individual, however, the present world seems to be ever more complex, confusing, insecure, and threatening. Well-known, old values are weathering, and relevant new values are not replacing them. Humans treat knowledge, information, and

communication in a chaotic and dangerous manner. At the same time, they don't take advantage of the large opportunities made available to them. However, knowledge, facts, and truth are still of crucial importance. "Opinion", "fake news", and manipulated facts can't be the foundation wall for society in the long run.

Human living conditions and life opportunities have always been unfairly distributed. Today's challenges are economic and social structures and mechanisms at a global level leading to increasing differences for very many people. The gap between rich and poor is rapidly increasing both within nations and between nations, although convergence of living standards also partly can be observed. We must have a much closer look at the development in the rich part of the world. And we must not forget "the bottom billion" (cf. Paul Collier). Injustice and inequalities lead to social problems in many areas and on many levels. Politics and global governance are also influenced. The crisis of climate- and nature already contributes heavily to increasing injustice. New, enormous flows of refugees might be a result.

Humans have lived for quite some time with the threat from mass-destruction weapons. Fragile arrangements have been made to avoid their use. We, however, have almost forgotten the fragility of existing arrangements. There is also a comprehensive and frightening further development and distribution of military technology in general happening in an arms race.

The news is dominated by ongoing wars, conflicts and other challenges seen from the perspectives of the great powers and nation-states in general. "The economy" is important also with actors that are largely hidden from public attention. Media focus on world leaders and oligarchs in a tabloidizing way as if everything is about their personal conduct, not on structures, relations and processes. These perspectives counteract dealing effectively with the common global challenges.

Most people are preoccupied with quite different problems than basic global challenges in their daily lives. Many need to just survive from day to day, others are busy with more private, consumption-based issues or issues created and nourished by media. Nevertheless, the basic global challenges are common and the very survival of everybody depends upon how they are handled.

The global challenges in total are huge. They must be met by the global community in common. No superpower aiming for global hegemony can deal with them properly. We must raise our attention to the global level. To be able to meet these challenges many input resources, that constitute a totality, and a focused cooperation between many fields of knowledge, institutions, and nation-states are necessary. Resources and time are needed. We, however, are about to be short of time. We are facing more challenges than the crisis of climate, and this crisis cannot be considered isolated. To face the challenges properly and take advantage of options available, we need fundamental changes in society and in the present global rules of the game. We must be willing to dig deep and wide enough to identify the fundamental drivers behind the challenges and to identify the resulting changes that are necessary.

Good and lasting changes come through broad processes, not revolution, or the use of force. Common platforms for mutual understanding, knowledge, participation, and cooperation are needed. Such platforms may lead to increasing mutual confidence. This may seem very far-fetched and basically impossible. There is, however, no other navigable way for humanity.

To establish platforms like this a solid foundation wall of holistic thinking is needed. I try to contribute to such a foundation wall.

Our world looks different from different positions and perspectives. Sometimes we need to check the main direction and the basic priorities to get on the right course. This is important also when we must struggle through the present crisis and conflicts as best we can without a clear sight. We must do the necessary groundwork to find the main compass course again and we must rethink the priorities.

The climate crisis is the most immediate and fundamental crisis where broad mobilizing is necessary. One important input is “The Future We Choose” from Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac. They have had a practical responsibility for the work behind the Paris agreement on global climate. The Club of Rome has several important inputs from “Limits to Growth” from 1972 until today. In “The Book of Climate” Greta Thunberg has gathered a lot of relevant and updated knowledge. “The Book of Climate” makes the existential seriousness of the crisis for climate and nature crystal clear. The book points out the need for deep systemic changes in society. Focusing only on the individual is a dangerous distraction. Individual choices and possible systemic changes, however, are closely interconnected.

These initiatives are important, but we still must dig deeper and wider for the most important drivers behind the emergence of the climate crisis and the crisis of nature. It is important how we hopefully solve, limit, or adapt to these crises, and what that means for the further development of human life on earth.

To point at several challenges besides the climate crisis and the crisis of nature does not mean taking the focus away from these fundamental crises. The totality of global challenges has several drivers in common. The total picture of challenges only underlines the need for deep systemic changes. Handling the crisis of climate and nature includes a wide range of measures in addition to direct technological and economic measures. This means changes in global structures and relations and our way of life for people in rich countries and other elites. I try to scrutinize the needs and the options for such systemic changes.

It is important that challenges, scope, and seriousness are adequately understood at all levels, both at individual level, societal level, national level, up to the global level. Global challenges are not solved by personal choices alone, nor by the normal political processes in nation-states alone. Individual choices, the participation in relevant organizations or activism, and political processes at all levels, however, altogether make important contributions.

I will try to make challenges as visible, honest, holistic, and clear as possible. This book is an open appeal to people at all levels of global society for new thoughts and considerations concerning a world that badly needs it.

Changes must be initiated both bottom up and top down. It is a matter of power structures and power relations, but it is also a matter of perspectives, knowledge, information and complex societal mechanisms at all levels.

Globalization, in its broad meaning, is a diverse field with both positive and negative effects. This is the case not only regarding economics. Challenges regarding globalization often must be solved at a global level. There is, however, also a need for looking at the global rules of the game, and the balance between global and more local solutions, with new glasses.

The UN (the United Nations) has defined global goals for sustainable development (Millennium Development Goals) and works to realize these goals. This is the closest we have come to a joint international cooperation for a better future for everybody. Jeffrey Sachs has in his book “Common

Wealth” outlined the importance of these goals and discussed ways to get there. I will discuss his approach and his assumptions later. We must scrutinize the rules of the game, structures, processes, and mechanisms in the global world of today that influence most of the goals of development in a negative direction. Without a basic overview, understanding, and discussion of these matters, it will be very difficult to reach the goals of sustainable development.

It is also important to look at the Universal Declaration of Human Rights again. The same rules of the game, structures, processes, and mechanisms in the global world of today also make it difficult to follow up this important declaration.

World Economic Forum produces annual reports on the most important global risks. This more specifically means the risks for the economic activity of the worlds most wealthy companies and people. The world seen through these lenses is different than the world seen through the lenses of the UN development goals. This results in very different global compass courses.

It is essential for change to influence what people are thinking and feeling. Their world views can be seen as “stories” making a complex reality simpler and more endurable. Societies will need a dominating story making most people cooperate and securing the stability of society. Such stories are not self-evident. We choose them and nourish them. This makes our ecosystem of information very important. The dominant story limits what can be discussed at all and the very basis for discussions.

How issues and problems are understood, communicated, and discussed in media, discussions, and political expressions is important. In practice it is difficult to challenge or nuance a story that is repeated all the time, hardly without opposition, in all channels of information and in every context.

Our story today is based in the western world (or the Global North). This story, however, also influences the rest of the world, and at least most of the powerful global players act according to it.

Let us have a closer look:

Our story today

Society is mainly organized according to the principles of mainstream market economy. The economy, and the basic activities of society, is based on everything that can be given a price in a market. The larger markets, the better. Mainstream economic evaluations override any other perspective, and «the economy» is living a life of its own.

Growth of the economy is vital. It is measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Politics begin where the economy already has given the framework.

Private solutions have priority over solutions for the common good. Government should be limited to secure the rules of the game for the economy with free competition, with a minimum of regulations. Individual freedom and private ownership are basic values. Success in private business is valued. Happiness is measured by material wealth.

This story considers democracy and human rights as something following directly from its principles and practices without any hesitation.

The story also implies a strong belief in the power of technology to solve most problems.

This story is easy to understand and easy to take to heart. The yardsticks for measuring happiness and success are simple.

This story can also go along with more local stories supporting other perspectives and considerations. This story is also partly the basis for how different elites, including authoritarian regimes such as China and Russia, with their elites, function. The stories told to their masses are, however, different ones. Trump's agenda is in many ways the extreme version of our neoliberal "story" stripped of all attempts to give it a humanitarian look.

The neoliberal story has for quite a long time been the dominating global story. It is natural to pose critical questions about how it is related to our global challenges. Does it provide the answers or is it instead the basic driver for amplifying the global challenges? It would in fact be irresponsible not to ask such questions.

We must see the big picture at sufficiently long mental distance. To be able to analyse it properly, it is, however, also necessary to apply enough perspectives for the analysis. To be able to make visible and discuss the global challenges outlined above, and how they are connected, sufficiently thoroughly, I prioritize the most basic issues within the following groups of themes:

- Cosmos/Nature
- Humanity/Society/Values
- Knowledge/Information/Communication
- Economy
- Governance/Order/Stability/Security/Power/Violence

These main groups of themes cover both the most important problems visible in media and public debate today and also important issues given less public attention. The selection of themes and issues is prioritized in order best to understand the basic background for the most pressing global challenges. These themes are also important to be able to suggest options and solutions. Anyway, an approach with a breadth like this is necessary.

I am looking for common backgrounds and how challenges are interconnected. What we do regarding one challenge influence options and problems regarding other challenges.

A sufficiently holistic view, or an architectural view, is necessary. Digging deep into a few themes only, like for example economy or security matters alone, will not provide sufficient understanding.

The sequence of the main groups of themes is not random. I begin with the most basic one which is nature and our relationship with nature.

Our relationship with nature is part of our general set of values. We must take values seriously. Values matter.

What goes on in our brains and hearts is decisive for how we, in common, can relate to global challenges. Our ecosystem of knowledge, information and communication defines and maintains our view of the world. It can also contribute to confusion, fog laying, manipulation, and passivation.

The economy, and how we understand and prioritize it, its rules of the game and its players, is important. The economy has many repercussions in the world of globalization. "The Economy" is, however, not as self-evident as people are usually told. We must go back to basic assumptions

behind mainstream economy. The economy cannot be considered a stand-alone and all-inclusive domain.

We also need to grasp the diversity of global governance with different players in both formal and informal roles. We must try to find patterns and ways to proceed towards alternative global governance meeting today's most basic challenges. Superpower thinking, and spiralling armament and distrust, will not lead us in the right direction, and must be abandoned.

This seems to be a long journey before reaching what most people consider the most pressing and up to date issues that continuously call for action according to the flow of news. Be patient. I still think this journey is important to be able to discuss these issues thoroughly enough to approach conclusions, and to propose options that are sufficiently holistic.

I try to be consistent in describing and discussing the different themes and issues at different levels or stages: status, discussion, and ideas for options. Often realizing status is an important step in a process of thinking. After having analysed the chosen issues this way, I try to put the pieces together for a more holistic picture.

With my humble ideas for high level options or solutions, I try to visualize a world we can choose to move towards. It is important to try to visualize such a world. I put most attention to changing structures, rules of the game, and ways of cooperation instead of trying to describe fascinating technological or practical solutions. Most important is to really understand the importance and scope of the total challenges and the main direction for options.

I want to achieve that you, after having read this book, ask yourself in your busy and important everyday life:

- **What on earth are we really up to?**
- **Do we have to think what we so far have considered “unthinkable” thoughts?**

I will first provide a short overview of status for global heating and other threats against nature. These threats also mean existential threats against humanity and nature altogether. Status and resulting perspectives are essential as a basis for this book even if global heating and destruction of nature are much more fully discussed by others. Although media now more often pay attention, a very serious reminder definitely is a must.

The speed of changes in nature and climate globally are unique in the history of mankind.

Today we live far beyond our means. This means that we live far beyond the capacity of the earth to cope with our use of areas, natural resources, our waste, and our poisoning of nature. We obviously can't go on like this. Our footprint is already far too big. Trends, however, only continue and accelerate.

Global heating because of emissions of climate gases to the atmosphere has evoked attention. The various consequences of global heating are critical. Our use of areas at nature's expense, and our overuse of nature's ecosystems altogether, is adding to the crisis.

Global heating and overuse of nature's ecosystems are closely connected with our general consumption. This means that we, living in rich industrialized countries, together with other elites, must reduce and change the composition of our material consumption substantially. This means measures and consequences in many fields and at many levels.

We can hope that such a massive collective existential challenge, as global heating and other destruction of nature represent, can make humanity see other differences and disputes in a new light leading to better priorities.

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The United Nations (UN) organ IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, provides the most holistic, trustworthy, and updated overview regarding global heating.

The United Nations (UN) organ IPBES – Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services has an equivalent position regarding biological diversity, and use of areas regarding viable ecosystems.

There are also many other useful sources of information supplementing and elaborating parts of these themes.

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IPCC has since 1990 regularly published reports. The last one is from 2021 with new interim reports in 2022 and 2023.

Regarding global heating, there is clear scientific agreement that we must keep the increase in global mean temperatures below 1,5 until 2,0 degrees centigrade to avoid dangerous, reinforcing feedback loops in climate systems. That means in other words to avoid that the climate systems run wild.

CO² and Methane are the most important, although not the only, climate gases supporting greenhouse effect and resulting global heating.

We have had substantial releases of CO² for a long period of time following the industrial revolution. More than half the total emissions caused by human activity, however, has happened during the last 30 years. The amount of climate gases in the atmosphere because of human activity is still increasing rapidly.

Rapid global heating has a series of grave consequences:

- Increased melting of ice resulting in sea level rise
- Melting of permafrost releasing Methane
- Drought resulting in crop loss. Many of today's most productive areas may be hit.
- Reduced access to fresh water
- Increased temperatures in the oceans, with serious consequences
- Disturbing climate systems resulting in increased frequency of extreme weather events and wildfires
- Increasing uninhabitable regions creating climate refugees

The main contributions to increased levels of climate gases in the atmosphere are:

- Production of energy, driven by increased general consumption
- Our use of areas including deforestation, large scale damming, and reduction of wetlands reduce nature's capacity for storing CO². Urban areas, roads and other infrastructure also reduce natural areas and make them less interconnected.
- Our use of the oceans reduces their ability to store CO²
- Industry, building activity, and transport, driven by increased general consumption
- Livestock, particularly for meat production

The digital world in particular entails large consumption of energy because of big data centres (the cloud), digital infrastructure and the production and use of masses of electronic equipment. The production of batteries and extraction of cryptocurrency, as Bitcoin, are for example very energy demanding. Extensive use of Artificial intelligence (AI) might increase consumption of energy significantly.

Fresh water is negatively affected by global heating. Less than 1 % of the water on earth is fresh water that we can use. Consumption must be restricted, and resources must be recirculated. Agriculture, including meat production, and industrial production use lots of water.

Global heating has come on the agenda in mass media and the global society. A series of conferences has been arranged by the UN. Reports from IPCC has all the time pointed at the seriousness of global heating caused by humanity. The rapport from 2021 has got even better scientific basis for conclusions although some uncertainty regarding future scenarios will always persist. The global society must act rapidly with comprehensive measures. Extreme weather events because of human activity are already here.

Measures for reduction of climate gases from various global actors, however, are not sufficiently clearcut and comprehensive today. The main picture means postponement of measures based on a belief that new technology in some way or other will solve our problems. Many sources of releases of

climate gases are also swept under the rug. Measures are not good enough, few concrete plans exist, and practical results here and now are mostly missing.

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The report from IPBES (The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) means a very thorough mapping of status for nature and human use of nature. The scientific community also uses specific knowledge from local communities and indigenous people.

The report underline how crucial nature is for human existence and quality of life. Most of the contributions that we depend upon cannot fully be substituted, and some contributions cannot be replaced at all. The natural processes secure the quality of air, water, and soil. They provide carbon capture, diversity, and pollination.

Our food production, included production for feeding livestock, has wide-reaching consequences for ecosystems, quality of air and water, climate, and quality of the soil. This is also the case for growing crops to get fibre and bioenergy.

During the last 50 years most relevant indicators that should be watched closely regarding agriculture, fisheries, and use of materials are significantly and rapidly worsened.

Nature all over the globe is significantly changed by human activity. Approximately 75% of land area is significantly changed. For the oceans we correspondingly have approximately 60%. Approximately 85% of wetlands has disappeared. Tropical forests have had a massive deforestation. In colder regions we get more and more monocultures. The number of insects is generally decreasing.

Human activity is threatening many species with extermination. This is happening fast with an accelerating trend. The trend is universal, however, with differences between regions and countries.

A reduction in original natural species is observed. They are often outcompeted by intruding species. Diversity, also genetic diversity, is reduced. This poses a risk regarding global food security because of reduced resilience against diseases and climate change.

The report points out both direct and indirect drivers for these changes:

- Large scale changes in the use of land areas and oceans
- Direct exploitation of many organisms
- Climate change
- Pollution
- Patterns of production and consumption
- Demographic changes

The report underlines that different goals that have been set, cannot be reached with the current trends continuing. This is the case both short-term and long-term. The report calls for very comprehensive, fast, and coordinated measures. Only species diversity is handled by media. This is also mostly lost in the stream of news. The total challenge is not taken seriously by authorities, media, or the man in the street.

*

FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) also works with climate and biological diversity.

Agriculture is important regarding climate and use of areas. Production of food touches most environmental issues. We need more knowledge, although we already have a lot of knowledge necessary for effective measures in food production, distribution, consumption, waste, and recycling.

Intensive agricultural methods deplete the soil, demanding more land, more artificial fertilizers, and more toxins. More water and more energy are also needed.

*

The most important specific threats against the oceans are:

- Global heating
- Destruction of seabed
- Plastic pollution
- Overfishing
- Activities like exploration for oil, gas, and minerals
- Catching other species than planned and damage from fishing gear
- General pollution
- Acoustic pollution
- Light pollution
- Damaging rich fine-tuned ecosystems, like coral reefs.

Bottom trawling is destroying the seabed. This results in reduced ability to store climate gases. Protecting sea areas is not taken seriously.

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I also comment some other relevant issues.

Mutual interdependence between species is vital for development and conservation of diversity in nature.

Protecting areas means protecting whole ecosystems, with all natural components. Division of landscapes might for example lead to inbreeding.

We are totally dependent upon forests and oceans doing their “job” storing CO².

Measurements from satellites have often been used to evaluate how much of the earth that is relatively untouched by human activity. Taking a closer look reveals that much less than what we can see from satellites is in its original ecological balance.

The global consumption of meat is almost five times increased only since 1960. Meat production has a major contribution to climate gases and use of areas.

Modern forestry with clearing of relatively large areas results in large scale change in ecosystems. We get monocultures instead of more diverse old forests. It is also better for climate to let trees grow older.

Local pollution of air and water can be life threatening especially in large cities. The trends point in the wrong direction. We again see a result of our massive consumption.

We lack knowledge regarding many aspects of nature. This should trigger a precautionary principle. We for example know little the world’s microbe populations. We, however, know that microbes are very important in many ways, and that their total biomass is enormous. How environmental changes

effect the amount of, the mix, and the development of microbes is not well known. We, however, know that the soil is crucial for ecosystems and biological diversity. We also have knowledge of the adverse effects of agricultural chemicals on organisms living in the soil.

We also have relatively little knowledge about nanoparticles in ecosystems.

Light pollution might seem to be an odd issue. Human activity, however, has resulted in massive light pollution. The biological clocks of all organisms are governed by light. We know too little about the general influence of light pollution on nature in general, and on vulnerable species and environments in particular. Coral reefs are examples of important ecosystems that are fine-tuned regarding environmental conditions like heat and light.

A similar issue is sound pollution. Sound can travel far in the oceans. We know that sound is important for whales, fishes, and other sea animals. They use sound for navigation, communication, collecting food, and avoid being eaten. Marine traffic and seismic activity in searching for oil, gas and minerals can seriously disturb the behaviour of sea animals. The degree of human activity creating noise in the oceans is massive.

Decimation of insects, both the number of species and the number of individuals has been observed. The insects are crucial for pollination and handling of waste and for ecosystems in general. The current trend is related to decreasing living areas. Areas that are built on, modern forestry, monocultures in growing crops, and changed landscapes, strongly influence the living conditions for insects. Our destruction of nature reduces the options for the free services provided by nature, such as photosynthesis and pollination.

The examples above show us how complex nature is, and where our knowledge really stops. Our massive impact first of all leads to reduced diversity.

A precautionary principle means that we do not make interventions in nature unless based on sound knowledge. The normal situation is starting with interventions without too many considerations regarding consequences. If we are lucky, we later understand what went wrong. It may then often be too late.

Commissioned research aiming at more effective usurpation of nature is often given higher priority than basic research that gives us a better understanding of mechanisms for avoiding or preventing harmful effects.

We need science, and bureaucracy, that give us a better overview of the consequences for nature caused by different types of human activity. We need this both as a basis for policy making and for individual choices. Present overviews are often too random and difficult to compare. A better methodology considering total lifecycle effects is needed. An electric vehicle must for example be produced, including, raw materials, water, and energy. Big cars need more input efforts than small cars. The car is transported to the user. When used, it consumes energy. The energy must be produced, even if it is renewable. The car, when used, produces airborne particles. It generates a need for roads and parking lots. At some point of time, it is taken out of use. Batteries and other parts of the car must be handled in the end. All this means that the use of electric cars as a proposed global environmental measure has many consequences to be considered. The effects of this measure are altogether limited. Reduction of the number of cars, and less use of cars, will be considerably more effectful.

The priority regarding green energy and green transportation implies a strong need for a series of scarce elements. The production of lots of electronic consumer products implies another strong need

for such elements. Taken together the need is massive, and it will probably only increase. Mining, including severe environmental consequences, to a high degree so far is situated in China. It will spread to many other countries. Mining at seabed is also by many countries and enterprises seen as large and promising prospects.

Seabed mining is in an early stage making it possible still to regulate it in a proper way. First, we must know more about the consequences broadly seen, including noise pollution. Most important is to avoid a race among all countries with seabed rights, according to the Law of the Sea Convention, to start exploiting the seabed. We should establish a global regime, seeing this as a common resource, strongly limit activity according to knowledge and the precautionary principle, and making common priorities.

Industrial countries are responsible for most releases of climate gases and the most severe and massive interventions in nature. Most of these countries, however, will initially be affected the least from direct consequences of global heating. The rich industrial countries have challenges reducing their total consumption and patterns of consumption to a level that is long-term sustainable.

The rich industrialized countries should of course put their own climate accounting in balance, but they should at the same time contribute to giving developing countries another model of development than their own model of development so far. The model of development in rich industrialized countries has been synonymous to “development” in general. Through international organs like IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank this “development” has almost been forced upon them as a prerequisite for getting loans. I will discuss development models as part of the discussion of our understanding of the economy later.

Developing countries, as a group of countries, not very well specified, also have a set of environmental challenges, even though their emissions of climate gases are far less than those of the industrialized countries. With their enormous populations a trend of consumption like that in industrialized countries will have massive consequences for climate and nature in general.

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Some specific challenges for many developing countries:

- Fresh water is in short supply in very many developing countries. Fresh water is needed for direct use in households, to produce food, and to produce other essential goods. Forests and wetlands are important for water balance. They are, however, threatened by other human needs. Deforestation happens partly from local fuel needs.
- Global heating threatens the availability of fresh water.
- Agriculture and industry use fresh water. Together with sewage they contribute to water pollution.
- Water pollution leads to diseases.
- Rich industrial countries occupy and deplete large areas of land from their own perspectives.
- Rapid urbanization- In 2010 more than half the global population were living in cities. A major part of this urbanization happens in developing countries. This might easily lead to emissions of climate gases, depletion of fertile land and freshwater resources, and reduction of species diversity.

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We might ask if nature is protected by law. Laws mainly cover problems where the parties are easily defined. Most environmental problems are not of such a kind. To evaluate the facts might also be difficult. The same is the case for weighing different interests against each other. What interests should be considered at all. Is it a matter of here and now considerations or should future generations be considered? Problems involving species diversity and climate change in the broad sense do not easily fit in.

The Natural Diversity Act in Norway, to take an example, consists of high-level basic rules, but with exceptions. Decisions about making exceptions is left to government and administration, often local administration. When looking at practical cases, narrow, short-term- and economic interest often win. The overall effects are not caught up well. It seems like nature in principle is a good thing to have, but it's case can quite easily be overridden when meeting the economic "reality".

In Norway individuals and environmental organization have sued the Norwegian Government at the International Court for Human Rights because of the exploration for oil and gas in arctic waters. Here, concrete threats against individuals will be a necessary basis for the Court's considerations, given the current laws.

There are several examples of different court cases from environmental organizations against national authorities and multinational companies because of their contribution to global heating. The results differ. The scope of such lawsuits and court cases seems to be increasing. Still, we might ask if the courts after all are the most relevant institutions to address? A better juridical framework is nonetheless important. It would in fact make sense to consider large scale businesses, like the giants of fossil energy production, resulting in massive harmful effects for very many people, often against better knowledge, as being guilty of doing crime against humanity. Most of the largest actors behind the crisis of climate and destruction of nature would clearly be hit by such a rule of law.

We must act now. Insurance companies see natural damage compensations not as something they must be prepared for in the future, but as a reality here and now.

The common technology attitude and technology optimism forget one crucial aspect. That is our total use of nature and areas. Green energy is, seen isolated, a good thing. Going for green energy, however, must be seen in a context including energy saving and use of areas. The general decrease of material consumption is crucial. We cannot grow or buy us out of the total challenges related to our relationship with nature.

The international energy agency (IEA) and the international organization for renewable energy (IRENA) have published a joint report with a clear message: The most important aspect regarding energy is not more energy. It is improving energy efficiency.

If we put on the glasses of an economist, it is broad consensus that the costs of doing nothing now will be far higher than the costs of necessary measures even though such measures will have a high cost. We also must act quickly.

The reduction of emissions from climate gases means a relatively clear challenge calling for technological and economic measures. To take care of biodiversity and ecosystems means more diverse attitudes involving specific and local competence.

We cannot go on with measures for each nation isolated. We must consider global consequences and measures according to that level. Goals and plans with too narrow perspectives, mainly procrastinating problems, must be abandoned and substituted by better approaches.

We need an earth giving living conditions for humanity and the other species that share it with us for a long-term future.

Humans are part of nature. We must acknowledge that fact. We must face the existential challenge. This means that we must be honest regarding the solid knowledge available without trying to embezzle facts we don't like challenging our ways of life. This must influence our way of thinking and acting in general.

Important issues to be taken to a final holistic discussion:

- We must get a sufficiently clear understanding on all global levels of the existential cruciality of global heating, use of areas, and material consumption.
- We must suggest principles and measures based on sound knowledge, that are effective and understandable. Principles and measures must have global focus.
- We must establish political lighthouse measures based on the principles and measures above.
- We must suggest individual measures based on the measures suggested above. These measures must trigger good consumer behaviour, but also consumer power and political opportunities.

Humanity's massive consumption, resulting in global heating and comprehensive destruction of nature, means that we must rethink our relationship with nature.

This also means that we must have a closer look at our values in general. Our values are the basis for how we think and act in all aspects of life and in all areas of society.

I consider issues that are essential for discussing humanity and ethics – today - and in the long run, in a global world.

Key issues:

- Relationship between nature and humanity
- Common human characteristics
- What does it mean to be human?
- The societal glue
- Human rights
- Democracy or autocracy
- A simple set of (universal?) values

The starting point for discussing *the relationship between nature and humanity* is an existential crisis for nature and for humanity, not only something that is often thought of as a nature-romantic or personal matter. This means that we must think more fundamentally about this relationship.

We observe many different *common human characteristics* that influence human life. It is important to be conscious about the existence of the most important ones. We should use this awareness to avoid opening and maintaining opportunities for systematic manipulation of people.

We, as humans, don't understand everything. We have, however, managed to obtain almost godlike powers. We have developed technology that make it possible to influence evolution as such, and in the end strongly influence *what it means to be human*. We become God in the sense that further development is much our own choice, however, with our, in many ways, limited understanding. We anyway have nothing left to hide behind. We can manage to risk what is fundamentally human, making ourselves irrelevant.

What makes a society function to the good of the many? What is *the societal glue* made of? What is the basis for confidence, cooperation, development, community, and stability? These are complex questions, globally seen, but some fundamental common denominators might be found.

United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights is often used as a striking argument when convenient. We must have a closer look. What does the declaration basically say, and how relevant is it for the world today.

What we can and should understand by *democracy* is not self-evident. The practical implementation of democracy is, and has always been, difficult. Some aspects of the trends that we see, regarding what we know as democracy in the present western world, call for worry. At the same time there are even more basic trends in society making it urgent to consider how we might have real democracy in new ways and on new levels in the future.

Autocracy has long historical roots and is in different shapes widely spread also in the world of today. I will discuss some common denominators for autocratic societies.

I try to pull together the essentials from the above areas to formulate *a simple set of (universal?) values* for the global society. This is meant as a skeleton or a starting point for further process and work.

The relationship between nature and humanity – *Humans are an integral part of nature*

The present “story” regards nature only as raw material ready to be exploited.

Through history humans often have tried to combat, usurp, or improve nature. In modern western world times, we have had sort of a secular religion aiming for controlling and exploiting nature by means of science and technology. This is expressed in terms of economics presenting specific goals for this activity.

We begin to understand that there are some limits for how far we can exploit nature without destroying it. We still try to push these limits from our own narrow human perspective. Our knowledge is, however, clearly deficient leaving nature at risk. There are also lots of examples of attempts to solve self-produced problems related to our use of nature, that results in unexpected new problems.

Our environmental footprint is far too large because of our consumption and our use of areas. This calls for a fundamental discussion of ethics and human values related to nature. The individual freedom and right to choose whatever item to consume and whatever amount of it, cannot all the time override any other consideration. Today this is, however, the case in rich industrialized countries and for other elites.

Most religions, and Christianity in particular, provides strong forces against new ways of seeing the relationship between nature and humanity.

Many philosophers have tried to justify the value of nature, and prescribe how we consequently should relate to nature, by philosophical arguments. Philosophers, however, all the time consider ethics from the point of view of the individual.

Some well-known eco-centric (the nature in the centre) approaches are, opposed to anthropocentric (humans in the centre) approaches:

- The Gaia-theory considering the earth as a living organism consisting of complex interactive eco-systems
- The Earth Manifesto
- Deep Ecology. Arne Næss is known as one of the most important persons behind the Deep Ecology consisting of 8 basic principles. One of the principles prioritize quality of life instead of high material standards of living.

Many people see the greatness of nature in a similar way as most indigenous people. Nature is seen as deeper and greater than us humans, and we are an integral part of it. This has been an inspiration to many people.

Our relationship with nature, however, is not only idyllic and harmonic. Humans have a real need for protection against predators and forces of nature. We, however, need mutual respect and recognition of the fact that nature not only exists for the benefit of humans. This means that

relatively short-term human needs not always can and should have the highest priority even with a human lens.

I do not make a choice among these approaches to individual ethics. They are, however, interesting, and they might inspire many people. It has proven difficult to turn these approaches into practical action at a larger scale.

Individual attitudes and actions will always be important. We, however, need an additional approach.

We should consider what I call collective ethics. In the case of existential threats to a group, we might say that the group, and all its members, have a common responsibility for handling the threat. This was self-evident for people in the small groups of hunters and gatherers long time ago. This must, however, now be the case even if the group is as large as humanity as such.

With the climate crisis humanity has for the first time been in a situation where it is clear beyond any doubt that what we do as individuals and societies has wide-reaching consequences for the lives and the basis for life for massive numbers of people far away in space and time.

What to do must be based on the best knowledge available about the consequences of actions and measures. This means that obtaining more sound knowledge about consequences also becomes an ethical issue. We should seek knowledge supporting preservation not so much knowledge useful for exploitation. That someone must take the first steps towards change on different levels also becomes an ethical issue. General participation from everyone is absolutely an ethical issue.

All consequences resulting from individual choices are difficult to overlook. For measures at the level of society it is crucial and sometimes also easier to consider consequences. Collective ethics is a kind of consequence ethics.

The framework when considering consequences is that we must have a world supporting living conditions for humans and all other species that we still share it with in a long-term perspective. Humans are an integral part of nature.

To consider consequences sometimes can be done at a high-level basis and be relatively manageable. Often, however, it is more difficult. We might not have the adequate knowledge, or the case might be complex. We, however, must try to evaluate consequences as good and systematic as possible. Obtaining more sound knowledge is an important measure.

Collective consequence ethics also implies that we - as a society, also meaning global society - in common must share the costs involved for giving nature and humanity long-term living conditions. We cannot be governed by individual freedom to consume whatever is desired, no matter consequences.

Laws and legal practice are based on the individual. Sometimes a group is acting ethically unsustainable. Individuals have different roles in this action. More exploration and consideration regarding collective ethics more generally would be worthwhile.

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Animal welfare must be discussed and justified otherwise. We are an integral part of nature, in a more absolute way than we often think, and this should almost automatically mean that we should have more respect and consideration for our fellow creatures and nature altogether.

Having close contact with animals means that it is difficult not to see that they are valuable fellow creatures with a rich scale of emotions and reactions. This is the case both for pets, livestock, or wild

animals in care and play. Most people seldom see or consider the livestock used for food production. They have no awareness regarding where the food comes from. Such livestock over time many places has obtained better living conditions. Economic considerations, however, usually trumps animal's welfare. Animals have their own basic needs that only to a limited degree are considered.

Norwegian law, as an example, is based on the principle that animals have their own value that is independent of their usefulness for humans. Practical priorities tell another story.

Common human characteristics – *We must avoid speculative and systematic manipulation*

We should have a look at common human characteristics. What characteristics are important for how we behave as individuals and as humans in society? We cannot hope for a simple and complete answer. It is, however, possible to point out several characteristics that we should be conscious about. This might help us to understand better what is going on around us today, and also future trends that might be expected. Some characteristics are easily seen as human "weaknesses" because they can quite easily be used for conscious, systematic and cynical manipulation.

Humans may "think fast (or short)" or "think slow (or long)" as described and discussed by Daniel Kahneman in "Thinking, Fast and Slow". "Thinking fast" is based on impulses and short-termism. This is an effective way of thinking and acting in many situations when short-term survival is the critical question. "Thinking fast", however, is used as the basis for advertising and eventually for propaganda. "Thinking slow" means making more effort in handling a challenge that basically does not require immediate action. This is basis for a scientific approach with critical thinking and verifiability. We often almost automatically choose to "think short" when we instead should "think long". Kahneman's discussions also indicate that people because of these mechanisms of thinking and reacting often need help, such as regulations in society, in many circumstances to act wisely.

Related to "thinking fast" is that we easily observe and hang on to superficial characteristics of persons and issues. It is far more difficult to observe more basic and structural characteristics. This means that politicians and celebrities become part of a common exiting and entertaining media world where the difficult questions never become asked.

Humans are social creatures seeking identity and affiliation. Being part of a group is important. This may lead to thinking "we" against "the others". This is an important and potentially dangerous characteristic. In many circumstances this human characteristic can be used in a cynical way. It might often be useful to point to an external enemy.

Identity has traditionally been coupled with family, clan, tribe, or religion. Humans also often identify with nationality, social class, job, or subject area.

From new technology and recent societal development some new and interesting identities have emerged. Social media, with echo chambers, result in identity coupled to groups having the same views regarding many issues. International educational options and tourism have resulted in identities coupled to ways of living often considered as modern or trendy. These new identities are not limited by geography.

Retaliation is a very strong norm in human relations. If anybody has done you a favour or has given you a gift, you are in debt to this person. This can be used by people controlling money or other

resources to create networks. Loyalty and secrecy are important mechanisms in such networks. Organized crime like the Mafia are examples of such networks based on retaliation. Recently it has also become evident that mechanisms of retaliation play an important role in informal global governance. Cultures for corruption also means elements of retaliation.

Addiction to drugs and the resulting bad effects both individually and socially are well known. Addiction, however, is a more general human characteristic. We also have addiction to social media, unhealthy food and tobacco. Modern advertising tries to cynically exploit the vulnerabilities involved. There has been work done to combat and regulate the tobacco industry. The other elements here are discussed later in a relevant context.

Some other mental mechanisms are also worthwhile to keep in mind:

- We often shape our opinion from individual cases without evaluating how representative they really may be
- Humans don't like risk. We often choose status quo, even if other options may be more favourable.
- We often base our opinions on close experiences – “What we see with our own eyes”
- We wait to see what other people do
- Expectations and comparisons with others are even more important than real status and real needs

This means that we often see the world through myopic glasses and with eye patches.

Man may often be egoistic, but also often altruistic. Man is not exclusively a simple egoistic creature in accordance with what economic theory presupposes. Direct and simple egoistic activity also often is not a good strategy for achieving your goals anyway.

We observe that human characteristics and patterns of action are multifaceted. My list, however, doesn't give the whole picture.

We probably have the same basic characteristics as in the stone age. Our surroundings and our interaction with our surroundings, however, is quite different now. Consequences might also be of another order of magnitude.

How human characteristics materialize, and what consequences they result in, is closely related to societal organization and the inherent options for establishing good relations between people.

The most important lesson to learn from this short review is to avoid organization, structures and solutions cynically trying to manipulate people and society, by exploiting these human characteristics. There are many relevant and important issues to consider when discussing democracy, media, economy, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and global governance.

What is meant by being human? – What is important and meaningful in our lives?

Some people imagine that humans (some of them at least) because of technological development are heading for immortality, eternal happiness, and God-like abilities.

We should instead rather start to remember how small we really are in cosmos. Cosmos hardly exists just to serve us. This means that we should really be humble.

We thus live in between wide extremes regarding how we should consider our existential situation. The former Secretary General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld, has characterized the human situation as “specks of dust that glitters”.

Religion used to be important in most people’s lives.

One relevant perspective is that religion, basically, might be used as a tool for controlling people, and that this often is the case. It is important for rulers in power that humans know their roles so that they don’t rebel and that the necessary obedience is internalized.

Another relevant perspective, more comforting for the individual, is that religion might give meaning to life, and comfort, especially in situations that are difficult to grasp with rationality. Some existential basic situations are loneliness, suffering, seeking for meaning in life, horror and uncertainty about death, as well as uncertainty in difficult personal choices in life. These are challenges that we always will struggle with, no matter religion or not. We are not as individuals and groups in every respect quite well prepared to let God’s old role disappear completely. Science and technology do not have the answers to these basic human challenges. We might, however, also ask if religion really has satisfactory answers after all. Maybe religion only satisfies a need to let go our own responsibilities for our own destiny in an overwhelming, difficult and threatening world. This prepares the ground for manipulation from seekers of power. Intellectually it is very difficult to imagine that “God” is supporting every religion and every nation claiming that this is the case. If anything “God” might be supporting nature, including humanity as such.

We, however, have managed to control the world around us to a surprisingly high degree. We have developed knowledge and technologies making us capable of even controlling evolution itself. Furthermore, we have collected data concerning human activity, both at the individual level and at the societal level, that challenge our own personal understanding of ourselves. In some perspectives we really have achieved God-like abilities, without being prepared for how to use them, and what consequences the use of our abilities might lead to.

It is, however, anyway up to us. We must take the responsibility. We have nothing left to hide behind, like we used to hide behind religion.

A lot of questions emerge:

- Should we try to make humans ever better in the sense of spare parts and cooperation between the human body and technology?
- Will focus for medicine change from healing sick people to upgrading healthy people?
- Should we really make efforts to control evolution towards a new kind of human heading for eternal life?
- Should we consciously or more indirectly remove different kinds of individuals or groups that do not fit certain criteria?
- Do we want to develop a kind of superhuman? Can we end up with a genetic upper class?
- Do we really want eternal happiness in a world without risk and challenges? Do we want “Brave new world” as described by Aldous Huxley?
- What about diversity if we can prolong life heading for eternal life?
- What about the value of diversity at all?

- Who and what should govern development? Money and profit? Scientific or technological ambitions? Political power?

The state of happiness in Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" means that the individual is frozen in a certain state. There will be no further human development in a way that normally happens when there are new experiences, resistance, and suffering involved.

It is interesting, as well as frightening, to observe what some people having too much money want to use the money for, besides flashy consumption.

- Try to use new technological prospects to prolong their own individual lives or maybe getting closer to a personal comprehension of what a superhuman should look like.
- Be frozen down by death with a hope of being revived when biotechnology offers new options.
- Escape current global challenges by building a city in space or a colony on Mars.

Do we have any adequate answers to very basic questions like – What is the meaning of life? What does make life worthwhile? If we, in fact, were able to obtain a much longer, even eternal life – how should we use it?

Many people would answer something like this to the question "What makes life worthwhile?":

- Somebody loves me.
- I mean something to other humans.

Others mean that what really motivate people is social position, a safe life for family and local society, respect and accept from others, and the possibility for contributing positively to society.

These answers are very far away from extreme individualism and "superhumans". Even material wealth often ends up a bit away from the top of the list of most people's basic priorities

We might ask how free our "free will" really is. We are heavily dependent upon biochemical processes that we also know can be manipulated. Our choices and preferences are constantly monitored in the digital world. The options for systematic surveillance and massive exploitation of human weaknesses are obvious. Biometrical parameters like face recognition, fingerprints, retina and iris, body language, and voice recognition, are ever more frequently and automatically used.

Big Tech is mapping our lives in ever more contexts and in ever more detail. This gives them, and authorities, massive options for manipulating our actions and our view of the world at large. We are hardly conscious about this happening gradually. We might come close to a kind of insect society governed by a, to some degree, random elite that are themselves governed by random personal driving forces. Artificial intelligence (AI) is an important tool in the toolbox for doing this efficiently. Different consequences will be discussed in relation to democracy, information, economy, and global governance.

We don't know where the final demarcation lines really are. We still must try to protect what we after all consider our free will. We must never freely let it go. What is the closest we get to free will is perhaps to try to choose "thinking slow" much more often.

What if man as such, with our perspectives and feelings, become irrelevant because of AI? Other unknown and uncontrollable forces might lead the world in their direction, based on totally different perspectives.

We must grasp these challenges. The process might be more important than the goals. We must all the time try to make good choices. We should be aware of structural measures to avoid manipulation.

It is obviously a superpower competition regarding technology. Scientific fields may be both exciting and prestigious. Some may also be motivated by the options for profit. Fields being ethically dubious are easily prioritized. A broad societal process concerning the ethical challenges to technological development is necessary.

We proceed this discussion after having explored technological development in general closer.

The societal glue – Human relations and local societies are fundamental building blocs

Different societies might consider the consequences of basic human characteristics differently. We can consider a scale going from strong priority on the individual in many societies to priority on relations between people, family and clan, and community matters in general in others. These very different priorities, however, are not really mutually exclusive. Close relations, trust, cooperation and community are after all important common denominators. Such basic characteristics and needs are also very important for all individuals. We must try to build bridges supporting mutual understanding.

Family, in any configuration, is next level after the individual, meaning clear mutual responsibilities. In many societies and cultures these responsibilities are far-reaching and often combined with religious and cultural norms often suppressing individuals and specific groups. In the western world the priority is on the individual both regarding freedom, wealth and formal rights. Here families on the other hand often struggle to have a sufficiently sound basis for functioning well. This again has consequences for many individuals. Many people are marginalized, and they strongly feel so.

Next level is local society. Thriving and diverse local societies are important in both ends of the individual/community scale both for supporting positive and reducing negative effects of the extremes. We will discuss economy later, but it is important to balance economic mechanisms to avoid the negative effects of centralization harming local society. Well-functioning local societies are basic elements in the glue of society. Loneliness and the lack of a feeling of belonging is a very unhealthy.

The basis for a sound community, is created by a combination of common affiliation to a group, mutual commitments inside the group, and a common knowledge of the functioning of the mutual commitments. The belonging to a group must not necessarily be based on an external enemy.

There are examples and documentation clearly showing rapidly growing inequality, both economic and social inequality, in many western countries. This influences individuals, families and local societies, resulting in growing unrest and instability.

It is essential that close relations, and local societies, are given options to thrive, and that they are strengthened. Society should make it possible for people to succeed in their personal lives instead of making them disabled social clients.

Society must facilitate basic options like the possibility of having a home based on safe and stable conditions. Society must give families and individuals that struggle the help needed to help themselves. Measures like unconditional basic income (this will be discussed later) can make it easier to shape a meaningful life by own efforts. Preventive measures regarding kindergarten, schools and opportunities for youth in general are important.

There is a trend towards that people having succeeded economically and educationally, build their identity based on education, job, and economy. They identify with the group having a similar background, feeling like a kind of global citizen. They feel closer to others having a similar background and status than their own local community. They are, however, also needed in their local society. Without their participation local communities get less diverse. They might even come close to falling apart.

Developing and supporting viable and thriving local communities must have priority. This means measures on different levels and areas of society. Societies need confidence. Confidence must be built over time with targeted effort. What measures that are needed to strengthen the societal glue will be further discussed when discussing economy and work.

Massive, uncritical use of digital services from large companies outside of local communities might often be a threat to the optimal functioning of local societies.

Human rights – Balancing focus on individual rights and focus on structural violence

During the last centuries there has been some great intellectual leaps regarding how we consider humanity, society, and basic societal organizational principles. I will consider these main areas:

- The age of enlightenment with fundamental thoughts, declarations, and constitutions.
- The system of the United Nations (UN). It is based on western or American values but has at least nominally achieved broader international acceptance.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a fundamental basis for the UN-system. The fact that it has been possible to adopt it, is important, even though there is a lack of deeper common understanding and compliance. It is important to highlight it again, to secure consciousness regarding what it is really saying, and how it should be used.

The declaration contains the following points keyword-wise:

- Article 1 Human dignity
- Article 2 Rights are for everybody
- Article 3 The Right to life, freedom
- Article 4 Against slavery
- Article 5 Against torture
- Article 6 Legal rights

- Article 7 Equality before the law
- Article 8 Legal assistance
- Article 9 Against arbitrary detention
- Article 10 Independent court
- Article 11 Innocent until the opposite is proven
- Article 12 Privacy
- Article 13 Freedom to move
- Article 14 Asylum
- Article 15 Citizenship
- Article 16 Family
- Article 17 Property rights
- Article 18 Freedom of religion
- Article 19 Freedom of speech
- Article 20 Right to organize
- Article 21 Right to political activity
- Article 22 Social and economic security
- Article 23 Work
- Article 24 Vacation and time off
- Article 25 Standards of living
- Article 26 Education
- Article 27 Culture and intellectual rights
- Article 28 Social and international order
- Article 29 Obligations
- Article 30 Rights cannot be removed

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a political, not a legal, document. It is, however, the basis for conventions following the declaration. The conventions are legal documents in specific sub-areas.

Important conventions:

- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (ILO – International Labour Organization)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Convention against torture
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

In addition, there also are regional conventions. The conventions are more detailed and precise than the Universal Declaration of Human Rights itself. They are legally binding with defined supervision schemes. Far from every country, however, has joined most of the conventions. This is also the case for the great powers.

The Declaration of Human rights give the individual rights in relation to the nation-state. Nation-states on the other hand have corresponding obligations.

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In the global world of today there are, however, several other important actors than the nation-state. Many nation-states are weak, and many areas in practice fall outside the reach of the nation-state. A weak nation-state leaves a vacuum of power that is easily filled by other actors like religiously based actors, clans, criminal networks besides multinational companies and financial institutions.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is wide-reaching. It is covering many important aspects of human life. It represents a totality.

There are, however, several important aspects regarding today's challenges that are not covered:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not handle man's relationship to nature.
- The declaration does not handle commercial mass collection and exploitation of data about the lives and actions of individuals.
- The declaration does not handle massive mass surveillance from authorities.
- The declaration does not handle the development regarding global governance and the new roles of multinational companies and financial institutions.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is meant to be valid for everybody. The climate crisis for example illustrates that the understanding and practical use of the declaration from many people easily is at the expense of the possibilities of others to get their obviously most basic rights taken care of.

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Very often somebody has a strong opinion regarding human rights without seeing the whole picture. Not a single country is fulfilling the total declaration. The declaration is meant to represent a totality. People cannot highlight what is most convenient, suppressing other aspects.

The neo-liberal interpretation means a unilateral highlighting of specific elements such as:

- Individual freedom
- The right to property
- Religious rights
- The freedom of speech
- Democracy

These aspects are central ones, but the practical interpretation of these issues is not obvious. This neo-liberal interpretation does not consider the totality and the diversity of the declaration. The clear developmental and welfare aspects for very many people are obviously forgotten. The individual is always part of a community.

Diversity is meaningful at several levels. It is also meaningful to accept that individuals are different and that different sexual orientations are natural.

Some violations of human rights, those that are called crimes against humanity, is graver than most other violations. Comprehensive structural violations, that we can call structural violence, however,

ruin the welfare, thrive, and even whole lives for large groups of people. Structural violence does not get proper attention.

Human rights have been criticised for being a western idea forced upon the rest of the world through political, cultural, economic, and even military measures. Today it becomes obvious that the interpretation and the anchoring of the declaration of human rights need broad renewal. Many countries do not want intervention in what they see as internal matters. This means a serious curtailment for universal human rights to be operable.

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By looking at the situation regarding human rights in some important countries, we get an impression of where the shoe presses.

The situation in the United States of America (the US) regarding human rights:

The US has so far been a relatively well based country as for rule of law. Equality for the law in practice might, however, be questioned. The freedom of speech is basically held high, even if the framework around free media, and how the media-reality is functioning can be severely criticized.

The Guantanamo base and the handling of supposed to be terrorists, and documented mass surveillance of the whole population, are clearcut violations of basic human rights.

The US has a long and comprehensive history of very severe violations of human rights in many foreign countries, especially in Latin America.

Internally there are comprehensive structural violations of human rights including a weak social safety net, racial discrimination, strong opposition to unions and workers' rights, high levels of social violence, and death penalty, being the most obvious problem areas. These are structural problems involving large population groups.

There also exist a problematic coupling between private economic actors and public policy. The jails (statistically with far the highest percentage in the world of prisoners compared to the total population, mostly minorities) are run according to corporate economic principles. Rental of workforce is for example used. We may draw a parallel to a form of slavery.

The situation in China regarding human rights:

China misses democracy (according to common definitions), freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. The rule of law is weakly practised. The rights of minorities are massively violated. Most attention lately has been paid to the oppression of the Uigur population. Death penalty is used after relatively summary trials. China has managed to reduce extreme poverty drastically in a short period of time. There is, however, a tendency to a weakening of welfare arrangements. An aggressive form of capitalism is at the same time emerging rapidly. China is one of the countries in the world with the highest economic differences within the population. There is massive surveillance of the population.

The situation in Russia regarding human rights:

Russia lacks freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. Surveillance and control of access to information is tight. Russia practices aggressive capitalism and is a very weak nation-state regarding rule of law. A series of heavy-handed measures are used against persons and groups that might challenge the state power. Armed conflicts and violations are happening several places, for example in Chechnya. Russia has a very skewed distribution of political and economic power.

The situation in India regarding human rights:

India has many different severely underprivileged groups that are neglected and marginalized. A split and rule policy is used against them. Media, civil society, political opposition, and organisations working for human rights have gradually got strongly reduced room for functioning. In Kashmir there is a constant state of emergency. India is one of the countries in the world with the highest economic differences within the population.

During the years that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has existed a lot of very grave violations have occurred. This is happening all the time almost all over the world. Even small nations with high welfare and peaceful surroundings are far from being perfect regarding living up to the standards of the declaration.

It is easily seen that almost all actors prioritize economy and security policy before caring for human rights.

Multinational companies today are large and important actors that at best are at the borders of good handling of human rights in most parts of the world. They cannot be held directly accountable for not acting according to human rights. Accountability is only indirectly enforced through their mother country. The relationship between multinational companies and mother countries is often unclear. This means that measures against a multinational company through its mother country in practice is difficult.

The United Nations have prepared recommendations for business, and some business actors have also prepared internal recommendations regarding human rights (Corporate Social Responsibility). The basic goals still are the earning of money for the company, not the needs of the society, where they operate.

Large well-known companies, directly seen by customers, try to prepare and keep an image of responsibility. But what about less visible companies and lots of subcontractors?

Important instances for the following up of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Development Programme and transnational organizations like OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development).

To achieve realization and respect for human rights, it is often necessary to apply constant pressure on authorities. Amnesty International is one of the most important out of several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) contributing.

The United Nations have prepared a specific declaration meant for motivated individuals working for human rights. The purpose of the declaration is to make them safe against violations from authorities, but also from other individuals or groups. Another purpose is to open for giving

economic, technical, and professional support from other countries and organizations. Work supporting recognized human rights should not be seen as an undermining or revolutionary activity. This is a very important declaration even if it so far has support from very few nations.

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When looking at the declaration from a critical point of view, we see that some important perspectives are missing and that different rights might be contradictory to each other. Wide options for interpretations may also be found. I will highlight important rights and point out problematic aspects.

The relationship between nature and humanity is not a part of the declaration. Global heating and massive destruction of nature were not at the agenda when the declaration was prepared and decided.

Economic rules of the game in today's global world in practice might undermine many of the rights in the declaration. We will later have a critical discussion of these economic rules of the game.

Religious freedom easily comes in conflict with other rights. In the internal life of religious communities, a human right like gender equality is often circumvented. How family is interpreted makes it easier to discriminate homosexual persons or transsexuals. Religion is often used directly to legitimate and justify use of power and oppression contrary to the intentions of the declaration.

Rule of law is fundamental. This is closely connected to the organization of power and authority in a society.

Freedom of speech is fundamental in relation to truth, personal development, and democracy. What channels and mechanisms that in practice are available for using freedom of speech is also important. Freedom of speech according to the declaration is closely connected with the need for a good community conversation. Freedom of speech should be seen from society's point of view as well as from the individual point of view.

Property is unequally distributed. The right to property is not the right to get property if needed, but the right to keep what you already have. Is it important how property is acquired? The use of areas and resources in connection with necessary protection of nature is a new important issue when it comes to property rights.

It is difficult to define democracy precisely and shortly. The declaration presupposes that fair elections are organized. They must be secret regarding what an individual is voting for. Elections limit the lifetime of regimes. A regime must have sufficient support from people over time. The declaration points at the rights to participate in the administration of society. Administration, widely interpreted, should mirror the population.

The authorities must have a long-term policy aimed at full employment. Everyone should be able to earn enough for decent living. In the end it is about a rational and just organization of society. Rights regarding working life are often violated by many actors, among them the multinational companies.

There must be a basic education without cost for everybody. Further education might not be free of cost. The education must aim at full development of human character and understanding of its dignity. It must support the respect for human rights and the basic freedoms. The education must aim at preparing everybody for participating in a useful way in a free society, support understanding, tolerance, and friendship between all nations, all races, ethnic and religious groups, as well as

support the United Nations' work for peace. The education given in very many countries is heading in quite another direction – it supports narrow nationalism and intolerance.

It is a human right to be able to take part in the scientific development as for example new medicines and technology. This conflicts with the present rules of the game for intellectual property.

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Nobody, and no nation, can rightfully say that “WE” stand up fully supporting and protecting human rights. Violations of human rights must be pointed at, but that cannot be done unilaterally from someone sitting high on his horse. A better approach is to be humble and consider human rights as a common challenge meant for cooperation. This means that boycotts and bilateral punishment reactions often is not the best long-term reaction to violations of human rights. In any case it is important to be consequent. There are lots of examples of the use of double standards, also from actors claiming their heavy support for human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights do reflect the world at the time when it was established. It is important to hold on to the intention behind it and all the results that after all have been achieved. It might, however, be wise and necessary to consider a new approach adapted to the actual global world today. The declaration is about individual rights towards nation-states. This must be reconsidered in a world where the role and authority of the nation-state are weakened and unclear, and where new players and new challenges must be part of the game.

The time of enlightenment and the United Nations system have given us valuable results, but the world has changed, at the same time as institutions to some degrees have rotten to the core. We need to have a functioning global level governance. This must function in addition to and partly above nation-states.

I will come back to formulating values that might be a starting point for new perspectives regarding human rights in a global world. The intention of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, however, is still important.

It was in fact possible to establish the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It should be possible to agree on an updating, raising awareness, sharpening, and revitalization of it.

Democracy – Practical solutions for common challenges among equals

Democracy means an environment in which the freely expressed will of the people is exercised. How democracy has been understood and implemented shows a wide variation at different times and in different circumstances.

We might be tempted to look at democracy simply as a belief in the basic equality of all people, and that they are able to organize their common affairs in a way that reflect this equality. What practical ways that are most useful is not given by default. Democracy means the demanding job making this function.

We must all the time remember that society is for everybody. Democracy is not consistent with letting the goals of powerful groups, or other narrow considerations, override the basic equality.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 21, say this about democracy:

1. Everybody has the rights to participate in the rule of his country, either directly or indirectly through freely elected representatives.
2. Everybody has the same rights to obtain positions in the state administration.
3. The will of the people must be the basis for public authority. This will must be expressed through periodic, real elections with common equal voting rights and secret ballot or likewise.

This means that technical and practical apparatus for elections is important and necessary. Good civil institutions, societal processes in general, and trust at all levels of society, however, are closely connected to real democracy.

The default understanding of democracy is closely connected to how society and governance of society are managed today in some western countries. Democracy thus means a culture that has developed over time, including principles and processes providing reasonable stability, diversity, balancing of power, controls against corruption, and a common feeling of personal freedom and participation.

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The first example of democracy in practice is from antique Athens (we then omit the slavery also involved). It was a form of direct democracy. It seems difficult to fully implement it on a larger scale. Still there are many interesting learning points from this ancient democracy.

The Athenian democracy was the result of the obligations that ordinary citizens had for meeting and participating. The real secret was the preparations for meetings. Ordinary citizens were serving in the administration. They practiced continuous rotation in all positions, and everybody participated. Every citizen could become president. This role was for example held for 24 hours.

Citizens were placed all the way along the political process from conflict of interest to decisions and implementations. This gave a unique understanding of everything happening before, under, and after a political decision. Important steps in a democratic process are to be involved in the definition of goals and to see that goals are implemented in practical policy.

Isegora was freedom of speech inside a decision forum. That means a constructive contribution to a good decision.

Parrhesia meant the right to say whatever you want without being prosecuted.

Parrhesia is closest to our freedom of speech, seen as the right for criticism. We often are not so concerned with freedom of speech as a creative and constructive element.

Discussions were seen as a necessary element in getting to wise conclusions, not as stumbling blocks in the way of effective decisions and implementations.

The speakers in the parliament did not act as rivals through the belonging to specific political blocs. The formation of such blocs was not seen as desirable.

The democracy of Athens is a real treasure. I will get back to several concrete learning points regarding democracy in a modern global society.

Other more recent experiences and examples of democracy in practice makes the Athenian example seem almost unbelievable. Various degrees of manipulation of information, direct propaganda, hidden processes and unequal distribution of relevant knowledge now seems quite common.

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Who are the People in a democracy?

First the People were men having property. Later, the people have gradually, after long and heavy struggles, included every adult person. This understanding of the people including everybody, meaning that everybody can and should participate, has continuously been threatened. This is for example now the case in the US.

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Nations where people can choose between two or more political parties are often called liberal democracies.

The democracies of the US and Great Britain are often seen as models for democracy. They show a typical two-party system. Power can shift between two parties or blocs. It also means a shift in parts of the administration.

In many other western countries, there are more political parties often resulting in coalition governments. Decisions are more often consensus- or compromise- ones. This means that more of the political process might be visible in public.

These groups of typical democracies are representative ones, providing some insulation between those in position and the ignorant and potentially dangerous masses. We might observe some thinking in terms of elitism behind the veils.

Switzerland has several elements of direct democracy in their constitution. In the case of constitutional changes, and changes in laws, referendums can be arranged. The people themselves can also initiate referendums. Referendums are relatively frequently used at all levels of governance. There is a culture for direct democracy. The governance of Switzerland is also very decentralized. Still, it has proven to be very stable.

Protest movements, like Occupy Wall Street, have ideals of direct democracy. Occupy Wall Street has interesting experiences and ideas regarding democracy. They challenge some “truths” about democracy posing questions like these:

- Democracy in the US is the same as individual freedom, free market, and the right to be part of this market. The self-evident goal is material abundance. Does it mean to be against democracy to have another opinion?
- Why is challenging money in politics regarded as “revolutionary”?
- Language and words are important. Why is the range of words and concepts that can be used in public debate, and still be taken seriously, so limited?
- Is democracy all about “lobbying”, “fund raising” and other work for election campaigns?

In many countries there obviously is a facade of democracy hiding some kind of elitist or autocratic way of governance.

Some nations, like Singapore, or partly China, have a one-party system, apparently working effectively for the welfare of the population. At the same time, they have a strict rule, restraining

freedom of speech, including close regulation of media and internet. They, however, claim the representativeness of the one-party organization.

Meritocracy, the idea that it should be possible for everybody to reach the top of society no matter background, if you are clever enough and work hard enough, is not the same as democracy. The idea of meritocracy has a strong standing in the US. Giving everybody a safe platform for their lives is less important.

Liberal democracy can ideally be seen as balance of power and participation at the same time. It supports a fair legal system with equality before the law and protection of minority rights. Freedom of speech and free media are basically important. Ideally, people should not define themselves from ethnicity, religion, or caste. Conflicts are natural ingredients in the social process. Some of the best characteristics of the ideal liberal democracy is the ability for change and adaption.

Globalization, and media with global range, as well as western political pressure, have resulted in the spread of democratic ideas. The number of nations declaring themselves as democracies has increased considerably after about 1990. Lately, however, a decrease has occurred. Maybe the ideals of the consumer-society and the way of life in western industrial countries also are as important contributors to the spread of democracy in the name, as democratic ideas as such. Democracy in the name often is very far from democratic ideals.

In established democracies participation in elections and membership and participation in political parties show a decreasing trend. The same is the case for trust in politicians.

Today the vast majority of the world's population has an extremely weak voice regarding global governance. This is important regarding the legitimacy of global governance. This should be considered a serious situation for everybody concerned with the progress of democracy.

The functioning of democracy depends on the organization and development of society in the broad sense. Democracy is more than the formal framework of elections, political parties, and government. How societal institutions function in practical life, their robustness, and the public trust in them are at least as important as formalities.

It is interesting to see how the Universal Declaration of Human Rights regards the composition of administration as an important element of democracy. The administration should reflect the composition of the population.

Democracy depends upon public transparency, freedom of speech and a real community conversation. Freedom of press was an important step. Critical journalism is still seen as a threat from those having power in society.

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We often simply see a battle between liberal democracy, often seen as American democracy in an idealized version, and autocracy. It is probably more useful to consider a more nuanced scale from openness, trust and cooperation in one end, and closeness, distrust, polarization and use of power and manipulation in the other end.

Established democracies often tend to move in the direction of autocracy. Antidemocratic points of view are accepted as normal and valid. They gain hold in and get increased support in most western democracies.

It is also interesting to see how some democracies, in the name, has moved to become real autocracies. This happens through mechanisms where democratic societal institutions and democratic processes are used to gradually move and concentrate power towards political parties and persons. Those coming to power this way is dependent upon people seeing prospects of personal gain and power. Loyalty becomes important. Competence and suitability are not important. This becomes the case throughout the whole societal structure. Controlling media and internet is also vital.

Autocratic rule needs an ideological foundation where the truth content and validity are unimportant. Rewriting of history is often used for this purpose. It can also be combined with a conscious lie with the right elements for evoking emotions. The apparatus of loyal fellow runners then helps spreading, substantiate, and maintain this ideological foundation.

In the short run democracy in many western countries can survive simply by giving a choice between democracy, as we know it today, and autocracy. Democracy, however, also has several more basic challenges that must be met by rethinking and action.

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Democracy, in its present form, without basic changes, do not meet the challenges emerging from the present development of information technology and biotechnology. We are getting tools for the total manipulation and governing of people. We are affected by a massive exploitation and manipulation of what we can see as human points of weakness without sufficient counterforces. This means the possibility for living in a digital and technological dictatorship without really being consciously aware of it. How we handle these challenges are crucial for the future of democracy. The US now clearly seem to be heading in this direction.

There are also several other important challenges:

- Basic handling of the economy is moved out of politics. The economy sets decisive guidelines, before politics in its broad sense gets involved.
- The financial sector and multinational corporations are outside democratic control.
- Supranational institutions have a clear lack of democratic governance.
- The dependencies of different expertise and bureaucracy are increasing.
- Power is shifted from elected bodies towards legal bodies – both nationally and internationally

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Democracy in a modern western nation is to a high degree what we might call a “democracy of good times”. It is a matter of choosing between different benefits in our “prosperity bubble”. What do people like to hear? Established benefits must not anyway be touched. We are not asked to make difficult choices. They can in any case be postponed. Politicians do not risk preparing for real choices with openness, and correct, and balanced, information. Challenges demanding long-term thinking are especially demanding. Some difficult choices must, however, be made along the way. They can be camouflaged in different ways. We might ask if this kind of “democracy of good times” is able to function in times of crisis. The world looks very different from the perspective of individual wallets and stomachs compared to the perspective of the global common good. A related phenomenon is due to the relatively recent situation in many large rich countries namely that large groups of people in fact are poorer than their parents. Even if they after all are relatively well off, they experience a clear decline in prosperity. This provides fertile soil for rapidly growing populism.

We might ask if the population of to-day really are watching a political theatre where politicians and media are the actors. It is important to make the right appearance and provide appropriate entertainment. Providing the most relevant and correct information is less important.

Genuine democracy must be able to deal with long-term challenges. Democracy means that it must be a clear majority behind a long-term development of society with common understandable, well-founded, and well communicated goals. Such goals should be up to elections. Implementation should be the next step also up to elections. Goals must be updated.

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Democracy, with its challenges and opportunities, is relevant at all levels. Cities and regions are interesting levels where democracy might have the most fertile soil to function well.

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A simple model of thought might be useful. This model sees the modern society as layered:

- Formal governance
- Heavy, long-term less formal power-structures
- “The social machinery” – making everyday life function.
- Individuals/family

Examples of formal governance might be western democratic institutions or it might be the formal party apparatus in China.

Examples of heavy, long-term power-structures can be armed forces and weapon-industry, big technological companies (“Big Tech”), or coal-industry in the US. Oil- and gas-industry is powerful in many countries. Bureaucracy is also important in many countries. These power-structures may go their own way hardly disturbed by formal political elections or processes. Money in politics results in strengthening the influence of these power structures in many countries. The finance-sector and multinational companies are operating globally but are also very important power factors inside many countries.

This model of thought illustrates many of the limitations for real democracy in a modern society.

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We can define ideal preconditions for what might be considered “real democracy”:

- Everybody is equals,
- Everybody can and should participate in elections,
- Freedom of speech,
- Transparency,
- Respect for correct information that can be tested,
- Independent information-channels and media,
- Arenas and tools for real two-way communication throughout the political process,
- Democracy overrules other societal power structures,
- There are functioning mechanisms for balancing power and changing power,
- There are functioning mechanisms for securing minority rights.

Real democracy must deal with difficult prioritizations, also long-term ones.

To-day's democracies must be honest about where they are in relation to these criteria. "Democracy" must not be used as breaker bar for the use of power, in a similar way as "civilization" was used in colonial times. Honesty can contribute to reduce global polarization. The western world can contribute by taking democracy and values seriously in a visible and trustworthy way.

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In most of the western world we experience a high degree of personal freedom. This is because societal institutions, that are built over time, are robust enough to be sure that freedom of speech will not undermine the stability of society. Maybe this is only the case as long as we have relatively stable economic growth? Maybe this is the case as long as media make enough noise, so that non-aligned opinions are drowned in noise? Maybe this is the case as long as our information ecosystem provides effective doping and insulation against relating to most global challenges. In totalitarian societies the societal institutions often are weak. This makes freedom of speech more dangerous, regarding the stability of society and the preservation of established power-structures.

Democracy in a global world, with supranational organizations, with lots of experts, can be strengthened by transparency, information, and an apparatus for receiving and handling input from the public. This apparatus must have technological/practical solutions and last but not least human resources. It is, however, demanding for individuals to be up to date and active. Interest organizations and activists can be intermediate links. Traditional political parties may get a less important role unless they are able to revitalize.

International work on technological standardization, including early work on the internet, has given examples of the use of technological means for letting, in principle, everyone contributes with input and comments to the work. It also provided a high degree of transparency.

What about referendums? Referendums require correct and balanced information, good processes, and political maturity. The experience from the Brexit-process is very bad. The experiences from Switzerland may be interesting.

It is difficult to solve "democratic debt" in large units like the EU only with formal changes of representation alone. There is a need for good processes, a culture for participation, and trust at all levels as a fundament. New ways of thinking are needed, together with new tools.

In the assessment and discussion of different practical and technological solutions for strengthening democracy, we must not forget the foundation wall itself, that means that everybody are equals and should have the opportunities to participate at equal terms. Society, also the global society, is there for everybody.

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An absolute claim to real democracy is to take away financial support to politicians and election campaigns in the way that it functions to-day. Western liberal democracy is not trustworthy if this is not changed by regulations and transparency. Because of money in politics, we see oligarchy being visible in clear daylight in the US.

The western world, and the different variations of liberal democracy, can to some degree lean back today because all other present examples of governance without any doubt are worse. Democracy is, however, not happening in a vacuum. Our information ecosystem as well as our economic environment (to be discussed) are crucial for democracy to have a chance to be genuine and functioning in practice.

The present turbulent global situation, with nature- and climate-crisis and wars, open for new ideas and solutions. The present western world is not automatically the whole solution. We can't, like in 1989, think that we are at "the end of history". Wiseness is an option. We must be honest, and we must leave double-standards behind.

A very high part of the global population live in nations with an autocratic rule. It is necessary to have a closer look at autocracies as such. How have they emerged, what are the prospects for leaving autocracy, and what are more basic characteristics.

Characteristics of autocratic rule – *The destruction of social structures, trust, and social networks*

Autocracy means government where power is concentrated in the hands of one person or a small group of people. Decisions and political practice hardly have any legal restraints or other control or regulation mechanisms.

Common characteristics are:

Opposition is ruled out by having no freedom of speech and reduced rights for organizing. Transparency is very limited. Controlling the information eco-system is essential. Destroying social structures, culture and self-reliance is commonly used. Force is easily used to see these measures through.

Many autocracies try to have a varnish of democracy, but heavily manipulate election processes and results.

The prospects for autocracies depend on history. Some nation states have a long history of autocratic rule all the way from feudal rule. Russia is an example. This means that the concept of autocratic rule is internalized in the majority. In Russia religion is also contributing to such internalization. Putin's use of his version of history is important building also on these other elements.

In many other autocracies religion is used for internalization of the autocratic ideas.

Many countries have been subject to colonial rule. Freedom fights against colonial rule very often have gone wrong in the long run. This is discussed from an historic and economic perspective by Acemoglu & Robinson in "Why Nations Fail". Old structures of extraction are inherited. New holders of power use the same old structures for exploiting the population. This means that many former colonies remain autocracies.

In other countries there has been a more diverse history. This means that relatively many people have ideas about other types of society. The Arab Spring represents such an example. Iran, given its history, is also an example. Still fundamental, lasting, change of government is difficult.

Eastern Europe is an example of a combination of strong internal forces for change, old feudal structures, and important external processes interfering with internal processes. Relatively many people had ideas about other types of society than the Communist society.

Apartheid, where a group of people, often based on racial criteria, is suppressed in a similar way as the opposition in autocratic nation states has many of the same elements as autocratic rule itself. South-

Africa is an obvious example. The situation in Israel and Palestine is another example. Mechanisms of apartheid are also still relevant in the US.

It is very difficult to organize an opposition able to not only make revolt, but also to have the abilities for governing the country after obtaining power in a good way under such circumstances.

South Africa is an example of wise internal processes combined with long-term external pressure. Such processes take time. Everything, however, has not succeeded there in the long run.

The historic treatment of indigenous people also in established democracies as for example the Scandinavian countries and Canada exemplify the use of the basic elements and mechanisms of autocratic rule.

Nobody, except those seeking autocratic power, really choose autocracy as the best way of governing a country.

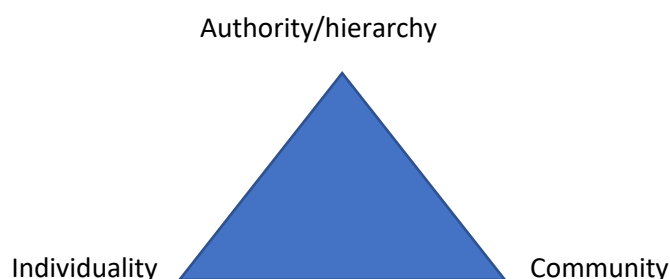
Autocracy means lack of individual freedom. It also means that society can't gain from the creative energy of its inhabitants. I will discuss the economic and societal consequences in more detail later.

A simple set of (Universal?) values – A high-level starting point

Global values must have a perspective more principled and high-level than ideologies and religions.

Investigating values held by many different societies shows that authority and hierarchy are seen as necessary basic values. Clear and stable societal structures and institutions, however, reduce the need for hierarchy as such.

A society's set of values can be seen to be placed inside a triangle like in fig. 1. The values of a sound society should not be too close to the corners of the triangle.



High-level values proposed:

- Humans are an integrated part of cosmos/nature.
- All humans are equals.
- Humans share a common responsibility.

- Humans need social relations and community built on trust and not overruling the basic intrinsic individual value.
- Governance is democratic.
- You have your personal freedom as long as you are a responsible fellow human and a responsible inhabitant of the earth.
- Diversity is valuable in both nature and society.

That humans are an integrated part of nature is a recognition necessary for the long-term survival of humanity and nature together.

That all humans are equals is the basis for a good society for everybody. We cannot accept narrow goals from special group interests.

All humans have a common responsibility. We need a collective consequence ethics. The costs of a common responsibility must be carried jointly.

Humans are social creatures, and they need social community. Tasks for the common good are solved together. We must apply structures and solutions that hinder speculative exploitation of people. We need real democracy in a global world.

Governance is enforced through practical solutions for real democracy. The criteria for real democracy are listed in the chapter discussing democracy.

You have your personal freedom as long as you take your responsibility as a fellow human and the responsibility as an inhabitant of the world. This way of seeing freedom is replacing the old one "personal freedom as long as you do not stand in the way of the freedom of others".

Diversity is nature's own way of developing. Human respect for diversity is closely related to the equalness in value. Prioritization of diversity means more solid basis for knowledge and better decisions.

Important issues to be taken to a final holistic discussion:

- Establish a global set of values carrying on and revitalizing the intention of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but also including new elements - the relationship of nature and humanity, new challenges and opportunities given by technological development, and new roles for global actors.
- Develop and establish solutions advancing real democracy in a global world.
- Establish structures and processes hindering systematic and speculative exploitation of humans.
- Advance openness and honesty in implementing values and democracy.

Knowledge, information, and communication are basic elements for human survival, cooperation, and development. Our use of and administration of knowledge is a prerequisite for meeting the existential challenges given by global heating and massive destruction of nature. Knowledge, information, and communication, are decisive for how society at all levels can function. Knowledge, information, and communication is way more fundamentally important for the global society than the impression we might get by observing the present chaotic situation. Different actors, like autocratic leaders, and “Big Tech”, looking at options for manipulating people for their own purposes, however, seem to be aware of the potential value and power inherent in controlling and using knowledge, information, and communication.

I consider the following main issues:

- Knowledge, facts, and critical thinking
- Technological development
- Intellectual property
- Media
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- The architecture of a public (global?) information eco-system

Knowledge that can be tested and challenged, based on critical thinking, is foundation wall for our information eco-system. The obstacles are, however, numerous and massive. Critical thinking is, however, the only common “language” having the potential for handling global challenges in common. Ready-made ideologies and religions do not have this potential no matter how widespread they are. We also can’t leave it all to AI.

Technology is one of the aspects and consequences of knowledge. The development of digital technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), and biotechnology, has very quickly influenced society, people’s everyday life, and the prospects for humanity enormously. This technological development, however, implies fundamental challenges. We must find ways to control technological development.

One aspect regarding the development of knowledge is intellectual property, including patents, copyrights, and trademarks. The rules of the game for intellectual property have had an enormous economic impact on the new digital economy, and on global trade altogether.

We both have traditional media and new social media. We must try to understand the present world of media, and how it influences society and societal processes at all levels.

It is easy to be blinded by the achievements of AI, the fantastic prospects announced, and the enormous resources used for winning the competitions involved. It is, however, crucial to ask the basic questions about the relationship of AI, critical thinking, and our information-ecosystem altogether.

It is important to consider a holistic architectural approach to our public information eco-system with critical thinking and community conversation as core elements. Such an architecture should have the potential to become global.

Knowledge, facts and critical thinking – *The only common “language”*

Critical thinking is the cornerstone of our world of knowledge and information. Critical thinking is the basis for a common global “language”.

Critical thinking means “thinking slow”, being critical and ask for verifiability. Critical thinking leads to the establishment, maintenance, expansion, and improvement, of sound knowledge. Critical thinking may be at various levels and domains:

- Technology has knowledge from natural science and practical experience as its basis. When developing technology, it is about trying out what is “working” in a relatively systematic way. Verifiability is a natural and essential element of the process.
- Scientific methodology applies a broader and more general examination of hypotheses to verify established knowledge or challenge, improve, renew, and increase knowledge both in natural science and in other academic fields.
- Most important considering community conversation is a similar general attitude searching for the most relevant knowledge. Alternatives must be evaluated without prejudice. An attitude of willingness to change opinion when there is a sound basis for it must be present. It must all the time be possible to challenge “truth” when new or more relevant knowledge is available. Challenging “truth” must not be manipulative or speculative. “Truth” must always build on the best knowledge and facts available.

What I from now on call critical thinking, is a general critical attitude towards truth and facts. We must aim at letting such an attitude be the basic element of a community conversation and maintenance of knowledge.

Critical thinking also means having a holistic attitude evaluating cases from several perspectives.

Critical thinking then is the opposite of conspiracy theories, and “opinion” where the factual basis is not important, or where facts are taken from “cherry-picking” where the perspective is narrow, or the facts are selected from a certain motive.

Religions often conflict with critical thinking. Religions regularly use an absolute interpretation of holy books independent of scientific basis or verifiability. Dialogue with religious fundamentalists is difficult. Fundamentalists can be found in most religions. Christianity is absolutely no exception. Many nation-states are governed based on religious fundamentalism without tolerance. However, at least in many societies, fewer and fewer aspects of life are considered holy and free from scrutinizing and public debate.

Today a majority is probably, for different reasons, negative to scientific knowledge and critical thinking. Beside religious fundamentalists and fans of conspiracy theories, there are many more personal reasons for being sceptical to scientific knowledge and critical thinking. Choosing your own preferred facts are easier and more attractive.

Critical thinking is also facing new challenges caused by the development happening in the new media world. This means new ways of handling information, and the very rapidly increasing amount of information easily at hand. Truth and facts do not hold the same standing as before. Everything may be regarded as equally true, independent of documentation or justification. The wrapping, the sender, and how often the message is repeated, are often more important.

Often technological progress is seen as the same as increasing knowledge as such. Critical thinking and scientific knowledge, however, are something different from, and far more comprehensive, than technocracy, prioritizing technology in as many areas as possible. However, technology has been a spearhead regarding increased prevalence of critical thinking and scientific knowledge. It is difficult to argue against something that obviously is functioning.

Critical thinking means that cases and issues must be described and defined in a way aiming at solutions. This aspect of critical thinking makes it the only common “language” that can have the potential to get closer to solutions for global challenges in a joint manner. Readymade worldviews provided by religion, ideology, or “opinion” do not provide similar potential.

A modern complex society must be based on sound knowledge. This is important both for the functioning of daily life and for long-term sustainable development.

To cope with truth, lies, or just “bullshit” is challenging both at a philosophical and at a practical level. Still critical thinking after all is the best toolbox available to navigate in our complex world of information.

Lies may have many, often exciting, aspects and presentations. Truth, however, cannot be presented arbitrarily colourful.

Scientists, experts and bureaucrats make indispensable contributions to issues of knowledge. They, however, may not see all aspects of all issues. A balancing critical opposition is needed. Diversity and democratic processes are important. We are approaching truth in complex processes as discussed by Sheila Jasanoff in “Can Science make Sense of Life”.

Important for humanity is not only individual rationality, but the ability to obtain rationality in larger groups. Diversity and a common “language” like critical thinking are essential elements, together with appropriate arenas for sharing knowledge and ideas. Alternative views and thoughts are often decisive for an optimal result. Settings with too uniform participants, even if they have the best intelligence and education, may give inferior results.

A challenge for science is to communicate something needing action, like the situation and prospects for climate, with the basic uncertainty that is always connected with science. What is almost certain and what is only very probable?

For building and managing knowledge, independent institutions are essential. Universities are the most relevant examples. Scientists have a moral duty to inform. This information should not come in the most popular format for modern media with isolated news often out of context aiming at sensation and “clicks”. Appropriate format is, however, difficult to find when both public attention and scientific seriousness should be combined. Universities and other research environments also often have internal challenges regarding openness, the will to cooperation, and practical cooperation, that make their important role in a modern society less efficient.

For several environments and organizations working based on knowledge is important. The United Nations with all its ramifications together with a lot of other international organizations and non-governmental organizations possesses much competence. This is also basically the case for public administration. Sufficient independence of economy, politics and power is important. There are lots of examples where this is not the case.

Multinational corporations, financial institutions, and other organizations having great resources, also possess much competence that clearly is dependent on the goals of these organizations. They

are sources for extensive lobbying towards politicians and the public. Only sufficiently strong independent environments can provide a relevant counterforce. These environments, politicians, and the public must be aware of their roles and responsibilities, and the methods used by lobbyists.

Lobbyists try to provide a unilateral view of problem cases giving some aspects weight out of proportion or omitting or suppressing facts that are against their goals. This view is backed by effective marketing in multiple channels. Lobbying also means using great resources on keeping close ties to politicians and other environments representing power and influence over time.

Popularized science is difficult because it is difficult to give a relevant picture of basic insecurity and disagreement among scientists. Mediation of scientific problems or results do not have sufficient standing in scientific environments. Media uses “expert say” to have reports that they think might be interesting to people. They often look for standalone cases, preliminary results, and results that can be labelled as sensational news.

False, incomplete, or distorted information and knowledge can be used to obtain or preserve power, to enforce enemy images or to obtain other advantages. Knowledge and information backed by critical thinking should instead support public debate and democracy.

Conscious rewriting or decorating of history is one specific area. Backed by reduced options for seeing alternative information this is seen to be an effective way of gaining or keeping power.

There are interesting examples from the handling of the latest pandemic showing both serious and good information, but also conscious and active disinformation from government and health professional environments. The good information also to some degree was transparent regarding uncertainty. When people got sufficiently relevant information about seriousness, they behaved loyal to necessary measures. The pandemic showed examples of governance based on knowledge, building and supporting confidence in government and knowledge provided by health professional environments.

The pandemics also clearly showed many of the consequences on knowledge and information revealed by the extensive use of social media. It is deeply problematic that handling of information is governed by mechanisms aiming at maximum activity no matter the seriousness. These mechanisms are basically provided by companies that are dependent on maximum advertising for their economic results. This will be discussed later.

On the other hand, United Nation’s climate panel and panel for biological diversity are excellent examples of collection and coordination of knowledge and cooperation for using knowledge at the global level.

The use of technology like Artificial Intelligence (AI) – to be discussed below - poses many decisive challenges regarding knowledge and critical thinking.

Technology – Great results and options, but beware what is going on

We have seen a series of important technological breakthroughs over a short period of time.

The smartphone, artificial intelligence (AI), internet of things (IoT), all sorts of robots, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality, cloud computing, nanotechnology, brain-computer connection, gene editing

(CRISPR), stem cells, test tube fertilization, cloning, and new implants, are maybe the most important examples

The Internet itself should also be on this list, even if it no longer is considered as something for the news.

We may divide these innovations in two main groups, digital technology and biotechnology, even if these groups also are closely interconnected.

The internet and cloud computing, both hardware and software, represent the basic infrastructure for digital solutions. Cloud computing means that digital data and services can be used from different user equipment via internet utilizing Wi-Fi and other mechanisms. All kinds of equipment, including sensors, can be connected to the internet, the result being internet of things (IoT). The smartphone provides access to this universe by means of different applications (APPs), solving different user needs, and giving access to social media. This universe is basically at reach for everybody and has a large and expanding number of users all over the globe.

The internet is basically an open, and relatively insecure net, even if it is widely used by critical infrastructure for society. There are many examples of cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure. The internet is, however, functioning thanks to a pragmatic attitude regarding governance so far. Internet governance, however, has changed focus from pure technological governance to a recognition of the deep political aspects of the governance. Human rights in the broad sense and financial systems are examples. Internet governance is further discussed when discussing “Global governance” later.

Artificial intelligence (AI) provides new dimensions and perspectives when it is integrated into all sorts of digital solutions. There are lots of examples showing that AI can provide impressive results in different relatively limited fields. Chess is one of the early examples. Machine learning is an important part of AI. Large Language Models are of special interest. Artificial intelligence can be good at solving many problems that can be defined clearly and where there is enough relevant training data with sufficient quality available. This is also the case for fields that are considered relevant to human high-level expertise. The massive use of AI in a lot of digital solutions make digital solutions an increasingly serious contributor to the demand for more energy.

In the analysis of enormous amounts of data (Big Data), finding interesting patterns, AI is indispensable. Facial recognition is one obvious example. Important qualities of digital systems (including AI) are the options for networking and upgrading.

Large Language Models do not model reality based on facts and causes, but based on probabilities and what seems satisfactory. AI sometimes deliver false results, however difficult to disclose at first glance. Biases may also be difficult to discover. Most important, however, is weakening our abilities for critical thinking altogether.

The Internet of things (IoT) makes it possible to include large amounts of sensors. Medical data will probably be an important field.

Superintelligence (SAI) is discussed regarding further development and use of AI. Can SAI make humans irrelevant?

Some aspects of SAI should be considered:

- SAI is operating very differently compared to human intelligence
- Consciousness is basically irrelevant regarding SAI

- What own goals would SAI possibly have other than what humans have defined (right or wrong)?

Further development of AI involves many risks at different levels before we might reach a situation where AI outcompetes humanity altogether.

Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is a branch of the Defence department of the US. It has initiated and supported the development of many of the modern digital solutions outlined above. DARPA has a strategy of cooperation with commercial companies in the market to test and enhance products. This results in close connections between the US military complex and the large American technological companies (Big Tech).

Drones and robots for killing are examples of the use of technology for military purposes. A basic distinction is the autonomy of technology. It is important how and by whom crucial decisions are taken. The human-technology interface is important, but complex and risky.

Types of weapons can be obsolete by agreements. This has in fact happened before.

Technology is an important arena of competition between the great powers with consequences that are difficult to foresee.

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Let us be more specific about biotechnology.

During the thousands of years that modern humans have existed, the total genetic material has been shaped by a combination of random mutations and natural selection. Now we basically can edit the DNA not only for existing people by CRISPR, but also influence the DNA of future generations, meaning governing evolution. Most human properties depend on many genes, but this opens perspectives to be dealt with.

Induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells) can be generated directly from somatic cells. We can foresee stem cell banks and the development of stem cell-based medicines. iPS cells grows similarly to cancer cells. It is now not very difficult to generate stem cells from ordinary somatic cells. The challenge is to ensure that they behave as we want in the human body.

iPS cells, together with AI, will potentially be important in developing and testing medicines and vaccines, together with testing the influence of chemicals more generally in the human body. Today the use of test-animals has many practical limitations and other unwanted consequences regarding the welfare of animals.

Biotechnology and AI meet in brain computer interface (BCI) connecting the human brain, digital components, and AI. We will see so-called Cyborgs and different advanced artificial spare part humans.

The development in biotechnology makes biological mass destruction weapons easier available.

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Very much of the innovation behind modern digital solutions are based on ideas and work in universities, the American armed forces (DARPA), and other public sector organizations like CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research). Intellectual property rights, however, are often left to private companies, mostly American companies. This is because of the rules of the game for

intellectual property (to be closer discussed). This means transferring much power to some private companies (Big Tech), The global consequences are substantial.

Let us mention just some of the companies included in Big Tech:

Microsoft

Microsoft dominates operative systems for personal computers and office support solutions used both in public sector, private companies and by private organizations and individuals. American authorities several times have had the company in the spotlight for tendencies to monopolistic behaviour. Competing solutions based on Open-Source code exist but have not over time managed to really threaten Microsoft's position

.Apple

Apple is one of the dominating producers of smartphones. The company has in many ways acted arrogantly in the market. There are many environmental problems behind the production of smart phones. This includes mines in for example Bolivia, Congo and China. Much of the product line is in China involving dangerous chemicals like Cyanide.

Google

Google has become the dominating search engine. This means a crucial position prioritizing and presenting content from many sources. Google can provide fast search results because of an enormous infrastructure. The owner of Google, Alphabet, is also the owner of the operative system Android and therefore also is a major player regarding smartphones. Alphabet also owns the video-channel YouTube.

Amazon

Amazon dominates trade on the internet and is also the leading company in cloud computing.

Nvidia

Nvidia designs and produces graphic processing units for high-performance computing. The company is a dominant supplier of AI hardware and software. There are, however, also other important suppliers of different types of data chips.

Facebook

Facebook is the prototype for social media. The company regards all content created by users as its own property. Facebook has been criticized for many examples of dubious and random handling of user data. Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp are also applications under the Meta umbrella.

We have had a trend from general internet content to Facebook-content. In many countries, especially in developing countries, Facebook is seen as synonymous with the internet itself.

Twitter (now X)

A convenient channel for short tabloid messages.

AI-companies

There are several companies competing for dominating the AI-market. This market is changing rapidly.

China (and others)

There are also important Chinese and Indian variants of digital solutions and social media. The Chinese application Tik-Tok is widely spread and is the social medium with the fastest growth. China also has similar solutions to many of the solutions mentioned above. Tencent, with WeChat, and Alibaba, with Alipay, and Baidu search engine, are examples. India is a leading provider of digital services. Taiwan is an important supplier of data chips. Japan and South-Corea are also important suppliers of diverse digital solutions. Companies and solutions from the US might be less dominant globally in the near future.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is not neutral. The providers of infrastructure are under pressure from BigTech because capacity and functionality in the infrastructure are important competition elements for their solutions. The basic components (chips) in digital solutions have been important elements also in great power competition.

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Technology, and more technology, is not the answer to all problems. Today technology makes the world so complex that we struggle to see what are good and what are bad answers from technology. We must take the time and effort to think twice. One important consequence of technology is its ability to change how we understand the world around us. Technology enhances our abilities and our capacities. Technology, however, also influences the way we see our environment, and it influences the direction of our thoughts. It is not enough to consider how technology works, we must also consider what forces, thoughts and ulterior motives that are part of its innovation. And we must consider the consequences in a broad sense. For example, we must consider how the human background behind AI influences the results from AI.

We often think that all problems can be solved simply by putting numbers on its elements and then proceed further by calculation. This results in a reduced ability to handle everything that is not conform to such attitudes, approaches, and methods.

Complex systems, that predicts probabilities for events and human behaviour, today are actively used for example by police and customs authorities. Such systems are also about to be more extensively used in other parts of society. It is difficult to foresee all limitations, sources of error, and long-term effects. Such systems basically are based on previous experience material used for training. Old patterns might easily be continued and enhanced.

The development of digital solutions has several deep consequences on humans and society. We have already discussed that it challenges human freedom. We will later discuss consequences for our information eco-system and economic mechanisms.

The development of biotechnology can easily lead to translating economic inequality into biological inequality.

We can't be sure of how free our thoughts and actions really are. There is, however, no doubt that they can be manipulated in many ways. We must not let all chances to value real freedom of thought go away without giving it a second thought.

Technological development, as we have seen, is happening very fast (often said to be exponential) in several critical areas in parallel. In each of these areas many experts are worried that we are about to lose control. These areas are usually discussed one by one separately, even if they really are interconnected. What they, no doubt, have in common is the need for posing basic questions about priorities and ethics.

It is crucial for humanity to consider a joint governance of technological development with ethical glasses. What is meant by ethics must also be seen broadly and holistic (ref. our former discussion of values). To undertake this task, both deep specific technological competence and more broad general competence is needed. This competence should basically come from independent instances. Such work must also have sufficient democratic anchoring. The foundation wall must be global.

Intellectual property – A good balance between society's needs and incentives for innovation?

Patents, copyrights, and trademarks are introduced to get a good balance between incentives for innovation and society's general use and benefits from results. A common name is intellectual property. Such rights have a relatively long history, have changed over time, and has been a very important part of the new digital economy, including digital technology, biotechnology, pharmacy, and entertainment.

A fundamental question, regarding intellectual property, is what is new, original and useful. Digital solutions are by nature complex and interwoven. There is sound evidence that public basic research represents a large and decisive foundation for resulting intellectual rights giving private companies enormous income.

When it comes to nature, the company Monsanto, has obtained intellectual property rights on genetically modified seeds of maize and soya-beans, together with rights concerning accompanying herbicide. These genetically modified plants do not produce plants able to germinate. The users are left in a forced situation having to buy new seeds from Monsanto every year. Extensive use of these products results in large monocultures and reduced diversity. Monsanto has also hindered interdependent researchers from examining their seeds. There are regulations with grey-zones regarding what biological material that can be patented.

Large pharmacy companies have obtained intellectual rights concerning important medicines and vaccines. In the US they also have extraordinary advantages at the cost of the rest of the society. US health authorities are hindered from using their market forces in negotiating prices for medicines. The pharmacy companies are allowed to openly pay doctors to prescribe their medicines. They prolong intellectual property rights by making small adjustments of products. They can also pay off smaller companies with cheaper comparable products for not introducing their products in the market or delaying the introduction.

A recent example is the Covid 19 pandemic and the global situation concerning vaccines. Public authorities had to a large degree financially supported the development of vaccines. The pharmacy companies, however, own the intellectual rights. They hindered the production of much needed vaccines elsewhere even if there existed laboratories, competence, and capacity to do the job. Intellectual property trumped basic global needs.

Regarding digital solutions, intellectual property rules of the game has made the largest companies dealing with digital solutions (Google, Apple, Amazon, Facebook, Microsoft) to become the largest companies altogether over a short span of time.

Intellectual property has created a large special juridical industry. A juridical jungle makes it difficult for new and small companies. The largest players use more resources on juridical matters concerning their intellectual property rights than on research and development. This looks like something very unhealthy.

Regarding digital solutions, it is open to discussion how unique the solutions owned by the largest players really are. Very often new results are obtained by combining well-known solutions in new ways.

Regarding Facebook it is almost only luck and clever timing, combined with economical crushing of competitors, that is the basis for their intellectual property. Microsoft has also been clever timing development together with economic activities. Special interfaces and coupling of modules and functionality in ways making it difficult to competitors, are parts of the strategy leading to monopoly. Similar solutions based on Open-Source code are functionally competitive.

We must take another look at the basic thoughts underlying intellectual property in a global perspective. The original idea was to obtain a good balance between private encouragement for innovation and the overall benefit for society. Now the real ulterior motives are only profit for the few, often leading to monopoly. We are left with a situation that results in bad outcomes both for innovation and for the benefits of society.

We should also remember the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights saying that all humans have the right to benefit from the results obtained by science and arts.

Global learning has the potential to be a more important source of global benefits than global trade. The WTO rules for intellectual property (TRIPS-agreement), however, is a definite hindrance for effective global learning.

Media – We need a proper community conversation

Media includes many variants such as printed material, radio, TV, film, games, music, and pure digital, internet-based media like social media. The smartphone provides an extra dimension because of the low threshold and availability to digital internet-based media everywhere. All variants of media have their own advantages and areas of use. There is, however, a trend towards increased integration of different digital media, also providing new options.

We have already shortly mentioned the technical background for the development of digital media. From now on we concentrate on content.

Our information eco-system is dominated by tabloid headlines, a cacophonous mix of all kinds of news, a constant flicker past our senses and our brain. The struggle for attention is very hard, irrespective of importance and seriousness. The largest challenge, regarding a proper community conversation, may after all be the vast amount of information, and the amount of all kinds of entertainment available. There is not a common arena for finding the information that is most important to community conversation. We, as individuals, must establish in-built mechanisms almost automatically sorting information without involving our consciousness. These automatic mechanisms are established without our full conscious participation.

Our total information- and media eco-system is large and complex. I must prioritize what I consider most relevant for society and global challenges.

An important distinction is between mass media, basically editor-managed, centrally distributed, and basically passively consumed, on one hand, and social media on the other hand. Social media makes it possible for us to produce our own content with few restrictions and provide more options for active response.

In theory social media represent a fantastic option for freedom of speech. In practice present social media function in a way that open for false and manipulated content and provides opportunities for players at all levels of society, eager to exploit these options. A basic reason for these negative consequences is the business model and the associated algorithms used. The business model aims at maximum activity irrespective of the seriousness or correctness of content.

This business model uses the human characteristic of addiction for all that it is worth. Recently Facebook and Google have been taken to court because of their algorithms causing addiction leading to adverse mental health problems. So far, the companies have been sentenced to pay the plaintiffs financial compensation. This could be the starting point for making serious cracks in the hegemonic position of Big Tech.

Social media makes it possible to distribute content to a large network of friends and followers. It is easy to respond through standardized mechanisms like “likes” or “emojis”. Such simple responses are important for prioritizing the visibility of content. Other mechanisms like “tagging” when publishing content and a comment field when responding are also important input to the algorithms. All activity on social media is counted and used. Data from the use of social media, is an important sales item. The algorithms are basically business secrets.

It is difficult, both looking at editorially governed content and content on social media, to see a clear distinction between news, advertising, dissemination of knowledge, politics, and entertainment. Entertainment itself may be OK, but it is not OK to give every element of content a perspective of entertainment and appreciation related to its value for advertising.

Regarding politics, we see a trend saying that the appearance of a politician, and how often he or she is in media, is more important than their political message. Politicians use social media to bring frequent messages in a short tabloid format. These are not totally new trends, but the trends towards less seriousness in politics are strengthened because of the enhanced toolbox and the total amount of channels and information.

News is never neutral. What is on the agenda at all is also important. Fires and firefighting dominate ever more at the expense of long-term and structural matters. “Reality” is what we continuously are served on TV and in social media. These are not new problems, but social media provides new

mechanisms to enhance problems. Social media are about to become the most important source of news. Even if the amount of information is increasing very rapidly, we in fact get less real diversity.

Channels and arenas for a good community communication, that can be reached and used by everybody, are lacking. Here we should remember “thinking fast” and “thinking slow”. Formats making it possible to fulfil reasoning and arguments pro et contra, using facts, are lacking altogether in the social media platforms. We are simply backing or rejecting things. We are not supposed to use time to think. The social media platforms do not support mutual respect and understanding. Options for community conversation, however, are crucial for real democracy.

Facebook, for example, in a series of incidents, and in several countries, in practice allowed misuse of the platform from political players by allowing false news, false user accounts and “trolling”.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for most people to hold facts apart from fraud and disinformation. This means that facts and sound reasoning are losing their strength and options for constructive use. The vast amount of false and unserious information, and that it seems to be no limits for what players that systematically use disinformation, are serious to people’s attitudes and understanding of the value of truth and facts.

Disinformation or false information is used to influence people’s worldview, but may also be used to create chaos, distrust and polarization. It is also used to divert attention away from important matters.

Error is followed by new error. Questionable information is repeated and copied. This may be seen as confirmation of the information. It rapidly becomes a “truth”.

The smartphone is closely connected to social media in modern everyday life. It is, however, very versatile and is used in very different ways, also by lots of people in developing countries.

Big brother sees you (authorities apply surveillance) – but also little brother sees you (everybody can take pictures and videos in many situations).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Outsourcing critical thinking?

I discuss AI domains where critical thinking is crucial. Basically it is not producing more information effectively that is our problem. It is rather having that information read, understood and discussed that represents the bottle-neck regarding community conversation and other domains that are knowledge-intensive. Information overload is not the answer. Fact-checking is recommended when using AI, but what about the efficiency of AI if fact-checking is performed at a proper level? Fact-checking is rather skipped taking the easy way out.

The use of AI is after all a very new phenomenon. More experience and knowledge are needed. Better deep and basic knowledge regarding how AI is working is obvious important. Obtaining knowledge and experience should be done more systematically and strategically. Running as fast as possible to use AI in every possible domain is not a good and responsible strategy.

We need AI-models that are built from the basis in order to be understood and controlled by humans.

Community conversation

AI should not be used at all in community conversation. There must be tools for supporting freedom of speech that are free from using AI. There must be arenas for community conversation where only contributions using such tools are allowed.

Public administration

AI should be used with caution. It is important to remember that public administration should not aim at producing and distributing as many reports and as much information as possible. The quality of public information and the feedback options and resources for following up of feedback should instead be prioritized. This means that AI hardly is a tool for more effective public administration regarding the interface towards the inhabitants. Still AI might be interesting regarding different back-office applications.

Schools

It is crucial that critical thinking is prioritized. More experience is needed for recommendations.

Academia

It is crucial that critical thinking is prioritized. More experience is needed for recommending more specific regulations of the use of AI. Probably AI will not influence the processes for publication dramatically.

The architecture of a public information eco-system – A proper community conversation

A public information eco-system should stand up to the following fundamental goals and standards:

- Options and facilitation for a real community conversation
- Options and facilitation for common sharing of knowledge
- Ownership and governance of data must be handled by a legitim public institution
- Mechanisms for conscious manipulation of people must be absent

Ideally such a public information eco-system should be global.

Today, several great powers see a need for doing something with the way Big Tech govern our information eco-system. Their approaches, however, are very different and uncoordinated.

The European Union in their work on digital laws has the following suggestions for areas of improvement:

- The users must get more options for influencing the handling of the content that they produce
- Far more insight in the algorithms used
- Mandatory for Big Tech to consider risks and consequences of their digital solutions for society

US authorities are more concerned with economic aspects. They consider splitting companies to avoid monopoly.

Many nations are concerned about tax issues. Big Tech doesn't pay relevant taxes.

Several autocratic states try to keep their population inside information bubbles governed by the authorities. Here propaganda and manipulated news get free reign without any counterweight.

From the present situation outlined and the goals for a proper global information ecosystem presented above regarding community conversation, lack of manipulation and sharing of knowledge, it is mandatory to evaluate and discuss far more radical joint thoughts and means for improvement of the present information platforms. This is a global social responsibility.

It is deeply problematic that private companies governed by economic incentives, and in an almost monopoly position, are given the responsibility to govern community conversation and the limits of freedom of speech. There is also very limited openness regarding how this role is handled.

Big Tech has been taken to court for adverse effects on the mental health of young people specifically.

The infrastructure owned by Big Tech should in fact be restructured to become the backbone of global infrastructure.

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Let us sketch a high-level architecture of global internet based digital information platforms.

Instead of platforms mixing everything, including advertising, in all settings, platforms should be more delimited and distinct:

- Social media platform without advertising and economic incentives
- Platform for community conversation containing opinions, discussion and politics in proper formats without advertising and other economic incentives. Fact-checking included.
- News without advertising and other economic incentives. Fact-checking included.
- Platform for facts and popular science (Wikipedia can be an inspiration) without advertising and other economic incentives. Fact and quality checking included.
- Platform for purchase and sale, advertising, and logistics

It is important that the user is free to seek out the functionality that he or she is interested in without being exposed to all kinds of advertising and irrelevant information. Advertising and purchase and sale can, however, easily be chosen when relevant.

The platforms must cooperate effectively. Information architecture is crucial. This means that information must be tagged in a way that defines, among others, the type of content or theme, who is responsible and the status for fact-checking. It is important to avoid noise and unwanted bias and group effects as described by Kahneman, Sibony and Sunstein in "Noise".

Search functionality is an aspect of information architecture, and it must be available to the whole set of platform elements above. It must be distinct regarding type of content, and seriousness of content must have priority.

The whole set of platforms must be governed by a legitim public organization. Ideally it should be part of global governance.

The platforms must be open such that functionality and APPs associated with them can be developed by many contributors based on a well-defined set of rules of the game. They must also be available to many providers of content also based on well-defined criteria.

More specifications regarding each platform element:

- The social media platform must use algorithms and functionality removing the unwanted consequences of echo chambers and the awarding of posts mostly trying to get maximum attention and reaction. This might be a contribution to a more civilized activity and calm use of social media. This again might be a contribution to reduced polarization in society.
- The platform for community conversation will be a significant contribution to a common community conversation by making opinions and discussion more structurally collected and accessible. Keywords are common global community conversation and diversity. Reasoned opinions included political news and expressions of opinion, analysis and background information are included. Contributions must be in a format securing justification and seriousness. The platform must include tools for dialogue. There must be sufficient resources for a serious follow-up of dialogues. It is mandatory that only software and tools without AI included are allowed at this platform element. Such tools must be easily available.
- News must have a defined source and a minimum of background verification.
- The platform for facts and content checked for quality must be enhanced and enforced. Unserious information might easily fill fields of information-vacuum. The use of AI must be closely considered including fact-checking.

Information that is accessible for everybody is a prerequisite for collective intelligence taking advantage of the benefits of diversity.

■

Critical thinking must be used for fact-checking and for enhancing the quality on information spread handled by media. Fact-checking can be used at different levels. In a global world local cultural competence may be necessary to fact-check properly.

Time and resources are necessary for proper fact-checking. Spreading of disinformation on the other hand is fast and effective. To some degree fact-checking is done today, leading to certain experiences. Some examples on how to follow up fact-checking are:

- An alternative claim is necessary instead of barely rejecting a false claim
- The true claim including data of quality should be presented first, not the false claim to be rejected
- Sufficiently simple and clear arguments should be used. A simple false claim is difficult to beat with a complicated correction.
- People seldom want challenges to their worldview. It is often better to try to reach a majority with a relatively open mind than to try to convince a minority with a fixed conviction.

We will basically focus on social media. Media with editorial boards, however, also should be fact-checked. Traditional media still reach many people. There should be standards for presenting results from fact-checking such media.

A lot of competent resources are needed for a relevant amount of fact-checking. Criteria for prioritizing content for fact-checking nevertheless are necessary. One criterium may be the amount of sharing or “clicks”. Another supplementary strategy is to concentrate on the following up of the quality and seriousness of sources of information. Tools using similar technology as in search engines, together with AI, may facilitate fact-checking effectively.

Local media are important. Independent media at all levels should be supported and strengthened considerably.

In some countries, like in Norway, there are rules resulting in a kind of “media welfare state”. This includes public channels for radio and TV with high-level claims for the seriousness of content side by side with commercial channels. Furthermore, there are rules against advertising aimed at children, and public institutions watching “press-ethics”. Measures like these should be considered more widely.

Freedom of speech and transparency are crucial elements that must be seen connected to community conversation. What is destroying community conversation is also a threat to freedom of speech.

The platforms outlined above must be seen connected to internet governance and security measures. Freedom of speech, risk of surveillance, privacy and trust are closely connected.

Far more resources should be used on good and fair handling of information. The platforms, including fact-checking, should be governed by a global organization. The resources for fact-checking must be at different levels and from different locations and professional fields. Journalists and academics are important professionals. They must also cooperate. Independent journalism must be supported. Critical and independent journalism should have better working conditions with new platforms.

There are proposals for giving internet access to the global poor. This could be a good idea provided we are able to first clean up our present information ecosystem.

More specific proposals for governing technology and information are discussed later.

Important issues to be taken to a final holistic discussion:

- Achieve and secure global governance based on knowledge
- Achieve and secure global community conversation and sharing of knowledge
- Establish and govern a global infrastructure for information
- Establish global ethical governance of the development of digital and biological technology
- Change the rules of the game for intellectual property to better consider benefits for the global community
- Reduce advertising aiming at increasing consumption

“The economy” has a unique position regarding attention in media and politics. For a politician to be able to show economic growth is trumping everything regarding attention and impact. It is crucial regarding global challenges how the economy in the present global world is understood, how it functions, how it is prioritized, and how it is communicated. The economy is interlinking the world across different models for society, ideologies and religions. Production, distribution, trade, and finance are globalized. The economy is motor for many of global trends that are discussed so far.

I will start with a short overview of *status* for the present global economy seen from the perspective of global challenges to establish a point of reference. Then I will discuss the different problematic aspects emerging from analysing the present mainstream economy. We must look behind the joint veils consciously or unconsciously provided by economists, media and politicians.

The different issues to be discussed closer are:

- Over time there has been established, expanded and maintained *rules of the game* for the economy under the banner “the free market”. The origins of these rules are mainly in the US but are applied by all the largest players globally. The rapid growth of the financial sector, and the new economy based on digital technology and biotechnology has had very large impact globally applying these rules of the game.
- Before continuing a meaningful further analysis, it is mandatory to go *back to basics*. We must look at the assumptions underpinning mainstream economy, and we must consider a more basic starting point looking at housekeeping with society’s basis for life and the total resources available, including nature and human resources. This basic understanding is part of the analysis and discussion of other topics to be discussed below.
- I further discuss some long-lived myths related to *society and economy*. These myths systematically downplay the common good and public solutions. They do not contribute to making discussions of the economy constructive.
- The rapid growth of the *financial sector* has a lot of consequences that must be sufficiently illuminated.
- *Green growth* is the common approach to combine economic growth and the meeting of the challenges from climate and nature. The basic ideas behind green growth are very dubious. They don’t withstand a closer examination.
- The most important players in *the new digital economy* have rapidly become the largest companies in the world. We must have a closer look at how they contribute to GDP and real value for society.
- It might be useful to see *the global economy as an eco-system in nature* with the financial sector in the role of the predator, heavily influencing the rest of society.
- *The labour market* is changing but have the potential to change in a much more fundamental and holistic way due to a more basic understanding of the economy
- *Wars and conflicts* have considerable effects on the global economy. It is worthwhile to analyse these effects since these effects always are present in the global economy. These effects are, however, at a smaller scale and less visible also in the normal conduct of the global economy.
- Development and *aid for development* first of all in developing countries but also more generally are complex matters also involving other perspectives than economics alone.

- Continuing growth of GDP (Gross domestic product) is seen as a prerequisite also for saving nature and climate. Another obviously relevant perspective, is that we must reduce consumption and use of areas to save nature and climate. This means reducing GDP or rather “degrowth”. I will try to discuss the matter more closely based on focussing on value for society compared to GDP.
- My analysis so far indicates that basic changes in the functioning of the economy are mandatory without totally abandoning the basic ideas of a market-based economy. I will have a closer look at the *prerequisites for changes in the economy*.
- I finally sum up in presenting a *high-level model for the economy* prioritizing nature and basic human needs for their own value, not as a by-product of their value for production and consumption.

Status – A short overview

When we talk about “the economy”, we talk about “mainstream economy”, or perhaps often “capitalism”. When everybody follows their self-interest, the handling of goods and services is effectively taken care of. Everything functions almost automatically governed by “the invisible hand” in the free market (cf. Adam Smith). It is vital not to put obstacles to the functioning of the free market.

Market economy is rooted in a basic need for exchanging goods and services (included division of labour). This is basically a win-win situation for everybody. Ever more advanced tools for helping the market function effectively have been developed. This development has given new aspects of the market economy that are far away from the basic concept of simple exchange.

By mainstream economy I mean both the basic formalism and the practical implementations that gradually has been developed. The present mainstream economy is built on the idea that only what can be assigned a monetary value in a market has economic value. Mainstream economy, furthermore, makes simplified assumptions regarding the functioning of society and individuals, prioritizing the individual’s egoistic behaviour. Society and the common good hardly exist in mainstream economy. On these assumptions mainstream economy has built a large and complex construction with mathematical formalism. When it comes to nature, complex ecological systems are broken down into isolated numerical values. This is highly contrary to basic ecological knowledge. Mainstream economy is considered a science even if it never is looking back at the basic assumptions related to the real world. Still mainstream economy today is considered almost self-evident.

Gross domestic product (GDP) is used for measuring the status and development of the economy. GDP is meant to include all activity in society that can be measured by a monetary value. This means that production, trade, and consumption of goods and services are the activities that are inherently prioritized, together with “making money” in the financial sector. Important activities in society that are not included are care work and other necessary household work, all non-paid work keeping society together, and the results obtained from the activity in the public sector. Not all economic activity is, however, beneficial to society.

Multinational companies and financial institutions have got substantially increased power in the global economy, due to a development of a global market with approximately equal terms of competition and increased coordination of the economic politics of nations. Multinational companies

have a global strategy and uniform management. They open for investments from all over the world by use of the large stock markets. A monetary system based on the US Dollar makes this function. This arrangement gives the US leverages for influencing global society also outside pure economics.

The financial markets are liberalized in most countries. Financially motivated transactions and speculation have become much more important than traditional production and trade. Money is no longer a way of making trade more efficient, but rather a goal and a commodity by itself. Digital development has enhanced this trend. Transaction cost has decreased; speed and volume has increased. Many tenfold more valuta is traded than what is necessary for supporting the trade of goods and services.

This economic globalization, however, can be seen as several processes with different speed and strength. Similar regional processes are also parts of the total picture.

Global value chains stretch across national borders. They often imply the use of cheap workers in developing countries. Knowledge, equipment, energy, raw material, logistics, and tax regulations, determines where in the world activities are performed. Knowledge is often the single most important factor.

The global trade is moving from raw materials to products based on knowledge. Economic resources are moved from production to protection. Goods and services are protected by intellectual property.

The economic centre of gravity is about to move from North America and Europe to Asia. International finance and trade are still recorded on behalf of nations, not because countries basically execute trade and finance, but because money, goods and services are crossing borders.

There are, however, some differences in the functioning of the market economy in the US and Great Britain and in many European countries like Germany, together with Japan and South-Corea.

In the US there are flexible labour markets with substantial differences in salaries, short-term financial focus, and authoritarian management. In Europe and Japan there is often more long-term thinking, relatively strong unions and consensus-processes. China is more difficult to categorize simply this way. A bulk of the largest companies in China are owned and controlled by the government, but operate by similar rules of the game as other multinational companies.

The American model has proven efficient to get results quickly. The American business-culture has been important for the development of the financial sector and the new digital economy. Short-termism and results in a direction not necessarily identical to the needs of society more broadly, is, however, a problem.

The basic raw material for the financial sector is debt. The financial sector rewards short-termism rather than long-termism. This way of thinking influences businesses overall strongly. Profit is often invested in short-term stock-marked rewards rather than in long-term investments in production equipment, research and development, and the building of competence. Also, the rest of society is influenced.

There are documented forms of exploitation of workers that may be called modern slavery customized to the global mainstream economy. The slaves from earlier times were after all seen as long-term investments. The modern slaves are seen as a cheap commodity that do not need to be looked after - use and discard. Multinational companies together with corrupt national or more local authorities are the main prosecutors behind maintaining this slavery.

Funds, like the Norwegian Oil fund (The Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global), funds from Arabian countries based on profits from gas- and oil production, together with other types of funds, hold a large and increasing share of the global stock-market values. They stand for direct investments, but mostly portfolio investments.

Portfolio investments aim at getting profit from stock dividend. Such investors do not mainly seek influence over priorities and operation in the companies that they invest in. Portfolio investments often mean several layers between owners and investors. Accountability becomes powdered.

Present stock-market activity is largely speculative. Short-term expectations, and what the rest of the market do, is more important than long-term results from companies.

Tax havens are important in the global financial industry. In tax havens the real owners of companies are often obscured. Strawmen and juridical and organizational complexity make it difficult to spot real owners. This makes it easier to avoid all kinds of regulations and taxes. Tax havens are widely used, and the amounts of money involved are enormous.

The economic globalization, including free flow of capital, has given the financial sector and multinational companies vast options for avoiding taxes in different countries. It also becomes difficult with personal high-income taxes given such a system.

Nation-states are on a sliding scale from rich industrial countries to typical development countries, or rather underdeveloped countries. In many development countries a link between the official society and large masses of inhabitants are missing. These masses organize in their own way, ignore juridical considerations and formalities and have their own kind of economy not shown in official statistics. They partly live outside the global world of consumption. They do not fit in in the global economy, and they are forgotten by the global society on many levels.

We see a trend of displacement from common welfare benefits to private consumption. The market economy may be seen as layered. First, we have a layer consisting of those willing to pay substantially for luxury products. Then we have a layer of more numerous consumers able to and willing to pay for a diverse series of products. Both layers are increasing, also in some developing countries. Those that need to have their very basic needs met, seem to get further out in the queue. The global market economy offers few incentives for thinking of poor people globally.

Countries that are home countries for multinational companies often do not have the relevant rules of the game or resources to regulate the global consequences of the activities of the companies. This is most comprehensive for the US and American companies.

There are global organizations (International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization) that to some degree regulates and supports the global economy. These organizations are discussed later. The only meeting place for all diverse participants seems to be the Davos-meeting organized by World Economic Forum.

Rules of the game – *Principles and practice*

“The free market” is a banner for neoliberal ideas. A market, however, is dependent on rules of the game. Today the market is only free in the sense that the participants, that over time have acquired position and advantages, are almost free to increase these benefits.

“Government”, however, meaning political institutions, formally decides the rules of the game, meaning property rights, juridical norms, and dispute resolution, on behalf of society. Capitalism wants government to be as small as possible, at least not to intervene much in the economy. A more fundamental issue than the size of government is who benefits from the rules of the game. Today the rules of the game benefits the few, not the many. Another fundamental issue is what practical processes that are behind establishing, enforcing, and maintaining the rules. These processes are not at all transparent, leading to political and democratic challenges.

Rules protecting property has always been important for capitalism. In the new economy, based on digital technology and biotechnology, intellectual property has been crucial, having major economic impact.

Other rules of the game are documented and discussed by Robert Reich in “Saving Capitalism”:

- American rules for handling bankruptcy make it relatively easy for companies to send the bill to employers and society
- Juridical agreements are extremely one sided dictated by the large companies
- Decisions regarding rules of the game are taken behind closed doors
- Resources for implementing rules of the game, enforce them, and following them up, are basically very scarce. This benefits the big players.

A specific issue is about the financial sector and the legal regime concerning loans and investments. There is no formal common global juridical institution. Financial law is in practice concentrated in legal instances in New York and London. When it comes to international agreements about loans to nation-states, there is a special institution, Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism (ISDS) that can be used by investors to sue governments in case of disputes. There is no mechanism the other way around.

The increasing economic inequality attributed to globalization should maybe equally be attributed to these rules of the game.

Understanding the economy – *Back to basics*

The present mainstream economy only considers what can be given a monetary value in a market. This simple idea is after all relatively new, and it is not at all self-evident. We must go back to basics. Economy should consider the total efforts to meet the basic needs for everybody regarding goods and services, but also safety, social and cultural life, and sense of affiliation, meaning of life and happiness - both short-term and long-term. This means that it is crucial how we relate to nature and to human needs in the broad sense. We need a better concept than “*value creation*”, that is used by mainstream economy in a way that makes it useless for a more basic discussion. I propose “*value for*

society” instead to avoid confusion. Value for society usually cannot easily be calculated. It is, however, often more important to make relevant qualitative evaluations than to make quantitative evaluations that are wrong or partly irrelevant even if the answer can be shown with decimals.

We have already discussed how our relationship with nature should be handled. Nature is by no means a free, endless resource open for short-term exploitation. Long-term management and conservation must be the yardstick for utilizing natural resources, not short-term economic profit. Still nature is a basic input effort factor in the economy. We will later discuss the necessary consequences of this basic approach.

Humans, their work efforts, and their contribution to a good society, is another basic input effort factor. This is, however, much more than workplaces in private sector. Activity resulting in care, social networks and in increased confidence, are important contributions to value for society.

Public services are necessary for the functioning of society. They secure long-term basic knowledge, viable institutions, and infrastructure. Public services provide substantial value for society. They are also crucial for market economy and private contributors.

Money is a practical and efficient tool for making the machinery of society go round. It is necessary to overview, stabilize, and regulate money in society. Cash flow and money bins are important. Mainstream economy concepts related to money get much attention, and they are obviously part of what must be considered seriously.

We, however, must start in the other end. We must consider the results we want to achieve with the input efforts that are available.

We must evaluate, and prioritize, regarding what is responsible and right, also in the long run, living with and using nature, its resources and services. We must also consider what human activities are most valuable for society and for individuals. This will have impact upon money handled in society. This will, however, be the consequences of hopefully good priorities and measures, not the other way around.

For simplicity export and import will not be discussed. A country may consider what is desirable and necessary to import, and what must be produced and exported to pay for the import. It is not about being able to export as much as possible to be able to import as much as possible.

The following simple sketch illustrates connections between input efforts and value for society:

RESULTS/VALUE FOR SOCIETY								
Infra-structure	Goods	Services	Social life	Leisure	Health	Knowledge /Information	Governance	Security
Energy Buildings Housing Transport Electricity ICT Water Renovation	Food Cloths Furniture Tools	Bank Post Logistics Personal services	Social networks Volunteering Confidence Motivation Cooperation Organization	Culture Nature Entertainment Travel Sports Play Nightlife Challenges Silence	Healthcare Children Old people Social care Local environment Prevention	Education Research Innovation Media	Law Rules Architecture Maintenance Administration NGO	Security Police Defence

INPUT EFFORTS	START SIGNAL/ LUBRICATION
Humans, working capacity Natural resources, raw material, area Knowledge, competence Technology Energy Innovation <i>Confidence</i> <i>Social network</i> <i>Motivation</i> <i>Organization</i> <i>Cooperation</i> <i>Management</i>	Money, Capital, Investment, Loan

Here we observe that the results that we want to obtain are much more comprehensive and more diverse than just goods and services. Mainstream economics automatically prioritize goods and services first.

We also see that human characteristic, like confidence, social networks, motivation, organization, and cooperation are important input efforts. Using such input efforts also lead to positive feedback and really become part of the result side. Input efforts are not static.

Even for those that most of all want to avoid elements of planned economy it is worthwhile to keep the considerations above in mind.

There are many examples showing that societies in war, and in severe other crisis, can increase the result side substantially. Societies possess strong muscles when all input efforts are used effectively. Mainstream economy is unable to describe and understand such phenomena.

The fact that “the economy” is more than just money, means that we often put low priority to many community areas, when we all the time evaluate and prioritize from money alone. It also means that we do not use the options for making changes, because we do not manage to see past the hindrances, mainstream economy apparently set for us. Changes in work life is such an important community area.

The fact that “the economy” is much more than money, is valid not only for countries, but globally as well. Ignoring this means that we systematically put low priority on large areas of important community development globally. The UN goals for sustainable development will be discussed later.

The global society really has resources or input efforts, that could solve many problems related to development, poverty, and health globally.

When discussing the pandemic and economy, the discussion based on money alone becomes too narrow. The pandemic gave us insight into the need for valuating other aspects than money alone. Most important, seen from the economic point of view, was to keep important input efforts ready for use again. Any loss measured in money becomes less important seen in a proper perspective. The financial sector, however, gained substantially during the pandemic. Support from authorities was mainly given to bad actors seen from the perspective of climate and conservation of nature. This was wasting the opportunities for change given by a crisis.

We need a reassessment of economic processes. Instead of asking if we in the short run have money enough to do an important task, we should instead have processes on different levels of society prioritizing what are really the most important tasks. This could provide framework for market economy, not the other way around as now is the case. We need the market economy for what it is good at. A totally planned economy is hardly a good idea, but we need more planned economy than what is the case today.

In “The Value of Everything” Mariana Mazzucato analyses how we evaluate the value of different activities and fields in society. How this is understood has not at all been self-evident and has been changing through times. The last 50 years or so, however, the idea that only what can be given a price in a market has value, has been almost preeminent. Mariana Mazzucato challenges this perception systematically. This is in line with what has been written in this book so far.

How mainstream economy evaluates value is very clearly demonstrated regarding Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In the definition of GDP there has been some attempts to adjust for other important fields of society than those automatically having a price in a market. These adjustments seem to be half-hearted and often inconsequent.

Mariana Mazzucato points at the financial sector, public sector, and the new digital economy. In all these fields there are basic questions to be asked regarding how they are handled in the evaluation of GDP.

She discusses how the financial sector today often does not create value for society. The financial sector moves and speculates using values created in other fields of society. The sector to a high degree contributes to the powdering of responsibilities, downgrading of concrete results in the real world (“on the ground”), and the prioritization of short-termism instead of long-termism. The way the financial sector still is included in GDP, its size and growth, makes it easy for the financial sector to lobby against politicians and society at large. They argue for having less regulations to continue to grow almost without limits. To be able to point to an economy, that on the paper is growing, even if it is only because of the definition of GDP, is tempting for politicians and easy to sell to the man in the street. What it really means for value to society is embezzled. The financial sector itself of course has winners when we look at it in a sufficiently narrow perspective. Norway, for example, with its oil fund (The Government Pension Fund Global), benefits from how the financial sector operates. Other countries and other kinds of players on the financial scene also are winners. The losers are the overall global society. The financial sector contributes to rapidly increasing inequality in many societies.

The new digital economy is included in GDP mainly based on advertising- and licensing income and stock market value. The obvious value of the use of the technology in all parts of society is basically

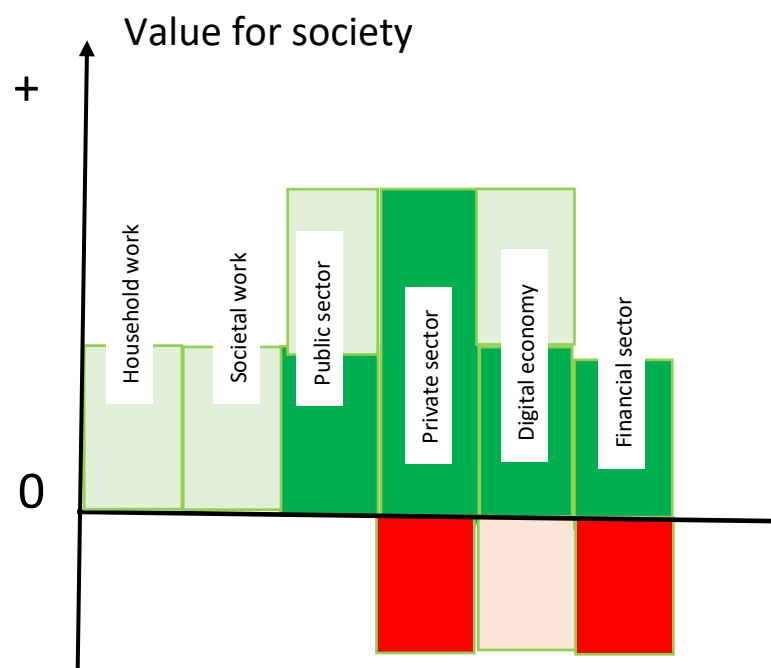
invisible and is not necessarily included in GDP. Digital economy and GDP are discussed by Brynjolfsson and McAfee in “The second Machine Age”.

Regarding public sector, Mazzucato focus on the interaction between public sector and private sector in research and development. Public sector is much more important than what economists usually recognize. Creating value is a collective process, not an individual process.

Public sector is included in GDP by its purchase of goods and services, and by the salaries and consumption of people working in this sector. The basic results from activities in the public sector, including quality, are not parts of GDP.

Below is a simple illustration of the relationship between value for society and GDP:

Figure 2 Sketch showing the relationship between value for society and GDP



The areas with a strong colour show what is included in GDP (both green and red are assigned a positive value regarding GDP).

- Household work (including care-work) and producing food for own use - is not paid for and is not included in GDP
- Societal work for the common good (social and human activity creating community and confidence), together with sharing or exchange of goods and services – is not paid for and is not included in GDP
- Public sector (Salaries to employees and purchase of goods and services are included in GDP – Results achieved are not evaluated and included in GDP)
- Private sector with goods and services are included in GDP (Several goods and services included, however, obviously have a negative value for society)
- The new digital economy – is partly included in GDP (Substantial both positive and negative contributions to value for society are not included)
- The financial sector has both a positive and a substantial negative contribution to value for society – both are included in GDP

I have not attempted to get a correct size of the different areas. The picture will also be different in different types of societies. The figure, however, illustrates that the difference between value for society and GDP is substantial.

GDP was from the start meant to be valid for an industrialized country (US) but has now been used more generally. Today the concept of GDP and economic growth seems self-evident and dominates economic and political thinking. There have, however, emerged critical voices. Mariana Mazzucato has been mentioned. An early critic of the use of GDP was in fact the man who defined GDP (Simon Kuznets).

OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), and others, have defined concepts that are broader than GDP. These concepts are, however, not easy to use and are not extensively used today. It is of course important to obtain knowledge about the societal areas included in GDP, as well as those areas that are not included. Trying to define one single number representing all societal factors must, however, be very uncertain and open for wide interpretations.

All measurements may be useful. It is, however, important to be aware of their limitations and be honest regarding how they are used. It is interesting to observe how difficult it is to find serious information about the real meaning of GDP. Only information regarding how it is calculated is relatively easy to find. This is a serious problem in a broader societal perspective.

Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi, however, have very thoroughly discussed the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress, including the problems with its measurement. They have also discussed additional information for more relevant indicators of social progress. They call for an end of the dominant use of GDP in assessing everything.

Mainstream economy and GDP consider nature only as a resource basically without limitations. When economical evaluations related to climate and destruction of nature automatically give the answer “continued economic growth”, some bells should ring.

How we understand the economy has many consequences at all levels, both locally and globally, regarding prioritization and budgeting. To leave the economy totally to “the experts” is highly undemocratic. The consequences of decisions are substantial for a lot of people.

It is important to secure stability in the economy, also if and when new processes for prioritization and budgeting are introduced. An adjusted and extended toolbox might be required. Today classical arguments regarding inflation and debts automatically are used but are seldom evaluated properly.

We may observe several interesting initiatives that illustrates and supports the ideas and discussions above.

The proposal from former President Biden about a large infrastructure package is in fact an example of the use of elements of planned economy to correct some consequences of what over time has been neglected by mainstream economy and its way of thinking.

IMF (International Monetary Fund) proposes to use SDR (Special Drawing Rights) to help developing countries handle the climate crisis. SDR can practically be seen as a kind of extra currency. This is a prioritization that is not fully in line with mainstream economy.

Governmental interventions in the economy more generally are in fact implemented quite often. This is mainly about subsidies or support packages, often to whole industries or some large companies. In the perspective of the challenges of climate and nature, very often the wrong activities

and actors are supported. Governmental interventions to achieve positive societal changes are seldom observed.

These examples support the main ideas about how the economy should be understood. Mainstream economy does not solve everything. Superior priorities and frameworks together with measures of repair are needed. Instead of rare and random measures, necessary measures and processes should continuously be used at a smaller scale.

What if the money placed in tax havens could be seized and given to the poor? The money in tax havens represents sort of a parallel economy. They can be used for luxury consumption, charity based on private visions, or obscure or directly criminal investments. To be useful for the poor other measures must be taken “on the ground”. Something useful must be present in the real world. Food, for example, must be physically present over time. This illustrates that the money in tax havens is stolen from activities that over time can give development and fair distribution. Development and distribution happen in continuous processes over time, not by throwing money after problems every now and then.

This reasoning can be used for the financial sector more generally. It is only the short-term profit, measured in money, from investments and money placements, that are interesting. What results and other consequences “on the ground” resulting from these monetary operations, is basically of little interest. This attitude is also adopted by politicians and authorities. Substantial amounts of money are granted to relatively lofty purposes without enough considerations about the fundamental work “on the ground” needed for these investments to really be useful.

Those trying to discuss global challenges automatically assume that market-based economy must proceed the way mainstream economy functions today. They perform their discussions without questioning this starting point. My discussions above, however, show that alternative thinking is crucial.

Society and economy – *The myths*

Let us start clarifying some concepts:

Government, The State, or rather more generally central authorities, can be seen as a concept representing society altogether with political processes and societal institutions. The main role for the central authorities is to secure safety, welfare, knowledge, societal and physical infrastructure, and culture for all its inhabitants. How these basic tasks are organized and followed up is crucial for the functioning of society. Legitim central authorities should be based on sound democracy. Government as an economic concept is the central authority for handling the economic rules of the game and guarantee the resources and functioning of the economy. The State basically has a regulatory role, but it may also be an active participant in the economy.

Public sector can be seen as a series of different services and measures on behalf of central authorities, that are not making money. Healthcare and education are large and important parts of the public sector in many countries.

The concepts market economy, capitalism, liberalism and neoliberalism are often used randomly without clear definitions. I use *market-based economy* to define the effective use of basic market

mechanisms. The other concepts mentioned have ideological overtones easily taking relevant discussions out of focus.

Public sector has different relative size in different countries. I still try to generalize the discussion of the public sector. A relatively large public sector often tends to stimulate and stabilize the economy, due to sound evidence.

A common myth is that private sector is financing public sector. This is how society organize prioritization and budgeting in mainstream economy. The basic idea is that goods and services (plus finance) produced by private sector automatically always get top priority, being the only societal sectors creating value (money). This is, however, just a “technicality” used by mainstream economy. The discussions in the previous chapter clarify that the relationship between private and public sector can and should be evaluated differently. Society has larger opportunity space. The discussion should not concentrate on private sector versus public sector, but rather on the challenges to be handled and the appropriate goals and measures.

Mainstream economy leans on private self-interest and private initiative being the only ways to handle a challenge effectively. It is true that ownership to something is creating accountability and proudness. Similar feelings and accountability, however, can be created when a task is undertaken by teamwork and joint responsibility. Participation and real democracy generate strong forces. We should be more openminded and nuanced. The general polarized discussion of private sector versus public sector is not a constructive discussion.

It is also a well-established myth that private ownership and governance is more effective than corresponding public governance in large organizations. The important question is, however, what kind of goals and rules of the game that are applied. Private companies today have simple goals related to short-term profits. Public organizations must have a much broader perspective. It is far easier to be effective towards simple goals when you can put on eye patches against complexity. Somebody, however, must take responsibility for holistic complexity.

There are regulations regarding food, medicine and many products harmful to health at different levels in different countries. In many fields, with major consequences to public health, more regulations should, however, strongly be considered. From a purely economic point of view alone this would make sense. We should consider societal costs related to public health resulting from unhealthy nutritional products. An effect on public health easily observed is obesity, rapidly increasing. There are, however, also many other unfavourable health effects that are not so easily and directly observed. “Fast food” and other examples of easily accessible, and heavily processed, cheap (but not always so when examined closer), and unhealthy food taken together is a major contributor. Such products have a global spread. The industry providing these products is an important contributor to GDP. Increased activity in private health industry caused by these products is also contributing to GDP. What about value for society? More regulations may be unpopular at first sight. Democratic anchoring processes may, however, be possible.

Market mechanisms support centralization and inequality. Well planned, holistic measures are needed to act against and balance such trends. This is necessary to support welfare for the many, good local societies and confidence. The challenges and practical measures are thoroughly discussed by Paul Collier in “The Future of Capitalism”.

Market-based economy in many ways function effectively, and we should benefit from this. Some regulations and some planning, however, are often required. We might ask if such measures should be undertaken upfront or after it turns out that the market is not functioning according to theory.

Planned economy in practice is more difficult than trusting “the invisible hand”. We should try to be cleverer at handling rational measures of planned economy. We should, however, not do more planned economy than what we can handle well enough. Practice makes improvement. Market mechanisms or elements of planned economy should be evaluated without ideological overtones. Planned economy is not always centralized and bureaucratic. Democratic processes behind planned economy are possible.

Money means power and is the starting point for activities. There is, however, a difference between investing money and having the job done “on the ground”. “On the ground” we need organization, administration, following up and maintenance, knowledge and motivation. Corruption must also be avoided. What is needed “on the ground” is often underestimated or even forgotten.

Economic challenges are moved outside politics and democracy. Economists behind mainstream economy have managed to sell the idea that economy is a field of science that is apolitical. Other perspectives related to economy must be taken seriously and other perspectives outside economy alone must be given sufficient room. Labelling everything with a monetary value, means that something essential very often is forgotten.

The financial sector – A “bubble” based on speculation and pulverization of accountability

The financial sector has gradually, but rather rapidly, been allowed to grow into a large and powerful role globally. The growth aside, there has also been structural changes internally in this sector. Other participants than the largest banks are entering the stage, and power is concentrated on fewer hands. Short-term profits from speculation are still important, but the largest participants earn their largest profits from the growth in the global economy.

The strong growth of the financial sector is not giving society and the man in the street more real value. It, however, shows several negative consequences:

- A market for speculation with money only partly related to real value “on the ground” in general
- Putting a monetary value on nature, both carbon-prizing and nature’s services, together with new financial instruments based on this pricing, lead to diversion from the seriousness of the climate- and nature-crisis. It also leads colonialization of large resources in poor countries.
- We get a market for luxury products distorting capacity and focus for businesses
- We get structural problems related to housing and other assets in several large cities that attracts large speculative investments – most people get problems with housing

The financial sector is based on debt as raw material. Substantial debt means risk and drop-height. The financial crisis in 2008 illustrates possible causes and consequences.

The financial sector, with substantial debt also means a high threshold for real changes in society. The future is already disposed of. Reversing investments that are already done, and sunk assets are not easily accepted.

Today only shareholders are seen as real stakeholders, and the goal for businesses is to maximize their profits. Employees, local society or society at large are not regarded as stakeholders with similar

relevance, if their interests are considered at all. This idea is totally dominating, although it is hard to see a valid justification.

Shares are parts of the salary for CEOs in the US, and companies can buy their own shares when appropriate. Share price and value become manipulated. This whole process is in the end subsidized by society taking the risks created.

In the US the relationship between the financial sector and central authorities is characterized by revolving doors. The same persons sit on both sides of the table, and there is no clear independence regarding the relationship between regulating authorities and the financial sector. The financial sector is in a unique position to influence politics and the perspectives for the future.

Tax havens are based on exploiting differences between countries regarding tax rules and other types of regulations. Secrecy regarding ownership and activities is the key itself to this business. Media has focussed on tax avoidance, but secrecy is the most important and most basic property of tax havens. The secrecy also gives opportunities for other obscure activities.

Tax havens are an integrated part of the present financial architecture and running business in the financial sector. Exotic small countries usually have been considered being tax havens, but the largest participants in tax haven businesses are the US and Great Britain. New York and London are centres for large networks using tax havens. Many other countries, however, also have substantial activities related to tax havens.

Authorities and politicians, as well as banks, economists and lawyers are participants in the activities in countries operating as tax havens. These societies have made themselves totally dependent upon this activity. Furthermore banks, economists and lawyers in apparently respectable countries, establish services and convey activities related to the tax havens.

The largest lawyer-, economy- and consultant companies globally are crucial in the functioning of the tax haven business.

Most of the hedge fund business also involves tax havens. All large multinational companies make use of tax havens. This is also the case regarding pension funds, and important institutions like well-known universities. Universities should be in the front-line valuing independence and transparency. The amount of money, shares, and assets kept in the tax haven universe is enormous. For many developing countries tax avoidance through tax havens outnumbers total development aid granted by far.

Tax havens attract increasing attention. Media focus on tax havens now and then, but mostly as single cases, not the basic phenomenon. There are, however, also more systematic attempts to scrutinize the tax havens universe. This has resulted in overviews like Financial Secrecy Index. Tax authorities have also increased their attention and started more international cooperation. A panel under UN-umbrella has evaluated the international efforts against illegal cash flows. The present situation can be seen as a patchwork, where the few regulations existing, are not being properly enforced. An UN convention regarding taxes has been proposed.

Politicians might be involved at different levels. This makes it more difficult to obtain fundamental changes. A substantial share of the sponsoring money for politicians and election campaigns in US, comes from the financial sector, often hedge funds.

Bitcoin and other crypto currencies are also money-systems making it possible to hide transactions. They often contribute to draw resources from productive economy. Crypto currencies are basically objects of speculation. Making crypto money demands large amounts of energy.

The financial sector evaluates what investments that give maximum profits in return. Such evaluations are mainly disconnected from utility and consequences in concrete projects “on the ground”. In addition, risk and responsibility is spread as much as possible. How is it possible to regard such a way of thinking and acting as beneficial for most people “on the ground”?

I will come back to how the financial sector deeply influence society in many ways.

Green growth – The foundation wall is failing

«Green growth» or “the green shift» is built on the wish of continuing growth in consumption and growth of GDP without doing substantial changes in the present economic systems and relations. The basic idea is that the energy needed gradually must come from renewable sources of energy instead of fossil-based energy. All the substantial consequences of increased consumption and use of areas are not considered. All consequences of establishing and running renewable sources of energy are seldom considered in calculations.

The following argumentation is basically based on the documentation and sources given by Adrienne Buller in “The Value of a Whale”. This is a very important book.

An important element in green capitalism is the pricing of emissions of CO₂. The business that emits CO₂ is obliged to pay for the emission. There is no global agreement on the right price for such emissions. The European Union (EU) has defined a comprehensive system, ETS (Emission Trading Scheme) with defined quotas and prices. The UN’s development program also embraces this basic idea.

Data from EU itself find very small real reductions in emissions from using ETS. Because of exception and clever financial instruments there are examples showing that the pollutants even gain from their emissions.

Globally we see a “wild west” situation regarding prizing, turnover, and speculation.

Pricing of emissions of CO₂ and other attempts to put a price on nature mean that only the “glasses” of economy is used. Nature is not considered in a proper way.

This leads us further to concepts like “greenwashing” and “carbon neutrality”. Many large companies justify and excuse their emissions, by claiming measures like planting trees in faraway countries, usually poor countries. Many such measures are very dubious and hard to control. We see a kind of neo-colonization from both large companies and rich countries moving their challenges regarding climate to poor countries using large areas there. Such projects usually also have serious negative consequences for local people.

The new digital economy – *Both real value for society and financial “bubble”*

The large industrial companies and energy companies lose terrain, relatively seen. The financial sector and digitally based companies are taking the leading roles. The main companies in the new digital economy have rapidly become the largest companies altogether (Big Tech).

The rapid growth of the new digital economy is based on network effects. When an application based on some kind of interaction gets a critical mass of users, the value of using this application rapidly grows for new users. Big Tech gets their direct income from advertising, licenses and user data. Stock market value, however, is important. The stock market value is based on future expectations.

We here see that price competition is not the only important element of market competition. The competition coming from new technology, new services, and new ways of organizing business might be even more important. The new digital economy means that the universe of competition is totally changed. Intellectual property becomes essential.

Basic characteristics of digital solutions and services:

- Applications and services are mostly intuitively useful to individuals and businesses.
- Network effects. The more users using interactive applications the more useful the applications become.
- It is possible to service a lot of users with limited resources. This might be seen as a kind of economy of scale.
- The winner takes it all. It is crucial to be in the right position at the right time.

The new digital applications and services are useful for individuals, businesses, and society at large. These applications and services may result in dramatic simplifications and efficiency in processes. Often processes have elements of self-service, meaning that the distribution of efforts and benefits is changed between participants. This impact is not fully measured by measuring GDP. The increased efficiency of processes is basically negative for GDP. It is, however, more than counterbalanced by increased number of customers and increased consumption.

Entertainment and leisure industry is also rapidly growing with foundation walls based on digital solutions.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an integrated part of digital solutions. The general development of AI is bringing in new perspectives regarding the spread of digital solutions and their societal impact.

Digital solutions offer many new options, often for free, for the individual user. Many of these options previously were impossible, almost unthinkable. These options obviously represent values for many people but are not directly included in GDP.

Social media with user generated content and services based on user effort, like Wikipedia, represent values not measured in GDP. The previous discussion of social media also points at large negative societal values not represented by GDP.

Digital solutions illustrate the more general problem that GDP does not always measure what people consider valuable.

Internet and social media have resulted in global advertising, expanding the economy by creating new wishes and needs. Today what results in most advertising income is what governs the visibility of opinions and discussions.

There is a tough struggle to get our attention. Social media creates addiction. Addiction is profitable. This can be further taken to new fields like health data and health applications.

Healthcare is a growing field of business awaiting an invasion from Big Tech. Internet of Things (IoT) makes it possible to connect all kinds of sensors and equipment for measurements. We have only seen early stages of this development.

The new digital economy really illustrates that societies in rich industrialized countries are societies of abundance filled with goods and services that we do not need for survival and reasonable welfare. There are really no limits for the needs that can be created. We get a new kind of dynamic compared to traditional economy with concrete goods and services with clear limitations.

The combination of the financial sector and new digital solutions changes the economic world view. Stock market activity is based on expectations for the future and less on results achieved and solidity. The participants in the new digital economy are caught in the impeller without quite understanding what is going on and how to react. The expectation of rapid growth often is problematic for successful companies. They may become unable to use their rapid income wisely. The new digital economy provides new mechanisms making the difference between amounts of money and real value “on the ground” run wild.

The new digital economy implies that we leave technological development to the rules of the game of the financial sector without ethical counterbalancing.

Money, however, can make changes in the real world. This means that priorities based on money alone become twisted regarding priorities based on achievable results “on the ground”. We then should consider what useful results “on the ground” digital solutions can contribute to, instead of letting digital solutions become a “bubble” connected to the financial sector.

The global economy seen like an eco-system in nature – The financial sector is the predator

The financial sector in the global economy can be compared to a predator on top of the food chain in an eco-system in nature. Most of what happens next in the economy depends on how the financial sector functions. The financial sector operates using money as merchandise. This business is very comprehensive. The goal is maximum profit from investments and speculation irrespective of the results and consequences “on the ground”. The horizon for profit is short-term.

With the financial sector as the model, businesses, are rated according to bottom line per quarter. This puts a lot of pressure on companies. Maximum profit per quarter very often conflicts with a company's long-term healthy business. Healthy business includes research and development, technology for production, and increased skills and competence of employees. Maximum profit per quarter also conflicts with the ability to focus on societal concerns. The focus on short-term profit influences salaries, working conditions, and options for participation from employees. It influences living conditions for people in a lot of local communities. It influences climate and destruction of

nature. It also influences the quality and sustainability of many products. Products may be directly or indirectly harmful or less durable than what they can and should be.

The options for short-term profits using the tools and products from the financial sector permeate businesses at all levels including multinational companies. Financial options and considerations override most other considerations. These effects are often named “financialization”.

All this taken together means that regulating the financial sector is important for meeting several global challenges.

Authorities and politicians in the most powerful countries and unions of countries taking a joint stand together are the only participants that have the strength to impose regulations for the global financial sector. They, however, often have various connections to the financial sector:

- Politicians may have personal advantages
- The financial sector has actively contributed to the election of politicians
- Revolving doors. No clear independence for regulatory authorities.
- Widespread lobbying
- Without the contribution to GDP from the financial sector, politicians have problems communicating growth of the economy (meaning growth of GDP).

The financial sector creates the basic framework for multinational companies. This means that it is difficult to basically regulate multinational companies, before regulatory measures are taken regarding the financial sector as such.

Multinational companies usually have a very comprehensive network of subcontractors at several levels. If the multinational companies take the responsibility for the whole value chain, they are in the position to provide a substantial degree of positive influence.

From studies of different societal environments, we know that subgroups in society often develop their own standards aside society’s main standards. A nearby parallel is the norms for bonuses, options, salaries, and special arrangements used by the financial sector. This gives the impression of a world of its own without the counterbalancing from alternative ideas, alternative experiences, and ground contact. People that for some reason has privileges very easily come to believe that the privileges are natural and well deserved. The most important aspect, however, is that the financial sector gets a leading role in influencing the expectations regarding salaries and consumption elsewhere in society.

Work and society – Value for society, a meaningful life, or just jobs

The labour market today has different rules of the game in different parts of the world. This is on a scale from relatively strong unions to exploitations of workers with low wages, bad working conditions and prohibition of or aggressive opposition to unions. In many places it is relevant to call it modern slavery.

A market-based economy will try to produce the goods and services that are demanded, and there must be customers who can afford to buy them. Here globalization comes in – if there are global customers who can afford to buy the goods and services, it is not necessary to pay wages that are high enough so that workers are able to buy the products that they produce.

The labour market is part of the mainstream market economy. The workforce should be used efficiently with full employment. We must all the time create jobs, implying jobs in the private sector, traditionally in the industry.

In many rich industrial countries, however, a two-part labour market is developing. This also means a two-part society. In the jobs that are the least attractive, foreign workforce is used because it is cheaper. The combination of relatively little attractive jobs and low wages, means that native workers in rich countries simply do not want to take such jobs. This also creates a risk of deficient preparedness for crisis for society. This was for example a challenge during the last pandemic.

Many new jobs now created in rich industrial countries are low-status and low-paid service jobs.

Some jobs are new types of routine-jobs in the big technology companies, like manual content checkers.

A digital global odd jobs market is also developing. Risk and responsibility are moved from companies to individuals.

When robots and AI can do ever more of the work, not only in traditional industry, but also in businesses mainly based on knowledge, the real need for traditional jobs will decrease. In rich industrial countries we are about to get a society of abundance. With limited work effort we can produce the goods and many of the services that we need. Because of climate and nature, we also carefully must consider our real needs.

The labour market does not operate in a simple and almost automatic way. There are social mechanisms and contexts involved, like social status competition and group formations. We might ask why an assistant nurse, a kindergarten employee or a renovator are less important than a financial analyst, a lawyer or a consultant. If we are willing to learn a lesson, the pandemic has shown something about the real value for society of many jobs that are barely visible, have low status, and low salaries.

To have a closer look at the consequences of increased use of AI and robots, we can divide the participants in the work market in a few main groups.

Routine jobs in production and logistics will get reduced scope.

In many jobs, however, there is still a need for personal contact, even if new ways of organizing services may be used. Examples are personal care-work, personnel in kindergartens, parts of shop- and logistics personnel, physiotherapists, dentists, hairdressers, security personnel, personnel in hotels and restaurants, craftsmen and renovators.

A third group is highly qualified personnel like doctors, teachers, lawyers, economists, architects, engineers, bureaucrats, academics, and a diversity of specialists. Such jobs and competences will still be needed, but the content and interaction with technology may change considerably. Technology will fully overtake some jobs. AI is better than humans for several advanced tasks.

Digital solutions for millions of users can often be run by few people. In this category new types of jobs may, however, also arise.

Overall, this means that the number of traditional jobs may decrease substantially. We must in addition remember that we must decrease the current material consumption for the urgent sake of climate and nature. This also means consequences for jobs linked to the production of goods that should not be produced any more.

It will, however, be wise fundamentally changing the way basic industries like agriculture, forestry and fisheries are organized and run. This means partly going back to more traditional ways of doing things to meet the urgent challenges from nature and climate. This means increased need for personnel in these industries.

In health, care and schools more people are needed, and the demand is increasing. Recruitment is failing because these are really demanding jobs also with low wages and relatively low status. The most important single measure is, however, proper staffing, competence and organization so that it is possible to do a good and meaningful job. Regarding education, technology might, however, play a more important role in the future.

In many countries there will be an increasing relative amount of elder people. This means that more people are needed for care work. Only to some degree new technology can be used. It is also possible to do more to facilitate that elder people can contribute more to society.

Everybody should participate in the running and thrive of society, but not necessarily in traditional full-time jobs in traditional sectors. This could build a basis for people to get new opportunities for using other talents that may be useful both for themselves and for others.

It is important that the trend towards a two-parted working life is stopped. This means doing something with extremely high salaries, and the very low wages that are possible by cynical use of the mechanisms of the mainstream economy labour market.

It is important to focus on humans, not just on jobs. We must expand our understanding of what we consider being jobs, or rather meaningful activity, both seen from the individual point of view and from the societal perspective. We must facilitate a meaningful life for everybody. Work in this broad sense has an important social aspect. This is the case both jobs in private sector, public sector and other meaningful activities.

The ideas about labour market in mainstream economy make us start in the wrong end. We must go back to the basic understanding of the economy. If people have the strength, time and competence to do a relevant job for the common good, it means that we can afford that this job is being done. That is good use of the basic input effort human work. We do not have to first produce something, that we hardly need, to accumulate money. To do so reduces society's opportunity space.

To support a safe platform for everybody, we need unconditional basic income, at a level that makes it possible to live and participate in society decently.

Unconditional basic income has several advantages:

- It supports gender equality
- It simplifies bureaucracy
- It gives dignity and independence to weak groups
- It rewards care
- It helps take care of children
- It gives opportunity space for culture and creativity

Unconditional basic income should be seen in connection with public welfare services and a relatively high minimum wages for traditional jobs. Respect and dignity are basic building blocks. The policy must be holistic, including tax policy. Problems and options are discussed thoroughly by Banerjee and Duflo in "Good Economics for Hard Times".

Working conditions and co-determination become even more important than wages alone.

More digital and flexible jobs mean less need for building offices. Existing localities can be reallocated for homes, and the total need for building new buildings can be reduced.

For security and preparedness reasons a society cannot be totally dependent upon cheap workforce and competence from abroad for critical societal fields. Agriculture and fisheries are included here. A two-part labour market is also having many unwanted consequences. If workforce from abroad is used, they should have comparable conditions, including wages, to internal workforce. This could lead to more healthy competition, and thus support maintaining internal competence and workforce.

Society must manage to produce the goods and services that are really needed, but besides that goal the main challenge is to organize society based on the goal that everybody should have a meaningful life. Society, however, will need competence at all levels. Relevant competence also is the basis for adjustment of competence.

This means that we should move from a society automatically prioritizing material wealth to a society with sufficient wealth based on other values. The basic key is to make changes by using the options given by another understanding of the economy, previously discussed. It is all about the right prioritization of human resources and societal thrive.

Wars and conflicts – The economic winners and losers

Wars and conflicts have considerable effects on the global economy. It is worthwhile to analyse these effects since they also always are present in the global economy. These effects are, however, at a smaller scale and less visible in the normal conduct of the global economy. Norway is used as a typical example of an economic winner in normal periods, but especially in times of war and major conflicts.

Components heavily influenced by wars and conflicts are:

- Oil- and gas-production
- Stock market, Hedge funds
- Production of weapons
- Rare earth minerals
- Food
- Logistics

Oil and gas prices often rise considerably because of wars or conflicts in oil or gas producing regions. This influences the general prices also for oil and gas from regions that are not directly involved. Norway usually profits economically from this situation because of higher prices for oil and gas in general. It may also in addition result in increased demand for Norwegian oil and gas.

Stock markets may fluctuate because of uncertainty. Hedge funds, however, in the long run will profit from increased activity, both good or bad activity as wars and conflicts. The Norwegian Oil Fund will profit from wars and conflicts in the long run. There are minimal ethical considerations regarding any activity generating profit.

The production of weapons is basically justified by a nation state's own security consideration or by the security needs of organizations like the NATO. The production of weapons may also be based on prospects of economic profit. Some of the largest producers and developers of weapons like the US,

uses weapon production and sales as a strategic instrument also outside pure profit. The military/technological complex is a strong force in US politics. Norway is also a relatively large producer of weapons.

Rare earth materials are becoming of increasingly strategic importance. This also means that the great powers use their toolbox of economic and military power to get hold of these materials. Smaller countries and developing countries are exposed to such pressures.

The supply and the prices of food are often heavily negatively influenced by wars and crisis.

Wars and crisis mean risks and increased costs regarding transportation and logistics altogether. The costs are usually transferred to the consumers of transported products.

All these components are bad news for consumers in rich industrial countries in general and developing countries in particular. They are all the time the losers.

Hedge funds and holders of other financial instruments generally are the winners.

It is important to find ways to regulate and stabilize the supply and the prices for food and energy. This is vital for consumers in general, but particularly for developing countries. I will come back to proposals.

Development and aid for development – *Complex matters mostly outside mainstream economics*

This leads us further to the general relation between rich industrial countries and poor countries and the concepts of “development” and “aid for development”.

International work on sustainability, including the Brundtland Commission and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals from 2015, don't consider the elephants in the room, namely that growth of GDP also in the rich countries is considered a prerequisite for sustainable development globally, and that the global financial system and rules of the game systematically downgrade environment and the global poor.

The basic thinking behind international work on sustainability is most clearly formulated by Jeffrey Sachs in his book “Common Wealth”. He makes some assumptions that to my opinion lack sufficient evidence:

- We should aim for growth of GDP in all countries also the rich ones. We will see a convergence-effect so that developing countries will approach the prosperity of the rich countries. Climate and nature will be taken care of by means of continuous technological development.
- Only small investments relative to total global GDP will be necessary to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. (If so - How can we go on without just doing it!)

Mainstream economics, with the dominant financial sector, is the instrument needed to justify automatic priority of private interest at the expense of the common good. It is also the instrument to automatically put priority on pure financial goals, pulverization of accountability, and short-termism at the expense of results “on the ground”. In the long run this means major negative societal biases, if the necessary measures for counterbalancing are not implemented.

When it comes to the concept of development, it is decisive that development is not automatically coupled to growth in GDP. The UN uses growth in GDP as part of their measurement of degree of development. Neither rich industrial countries nor developing countries can automatically afford further development defined like this. This also means that private investments in poor countries from large companies based on the company's own goals, also when it comes to the use of natural resources, not automatically are positive initiatives. Such investments must, for eventually being positive, be in specific projects with clearly defined goals and frames for poverty alleviation and local needs. Sufficient social and political stability and lack of corruption is also a vital prerequisite.

When it comes to aid for development, we must consider net transfer of resources in both directions between rich countries and countries needing developing aid. Aid to poor countries is as the main rule given by loans at relatively non-favourable conditions. Cancellation of debt is the exception. We must consider the total history behind investments - where do the money come from in the first place? Such a holistic consideration shows considerable flows of resources from poor countries to rich countries altogether resulting in a net transfer of resources from poor countries to rich countries. When evaluating aid for development this situation must all the time be kept in mind.

Norway has a relatively large public budget for aid for development. The goal has been poverty alleviation. According to new proposals this budget should be divided between poverty alleviation and measures for the common global good. This basically includes measures for reducing climate risk. Norway do very little for reducing the country's own emissions. They bet on using their fortunate position having a large fund of money from years of fossil fuel extraction and financial profits to buy its way out of the challenges. Reducing money for poverty alleviation based on such a background is a striking example of double standards. Norway as an example also illustrates the circulation of money in the financial circuit. Grab with one hand and give a bit with the other hand.

Development and aid for development, first of all in developing countries, but also more generally are complex matters also involving other perspectives than economics alone. I refer to very thorough research and discussions regarding this topic – “The Bottom Billion” and “Left behind” by Paul Collier and “Good Economics for Hard Times” by Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo.

When considering practical aspects of aid for development, there are many pitfalls and suboptimal arrangements to be taken into account:

- Lack of long-term stability
- Many actors working more or less in parallel
- An aid for development industry with high salaries almost free coupled from results on the ground
- Lack of holistic attitude considering economy and other aspects taken together
- Lack of local anchoring

The most important measures for developing countries are after all not traditional aid for development, but stable and fair framework conditions.

Ever-increasing economic growth? – *We must change focus and have a closer look*

The basic framing of a discussion of economic growth must be that we must prevent global heating and destruction of nature. Often only climate is considered. Destruction of nature, use of areas, and biological diversity are not included in the evaluations and calculations. We must see the whole picture.

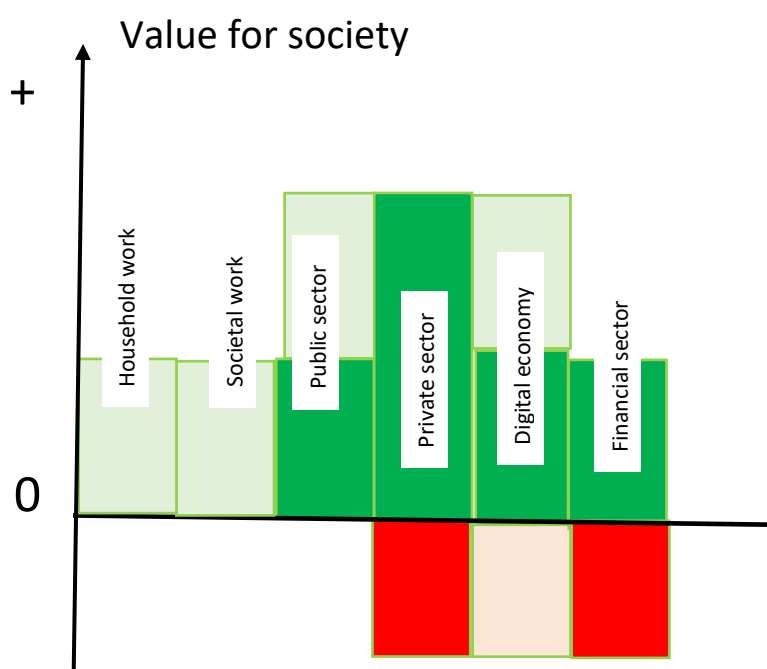
From a psychological perspective the present modern human in rich industrial countries often focus on growth in general and ever better and more comfortable living conditions. This is expressed most clearly in growth of consumption. People often build their identity based on consumption and wealth. This type of identity is, however, closely related to comparison with others and group-identity. We cannot disregard these psychological mechanisms for growth, but we can try to lead them in a new direction, that is growth in societal benefits. Societal benefits are more diverse than individual wishes and wellbeing. Societal benefits, however, could also be experienced to be more satisfactory for the individual resulting in a better life.

We must believe in the possibilities of changing people's attitudes even if it will be challenging. Targeted measures at all levels, however, are necessary. To get most people to understand what societal benefits mean to them, these benefits must be highlighted and repeated in the community conversation. The constant focus on mainstream economy and consumption must be redirected. This is an important challenge to media, politicians and in fact everybody. It is indeed not so farfetched if we leave habitual thinking behind.

As discussed previously there is a clear difference between growth of GDP and growth of societal benefits or *value for society*.

I will use the previous figure 2 for illustration and discussion.

Figure 2 Sketch showing the relationship between value for society and GDP



The areas with a strong colour (both green and red) shows what is included in GDP.

We take a closer look at the different main areas.

Household work and care:

The most important aspect is that no one must be left behind. The proper functioning of families has large repercussions. Change in labour market, unconditional basic income, and measures of general welfare are important.

Societal work (social and human activity producing community and trust):

Local environments, social networks, volunteering, sharing, and cooperation can be systematically strengthened.

Public sector:

Public sector can produce more services and better services. Basic services for society like health care and education can be systematically strengthened by prioritization of staff, competence and organization.

Private sector (much of the goods and some services included in GDP has a clear negative value for society):

Production of necessary goods and services must be taken care of. Necessary stronger regulations, that takes care of climate, nature, safety and health should be considered. More specific accountability is also important. Better cooperation between private and public sectors can have positive effects providing stronger impact and better handling of risk. Real "Green" innovations and projects should be supported.

The new digital economy:

Measures previously discussed related to avoiding negative consequences should be implemented. The negative societal effects of the present social media should be removed.

The financial sector:

It is crucial that measures related to negative consequences previously discussed should be implemented. This is closer discussed later.

These measures taken together are likely to constitute, and in fact also to be experienced by people, as improvement of societal value. The focus on GDP alone tells us very little about these benefits. We must focus on what is the specific content under the heading GDP. The specific content is much more important than the size of GDP as such.

The relationship between GDP and material welfare alone is not straightforward. Is it a substantial reduction in welfare to own 5 good pieces of specific garment instead of 20, 2 excellent types of sports equipment instead of 10, or waiting a few years before buying a new mobile phone or a new

and larger flat screen. There are a multitude of examples. This shows that it is possible to have a very high material welfare and quality of life in rich industrial countries even with a clear reduction in GDP.

As discussed previously, to have increasing GDP as the ultimate goal is not compatible with taking care of climate and nature. This is also the case if we go for increased GDP further from the present situation with the current rules of the game, structures, processes, and relations. If we manage to take away all the elements recorded in GDP that result in decreased value for society, it might be theoretically possible to have increased GDP compatible with taking care of nature and climate from that starting point on. It would, however, be more reasonable to go for degrowth, as proposed by some economists. The basic key is in both cases to be very specific about the resulting value for society.

A basic perspective regarding value for society is to take care of nature and climate. This means relatively comprehensive and invasive measures of regulation related to the use of natural resources and areas. Measures and resources for follow-up are crucial. Measures should be on a local as well as a global level.

GDP as such is not the problem. The problem is the whole way of thinking about GDP and politics evolved from that thinking. GDP has turned into a general and preeminent unit of measurement and goal setting.

It is, however, after all rather the amount of money in the global economic system together with future expectations that is most important for the big players in global economy. This means that regulating the financial sector becomes crucial.

«Limits to Growth», with follow-ups from Club of Rome and “Doughnut Economics” from Kate Raworth also give relevant background for this discussion.

Changing the economy? – *Structures, myths, power*

The economy is not something boring, stand-alone, that we should leave to the experts. The economy is at the heart of societal development and the everyday life of everybody. We must dare to stick our hands in the hornet’s nest.

The man in the street tries to survive with the destiny provided for him by the hardly predictable ups and downs of the economy. Without support from society, he will easily be in trouble, especially if not growth in GDP gives some sort of stability and predictability. The carousel is spinning. It takes effort to leave it.

Economists have their education and their professional environments, seeing the economy and its concepts and methods as something self-evident not to be fundamentally questioned. Their job is mainly to secure maximum output for themselves, their employers, or clients by taking advantage of the opportunities given by the present rules of the game. The rules themselves, and the overall consequences of using them, are preferably not considered. The professional environment leaves little space for alternative ideas.

Politicians and authorities take the easy way out by trusting the economists and their receipt of growth in GDP. Growth in GDP can dampen social unrest and postpone necessary larger changes still a few years.

The mainstream understanding of the economy is, as I have tried to show previously, not something self-evident. It is not at all some law of nature. How it is functioning, with all considerable consequences, creates many types of problems, previously described and discussed.

We can summarize like this:

Mainstream economics is the instrument needed to justify automatic priority of private interest at the expense of the common good. It is also the instrument to automatically put priority on pure financial goals, pulverization of accountability, and short-termism at the expense of results “on the ground”. In the long run this means major negative societal biases, if the necessary measures for counterbalancing are not implemented.

So, what are the most important obstacles for necessary changes?

- The most fundamental obstacle is the position that mainstream economy has managed to establish related to politicians and society at large globally. When looking at the crisis of nature and climate, the attempts to include in the economic models something that does not fit in at all, is dangerous, making us unable to handle the crisis effectively. Adrienne Buller has in “The Value of a Whale” documented and discussed very clearly, that the receipts and methods given by mainstream economy for solving the crisis of nature and climate, are not at all navigable. The global society must leave this track as soon as possible. It is urgent. There are several excellent economists challenging mainstream economy. The economic establishment altogether, however, seems to remain dominating economic institutions and public debate. This also includes international institutions like the IMF and the World Bank.
- All measures are used for influencing and manipulating people’s everyday life in the direction of increased consumption. Advertising is massive with social media adding a new dimension coupling our ecosystem of information closely to advertising. All psychological means for manipulation are being used. Advertising is basically creating new needs. Our basic needs, on the other hand, are not dependent upon massive advertising.
- Most people, also in central roles and positions, have a too one-dimensional understanding of the economy and what options that are available for other ideas and measures than those prescribed by mainstream economy and the growth strategy. They do not try to see behind the veils consciously or unconsciously provided by mainstream economists, helped by media and politicians. Enduring myths get nourished. Even those that are opponents to many of the effects of mainstream economy, think and argue based on the limited conceptual world of mainstream economy.
- The man in the street gets very little help to understand the mechanisms and resulting consequences of mainstream economy. He is not supposed to bother anyway. What is normal is shaped from individual choices and societal mechanisms. This level of normality for consumption is today almost automatically linked to the level of GDP. People consume what they are given the chances to consume helped by aggressive ubiquitous advertising.
- The practical challenges doing large changes in a global economy is of course enormous. Such eventual changes will have ripple effects in many fields. The toolbox needed will also

have to be improved. These challenges alone are easily considered as insurmountable obstacles.

- Economic and political power go hand in hand, and many politicians, companies and other actors benefit substantially from the present economic situation. The financial sector has achieved enormous power and is tightly interwoven with politics and government. Politicians and governments basically have the power and tools to initiate changes. They, however, have accepted a role being totally dependent on the mindset, practical mechanisms, and rhetorics of mainstream economy.
- Today's global governance regarding the economy is rigged to preserve the present rules of the game, mechanisms, and relations, not to change them.
- Great power politics and cold war rhetorics make global cooperation difficult, especially between superpowers. The substantial negative effects of the present rules of the game and economic structures and relations, however, applies for most people both in U.S., China, EU, and India, not to mention most developing countries. These negative effects, however, do not apply for holders in power and elites.

When it comes to understanding the economy, some myths are still alive:

- Everything about the economy is only related to money
- Growth of GDP is the non-disputed goal for everything
- All activity in the financial sector, including trading and speculation with money, creates real value
- Only private sector generates real value, paying for the rest of the society
- Private sector is by default more effective than public sector

These myths are discussed previously. It is possible to consider a well-functioning economy mostly based on market mechanisms without automatically fully accepting all these myths.

Personal choices are important for themselves, but they are even more important when they are influencing other people. Such choices and processes can trigger consumer power and political influence. By consumer power I mean the power to change the total consumption, not the choice between specific products.

When considering options for changing the economy, a perspective based on the tensions between the input efforts "work" and "capital", is interesting.

At the time of Marx both work and capital were relatively concrete concepts. Work was related to industrial workplaces. Capital was also relatively clearcut and identifiable. Government was not part of capital, however government clearly supported capital.

Both work and capital have changed substantially.

The content of the concept work is now much more diverse. The Labor movement and unions have not managed to gather most people that might be considered as workers. Work is not now something that can be an effective source of power.

Capital has also changed considerably. The financial sector has picked up both the owners of companies and industries as well as public authorities under its umbrella. Cooperation between government and the financial world has come to be seen as the natural and right thing to do. Government in fact provide substantial support and risk-reduction for the financial sector.

This means that capital has no clear counterweight. The only possible counterweight is the population regarded as consumers. Consumers are also not a homogeneous group.

This short discussion suggests that classical Marxist thinking in many ways may be outdated.

If enough people reduced their material consumption substantially, this would influence the economy at large. This could create space for alternative thinking about the economy. The first reaction from economists and politicians would of course be to see a crisis coming. The simple answer would be to try to increase consumption. Authorities should, however, look for other options. War and other crisis might also disturb economic growth. To use reduced economic growth to change the economy it is necessary to look for more fundamental measures outside traditional economic thinking. I will discuss such measures later.

This means that both individuals and government should look for different key roles regarding initiating changes in the economy. In the background we have the great powers eventually acting together that are the only ones with the power to support coordinated big changes in the global economy.

Paul Collier has in “Left Behind – A New Economics for Neglected Places” suggested a new economics for places left behind based on positively spiralling societal processes instead of trusting the solutions given by mainstream economics. He underpins his arguments by examples based on first-hand knowledge. Elements of such processes are self-sacrificing leadership, shared agency, local knowledge, rapid learning, learning from others, communication, and participation. His new economics is applicable also more generally than for places left behind.

The good news is that there is very much useful information in public registers as well as in the information systems of banks and financial institutions.

Taxes and tolls will always be useful measures for avoiding unwanted activity and for equalizing inequalities. Still, I would rather first consider the basic rules of the game and mechanisms that promotes unwanted activity and that amplifies inequality.

Overall economic model – *Nature and a thriving society must have their independent priority*

The present mainstream economy can at a principled level be illustrated as below. Mainstream market economy should be replaced by an economy where market-based economy only is part of a total economy.

Fig. 3 Mainstream market economy

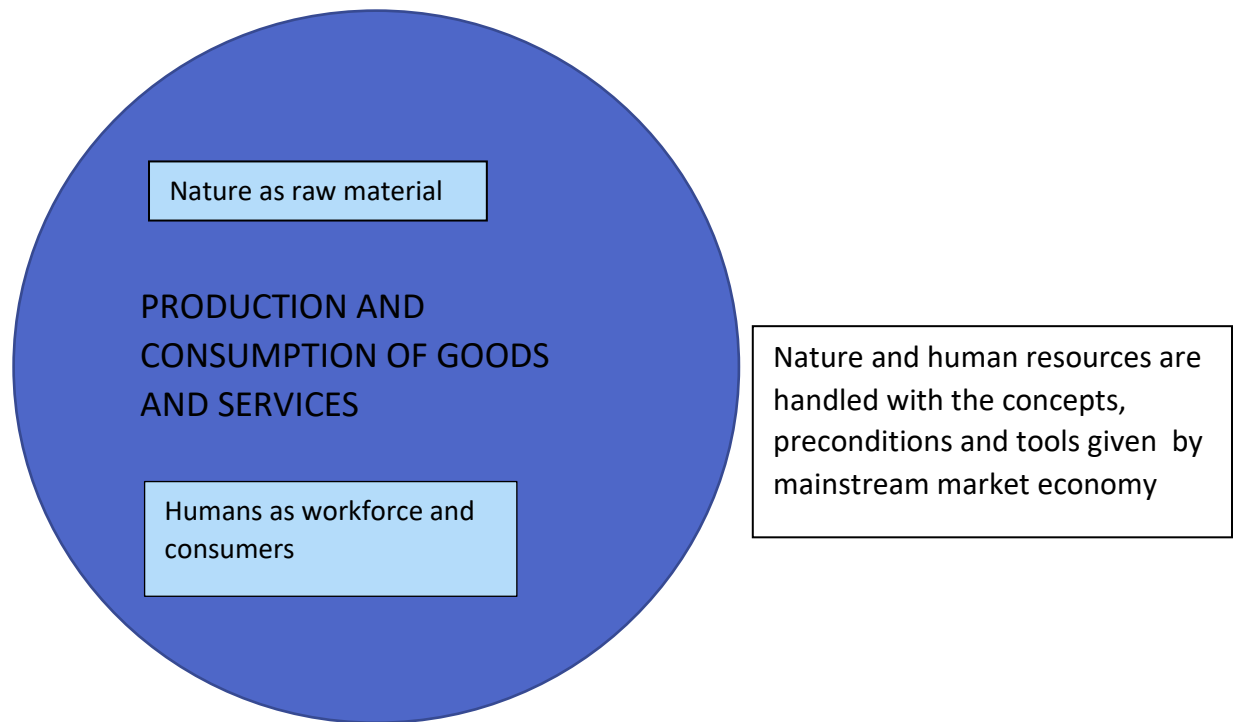
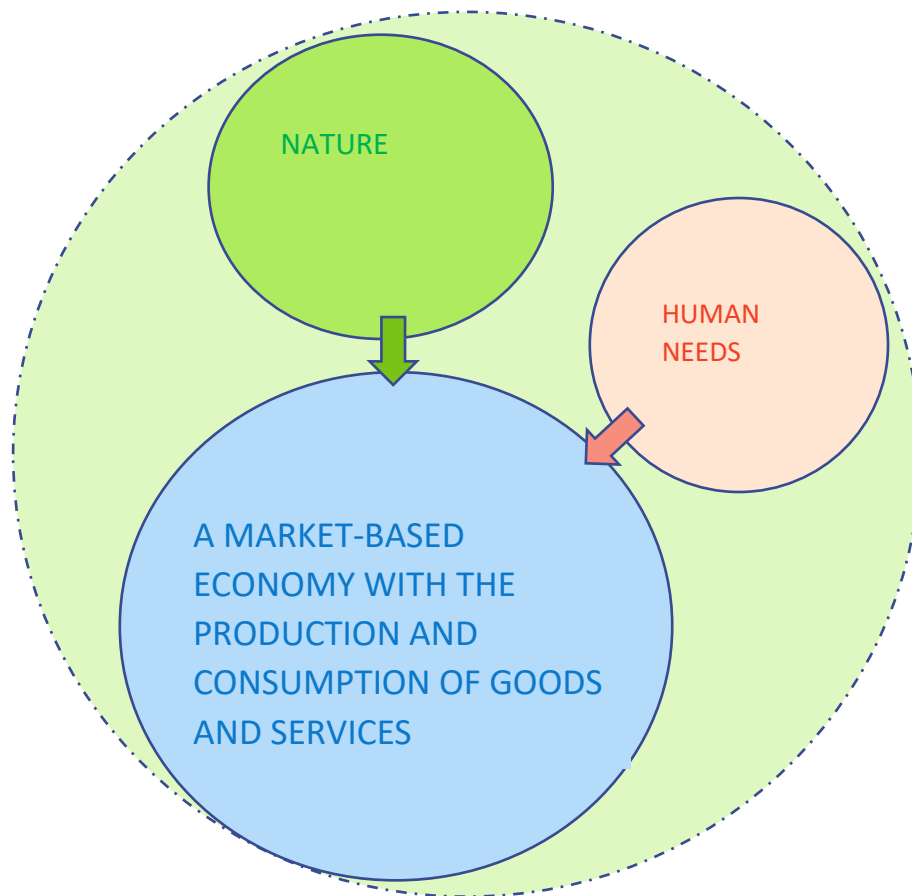


Fig. 4 An economy where market-based economy is only a part of the total economy



Nature and human needs are handled with concepts and toolboxes relevant for these fields.

The input to the market-based economy comes from nature's needs in the shape of specific regulations of the use of natural resources and areas.

The input to the market-based economy regarding human resources is based on human needs, not the needs of the market economy as such.

The ideas of the model can be used at several levels, from the global level and downwards.

This includes market-based economy, but the toolbox must be revised and expanded.

Important issues to be taken to a final holistic discussion:

- Increase the understanding of the basics of economy, including what gives value for society
- Introduce processes for the prioritization of what gives most value to society as framework for market-based economy. We must first ask what is most important for society, then comes the policy for handling money, not the other way around.
- Introduce regulations and rules of the game for the financial sector to support long-term thinking and limit short term speculation
- Secure distinct accountability in the financial sector, including tax havens and multinational companies
- Start processes for a gradual reorganization of work and society based on a more basic understanding of the economy
- Change the rules of the game for intellectual property
- Measures related to protection of nature and climate must shift from purely business economic measures, such as that the polluter should pay for polluting, to more specific frames for what natural resources can be used and what can be produced.
- Public health is considered from a socio-economic perspective. The production and quality of food, with all its consequences accounted for, should be scrutinized.

Governance/Power/Order/Violence/Security – *What and who are really governing the way of the world?*

Formal global governance today is quite unclear and fragmented. In fact, there is also a widespread view that the known formal global governance already has fallen apart and that we actually have got a new and even far more unsecure and fragmented way of the world. This is worrying, but might also mean new opportunities. A trend where the most powerful nation-states more often downgrade established formal global governance is alarming. The Trump MAGA approach is discussed more specifically in a postscript chapter.

In addition, we have many informal players and arenas. These are often not clearly publicly visible but are increasingly important. There is also a close relation between formal and informal actors, so that lobbying has both elements of handling of information and social elements, making the background for decisions untransparent.

It is perhaps because of this situation even more important and useful to have a relevant overview of actors, arenas, and structures both in formal and informal global governance. This is useful for understanding all diverse fields that absolutely need some sort of global governance, and also to see where the challenges are most pressing. We should not let go all formal organizations and arenas without a second thought even if they obviously don't function optimally. Elements of and experience from existing global governance might also imply building blocs for reformed global governance. The *Status for global governance* is therefore getting a relatively broad discussion. I try to identify consequences, possibilities, and limitations regarding effective handling of basic global challenges.

Who has got the military and economic power? Who has got legitimacy? Who is representing many people? What about practical democracy in global governance? Are global organizations like the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization capable of using their human resources and competence effectively? Are arenas like the Security Council, G7(8) and G20 functioning effectively as arenas for taking vital decisions? Are decisions implemented and followed up? Who has the power to be the engine for long lasting changes – The U.S., China, The European Union (EU)? Is it after all the financial sector and multinational companies that governs the world without any formal, legitim, or democratic accountability? To what extent are different players working in the same direction?

Some important perspectives relevant for an *overview of total global influence* are:

- Legitimacy
- Military power
- Economic power
- Power of knowledge
- Strategic raw materials
- Power of influence
- International fora
- Internal problems

I try to see these perspectives correlated.

In addition, some themes are discussed more specifically. These themes are *the role of the nation-state in global governance*, *global governance and the crisis of nature and climate*, and perspectives

when discussing *the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East after the attack on Iran from the US and Israel*.

Most of the present formal global governance is based on the nation-state in a central role. This is problematic in many ways. What is formally accepted and practically functioning as nation-states, covers a wide spectrum. In addition, other participants than nation-states have become increasingly important in practical global governance at the expense of nation-states.

Still a well-functioning nation state is a basic prerequisite for making global governance function. What makes a nation well-functioning and healthy? Mutual trust among inhabitants and trust in social institutions and governance obviously is important. Corruption Index is an important indicator for the health of a nation state. The Canadian prime minister has called for more cooperation between medium sized nations. Maybe we should rather point at closer cooperation between relatively healthy nations around the world in order to move towards formal global governance that could be functional.

The most recent partial report from UN climate panel shows a very negative trend when it comes to real emissions of climate gases and follow-up of agreed obligations. It is also essential to remember not only climate but nature altogether. I try to analyse the present situation systematically. Has our present regime for handling the crisis of nature- and climate a structure and a philosophy that makes it possible to achieve results that are sufficiently positive?

The Russian invasion of Ukraine can be seen as a regional problem or as a start of World War III. It anyway creates substantial widespread unrest and has wide repercussions. How the most important global actors handle the situation will have consequences for the possibilities of future cooperation and global governance. The situation is unclear, but possible long-term effects should be broadly considered anyway. This is, however, not at all the only present critical and complex conflict, but it is considered a useful example.

The situation in the Middle East after the attack on Iran from the US and Israel is very complex, and it is even more complex than it was before the attack. Some considerations on the situation still are worthwhile.

Status for global governance –Participants and structures to be aware of

The United Nations (UN) is a natural starting point. The UN is a serious attempt creating real global governance after World War II. The UN had a precursor in The League of Nations and other international cooperation in several fields. The UN is built on the participation of all formally accepted nation-states.

The main bodies of UN are:

- The Security Council
- The General Assembly
- The UN Secretariat
- The International Court of Justice

- The Trusteeship Council
- Several relatively independent special organizations. Examples: FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), WHO (World Health Organization), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). This reflects and underlines the need for global governance and cooperation in many fields.
- The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) representing a superstructure for the special organizations.

The main mission of the UN is to support international peace, security and cooperation.

The Security Council is the main source for authority and legitimacy. The Council consists of 15 members. The US, Russia, China, Great Britain, and France are permanent members with the right of veto. The membership otherwise rotates. Guidelines and standards for peacekeeping operations have been developed. The scope of such operations is quite large.

The General Assembly is arena for general debate, facilitation for agreements, coordination and surveillance of the whole UN system. It may be seen as “Town meeting of the world”.

The Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 is fundamentally important. It was discussed earlier in this book.

Sustainable Development Goals 2015 consists of 17 goals:

- End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

- Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

There has been a broad process leading to the development goals.

The UN system altogether contains substantial expertise. The climate panel (IPCC) has played an important role.

Approximately 5000 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have consultative status at the ECOSOC independent of national governments. Some examples are Amnesty International, Friends of the earth, and Oxfam.

The results achieved by the UN system should not be underestimated. The results are important, but very far from sufficient. The influence from the UN system also seems to be weakened gradually. The global economic system is undermining much of the work done by UN instead of supporting it.

Other important formal instances or arenas:

Group 7(8) consist of the US, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Canada. Russia has participated for a period. The European Union (EU) participates as guest.

Group 20 consists of Argentine, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, China, Mexico, Russia, Saudi-Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, Great Britain, the US, and the EU.

Group 20 is about to be more important than group 7(8).

There are also several important formal regional or special organizations. Some examples are the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), the OECD (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), the African Union (AU), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

The most important informal groups or arenas

Informal groups and arenas are mostly hidden from public awareness. The Epstein case known through the Epstein Files from the investigation of sex trafficking crimes revealed as an important byproduct comprehensive networks of very wealthy people, oligarchs and people in many important official and social positions. There are probably many other similar networks that operate with different degrees of secrecy. We also remember from the discussion of the economy the importance of secrecy in the tax haven universe.

The World Economic Forum is a kind of HUB for informal global governance. This Forum is mainly known for its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland. It, however, has a permanent secretariat and administration. The leader of probably the most important global financial company, Blackrock, is leader of the board. The World Economic Forum publish several reports. One of them is an annual report of the most important global challenges.

Trump's Board of Peace is meant to be a board for formal global governance. It, however, has many of the characteristics of informal global governance. The Board members are picked according to the personal liking or disliking of President Trump. The statutes can hardly be taken seriously regarding fair global governance.

All such groups and arenas for informal global governance have goals that are others than the common good expressed most clearly in the Millenium Development Goals of the United Nations.

The only way to counterbalance these powerful informal players is sufficiently strong institutions for global governance based on goals for the common good, fair participation, transparency, predictability and stability. The existing formal global governance has not managed to withstand the forces trying to tear it apart. That does not mean that we don't need formal global governance. We have to have a closer look at the needs and the more or less successful results from existing formal global governance.

Different groups of nations

Great powers

Great powers, with substantial military power, can get support for their wishes and agendas regarding economy, military goals, politics, diplomacy and culture from others. The most effective way is by voluntary cooperation.

Hegemonic powers in historic periods like the Netherlands, Great Britain, and the US have managed to combine military and economic power with intellectual and cultural leadership to lead the international system in their preferred direction.

China is rapidly becoming a great power challenging the US in many fields.

The US

The US has had, and still have, enormous global influence in several dimensions. The very strong military power, however, is difficult to transform into results in other sectors. What happened in Iraq and Afghanistan are recent examples. The polarization of society and politics is a clear weakness making it difficult to achieve major results and changes.

Many of the world's largest multinational companies are resident in US.

The US has an enormous national debt. It can continue to grow because of the organization of the global monetary-system with the central role of the US dollar. This debt is not an indicator of a healthy economy, and it implies a risk for the global economic system.

The US has been able to virtually rule the world for a relatively long time. This role is now becoming less clear, leaving a kind of power vacuum. The US has to a very little degree supported the work of the UN. All the time from World War II the US seems to have believed to have the inherent right of making and breaking the inherent global rules of the game.

Religion is a strong internal force.

China

China has made a long, but rapid journey from relative isolation to become participant, contributor, sponsor, and reformer of the international system originally dominated by the western world. This is

most clearly seen in projects and initiatives at a local or regional level, but with global influence and effects. The new “Silk Roads” has become a familiar term. China is a major contributor to the UN activities.

China with its enormous population has many internal tensions and challenges. Stability becomes important in a large and diverse country changing rapidly. We see contradictions regarding large economic inequalities, urban versus rural population, and central rule versus minorities. Values like democracy, human rights, minority rights, and individual opportunities suffer. China tries to tightly control the flow of information internally and towards the outside world.

India

India is hardly a great power today but with its enormous population India is moving towards an increasingly important global role. It is a technologically advanced country with an internationally important sector of advanced technological services. At the same time much of the population lives in deep poverty.

The present government combines active Hindu nationalism with unrestrained capitalism. The ancient caste system is still existing. The Muslim minority is significant. The different underprivileged groups in society struggle to find a joint platform for opposition.

An important recent event is the comprehensive, long-lasting, and so far, successful wave of protests from Indian farmers against market economic reforms threatening their basis of life.

India is a very diverse country with many internal conflicts. For example, Kashmir is a heavily militarized territory. We may ask what unites India's large population except their joint territory based on a relatively random historic drawing of borders.

In foreign policy India is playing in multiple directions. India has a composed relation to neighbouring countries like China, Russia and Iran. Pakistan is clearly a rival. India is a member of the Quad representing cooperation between the US, India, Japan, and Australia.

The European Union (EU)

The EU consists of 27 European countries. The union is a complex mixture of institutions based on the governments of the member countries and a superstructure of institutions. The superstructure of institutions is relatively large. The main institutions are the Council, the Commission, the Parliament, and the Court of Justice.

The proceedings mainly follow a path with superstructure initiative followed by national validation and superstructure follow up. EU has been criticised for lack of democracy. The strong and competent bureaucracy, however, serves as centre of innovation regarding economic and political regulations.

The EU means a common market and mobility for workers. A deeper integration is a recurring theme for discussion.

The EU has secured peace within its borders for a long period of time.

BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa

BRICS is built on a joint frustration over the global architecture and governance regarding economic and political world order dominated by the western world. BRICS has so far resulted in relatively few joint initiatives. The group, however, is about to be revitalized and extended.

Developing countries

The economic globalization has had diverse consequences in different countries and regions. Many countries defined as developing countries have tried to follow a recipe given by the western world and implemented also by international bodies mainly with a lack of sufficiently positive results.

Obtaining political power and international recognition gave opportunities for new elites. Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) tried to present a joint initiative from developing countries for solving international problems. The role of NAM is less clear now. The “third world” as a political power has disappeared.

A specific group of developing countries are countries where real governance is executed by strong clan systems, making other societal structures and institutions weak. In several Middle East countries, the combination of enormous natural resources like oil and gas, clan systems, and the interests of great powers, results in complex conflicts. Divide and conquer strategies at several layers are common.

Approximately 50 countries, mainly in Africa, with a total population of one billion people and a rapidly increasing young population are called the “Bottom Billion” by Paul Collier. They have some common characteristics of failing nation-states. The instruments needed for changing their situation are diverse and long-term. This is discussed thoroughly by Paul Collier.

Some other countries

During the Cold War period some countries tried to manoeuvre between the blocks to gain advantages. Examples are former Yugoslavia and to some degree India, Indonesia, Algeria and Egypt. Some countries like Cuba made a clear decision. Investments and support from the great powers of that time are now less important.

Oil and gas are important. Important countries with oil and gas resources are Saudi-Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Venezuela, Nigeria, Iran, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

Japan and South Korea are advanced industrial countries with large economies.

Australia is the biggest exporter of coal in the world.

Argentina, Brazil and Ukraine are important food producers and exporters.

Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Egypt, and Panama have an important strategic geographical position.

Israel is a technologically advanced country heavily supported by the US.

Former Soviet states (and new silk road states) Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are rich in natural resources, especially rare earth metals.

Pakistan represents a rapidly growing consumer market.

These countries relatively seldom appear in mainstream western media.

Multinational companies

The multinational companies try to live a life of their own. They represent informal global governance and lobby against formal global governance with substantial resources to set the agenda.

There are, however, elements of global governance internally in multinational companies with their support chains, production lines, and sales organizations.

Juridically they are accountable to the rules of their base country but with limited responsibility. The US companies are basically under the wings of the US authorities supporting them, even if these authorities begin to see challenges due to their rising monopoly tendencies and increasing power.

Altogether there is no global counterbalance to the power of the multinational companies supported by the financial sector.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and non-formal organizations regarding global governance

The NGOs and other non-formal organizations are important in many ways. NGOs represent a link between the UN and the diverse global population.

Examples:

- Organizations based on ideal goals or voluntary work
- Think tanks
- Credit ranking firms
- Private military and security companies
- Transnational religious movements
- Large scale charity

Thinktanks represent a bridge between academia and politics with ideas and advice. They can be a counterbalance to power or rather part of lobbying from actors with large resources. Independence is important for legitimacy.

Credit rating firms operate in relation to governments and companies. They service narrow financial interests without due accountability related to risks.

Security and military activity can be outsourced. The scope of such outsourcing is increasing. The area of responsibility related to ordinary military forces is also expanded. There are challenges regarding legitimacy, independence, transparency, responsibilities, and accountability. Such companies are also often used for evaluating and defining security risks. This easily leads to endless new missions. The human aspects of violence are easily hidden or are becoming more distant.

Criminal networks are decentralized, flexible and multinational. Investigations and punishment are only normal running costs.

Traders have over time been important actors in trading with physical resources like oil, metals, and agricultural products. Traders have become an integrated part of the financial sector.

Status and organization in specific fields

International law consists of norms and standards governing relations between nation states and international organizations. To some degree individuals are also considered. International law represents a continuous process of authoritative decisions. International law is changing and developing. The scope is substantial. It is primarily based on treaties, agreements and accepted general practice. International law exists together with national law without a strict hierarchy. Many nations do not recognize all parts of international law. For example, the US, China, and Russia do not accept International Criminal Courts (ICC) regarding crimes of war. Unfortunately, the question of genocide based on the principles of international law lately often has been raised.

One example of international law is the *Law of the Sea Convention* implies joint rules for the use of the oceans. This convention gives coast nations with long coastlines, as for example Norway, substantial advantages that might be seen as unreasonable in a global world.

Weapons of mass destruction are nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. There are agreements regarding the spread of necessary technology. These agreements handle norms, principles, and international law in a proper way. Mechanisms for following up and practical following up, however, are weak. The convention for chemical weapons could serve as a model for the other agreements.

Work

Workers in many nations are marginalized both regarding formal decisions and practical influence. This is the case both for formally employed workers and for new complex types of employment relationships. Global organizations are also marginalized.

Economy

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is supposed to be an observer and sequel to the global economic system providing policy norms and support in crisis. The IMF shall secure economic growth and financial stability. IMF has had a neoliberal basis laid down in The Washington Consensus. Focus and mandate has changed over time. A revitalization took place in relation to the 2008 financial crisis supported by G20. The IMF should be seen together with the World Bank and World Trade Organization (WTO). All these organizations lack transparency, and their roles and functioning are open to discussion.

Health

World Health Organization (WHO) was important during the last pandemic. The pandemic, however, also revealed lack of authority, economy, and professional knowledge. The world must be prepared for more pandemics. The increasing antibiotic resistance and traditional mass vaccination in poor countries are other important challenges.

Energy

There is no international superstructure regarding energy. International Energy Agency (IEA) organizes large consumers of energy. International Renewable Energy Agency is also established.

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) organizes many of the largest producers of oil.

Intellectual property

Intellectual property is especially important regarding digital solutions, medicine, and biological material. It is an important element of trade agreements.

Internet

The governance of the Internet is very important and interesting. From the early days of the internet the governance was implemented by the US organization Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

Later, the use of the internet was spread globally with diverse types of users. The governance became bottom-up with a consensus-based decision model. Mechanisms like “Request for Comment” was implemented resulting in a marketplace for ideas. This approach is generally interesting regarding democracy.

About year 2000 several governments realized the importance of the governance of the internet, and that they had missed out of what was going on. Many challenges open for discussion appeared. This discussion is partly taken in International Telecommunications Union (ITU). There are diverse participants, both nations and private companies.

Today the Internet is governed by a non-profit organization that in fact has delivered the goods so far. There are, however, many principal weaknesses. We might ask if the foundation wall is good enough both technically and organizationally. The scope of Internet of things, AI, surveillance, and security are some challenges.

A major part of the infrastructure is owned by private companies.

The Internet should be accessible and safe for everybody globally.

Refugees and migrants

There is an international convention for refugees. There are, however, many grey zones. Human trafficking is a challenge. Altogether the international system for dealing with all sorts of refugees is not working. Climate refugees is about to be an enormous challenge.

Religion

Wide-spread religions, like Islam and the Catholic church, are not clear participants in formal global governance. They are, however, important because they influence world views and thinking for very many people. There is a trend towards more activity from religious organizations towards the UN-system.

In many nations the connection between religion and political power is very strong meaning suppression of populations. This is a severe hindrance for global cooperation and global solutions. Religion used this way has nothing to do with freedom of religion – rather the opposite.

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There is an enormous gap between the narrow representation and technical focus of today’s global governance and the corresponding footprint of consequences for most of the global population. We are miles away from anything like democracy. China, India, and other non-western nations with the

vast majority of the global population must be taken seriously and be treated fully as equal participants in international organizations and arenas.

The financial sector and multinational companies, and the way they operate in a global world with no clearly defined accountability, is also deeply problematic regarding democracy. They operate according to old and inadequate rules of the game in their country of establishment, often the US. The consequences, however, are enormous globally.

Some global participants like NGOs, civil campaigns, protests, experts, judges, and lobbyists sometimes can influence the global agenda. Such actors, however, have little influence regarding great power politics and finance.

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Internal considerations and priorities often are deciding the agenda for many nations, including the great powers. How they behave in foreign policy often is influenced by considerations regarding internal stability or internal political power balances. Even personal priorities from leaders may strongly influence foreign politics.

The US military establishment and armour industry obviously need a substantial export of weapons. Chinese overproduction of steel and building materials may influence the progress of the new Silk Roads.

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Things are not always like what they appear to be.

National security is often used as justification for secrecy related to foreign powers. The real reason, however, may often be the need for secrecy towards own population.

Emphasizing and communicating contradictions and hostility, especially between the US and China, reduces opportunities for global solutions. Global solutions are crucial for handling the most pressing challenges for humanity. The world is not a zero-sum game with only purely good guys and bad guys.

A spiralling armour and distrust development only helps the opponent to fortify his position and power. External enemies are useful on both sides of conflict lines.

Globalization has led to deep mutual dependence between many nations. This is also the case for the great powers, the US and China. The trade balance including the large US deficit is important for both nations. Dependencies regarding special raw materials and electronic components are other important fields. The mutual dependencies are in fact a good thing when it comes to opportunities for global solutions. To take the enemy image too far implies large negative consequences for both nations.

The lack of effective global solutions and rules of the game makes it easier for bad global actors. For the time being Russia and Israel are the most obvious examples. Organized crime, terrorism, and oligarchs also get freer leeway.

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Intelligence, information, and knowledge in all fields and at all levels are key fields for competition between great powers. This includes surveillance, technological cutting-edge expertise, and military technology. Influencing own population and global opinion is also important.

There are lots of data collected that are not directly handled by classical privacy legislation. Examples are search logs, metadata, communication data, transaction data, geographical data. This common versatile collection of data is complemented by facial recognition, biometrical data, and health data.

It is almost impossible to avoid surveillance from a power controlling the total chain from ownership of applications and infrastructure to the control of key actors and technological cutting-edge expertise. Both the US and China can closely monitor their own population and to some degree the rest of the world without real opposition.

A counterbalance against such powerful surveillance must include measures all the way from legislation and real follow-up activities to technological cutting-edge expertise. Whistleblowers like Edward Snowden, show us the problem, but also the difficulties in handling it effectively. Surveillance and privacy must be considered related to societal trust. This is a key field for improved global governance. The UN Convention for protecting regime critics together with its implementation and follow-up then becomes very important. A trustworthy protection by law is in fact more important than traditional privacy regulations. Traditional privacy regulations, however, still are important especially regarding commercial use of data.

More generally, it is important to discuss what restrictions to individual freedom are adequate to achieve effects for the common good. The experiences from the pandemic were an interesting background for such discussions.

A society is held better together by trust as an inner glue, than by exterior pressure, control, and surveillance. To build trust it is necessary with courage, continuity, and patience. The institutional foundation wall must become strong enough.

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The European Green Deal is state of the art when it comes to handling the climate crisis. There are many positive elements like trying to involve the population. There are, however, important failing basic assumptions.

- It is based on the principles of green growth already discussed in the economy part.
- No changes in the population's way of living are considered. This must change if the European Green Deal is supposed to be a model for global development. Personal freedom of consumption must be regulated, considering clothes, cars, electronics, meat etc. The world cannot handle the European way of living implemented for the total global population.

We must find better global solutions, but is it possible to consider global solutions for challenges that no national state is able to handle properly? The basic problems, however, are common in such a way that it may be easier look behind the petty considerations, bonds, inequalities, and mindsets. Moving the focus globally may also loosen some internal "Gordian knots". We may get new common goals instead of external enemies as basic motivation.

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The UN has changed focus from disputes between nations to internal conflicts. Such conflicts are difficult to handle without new approaches containing building of societal institutions, with more humility, patience and input of human resources. The situation in Afghanistan and Yemen are examples of approaches that are inadequate.

The peacekeeping forces of UN should become a trustworthy global police force. Changing several aspects of global governance, however, then must form the basis needed for this to be realistic.

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History will always be with us. It is, however, thought-provoking to observe to what degree colonialism with Great Britain and other European colonial powers, together with a heritage from World War II, are integral parts of today's global governance. Then the US facilitation of private companies and military bases all over the globe also is important. These observations alone clearly show a need for updating global governance.

Overview of total global influence – *There are more perspectives than military strength*

We must consider global influence in several dimensions. Military, economic, and political influence, however, are closely interconnected.

A new cold war is, according to many instances, about to come. Maybe some instances want it to come for diverse reasons. The arguments communicated for supporting this vision should be evaluated closely.

The following overview is meant to nuance the problem area. It is also used to propose elements of new global governance.

Subject area	Major participants	Comments
<i>Legitimacy</i>	Global population. UN, IMF, WTO, G20, International Courts.	There is no sufficiently clearcut representative for the global population. The UN, and the Security Council come closest, via member states. IMF and WTO have limited participation and weak transparency that reduce their legitimacy. From a democracy point of view, the global population should to a much higher degree mirror political influence. International courts are not always respected. The main goal for the UN is to secure peace globally, and UN forces have been used in many conflicts. A new trend is that substantial acts of war have been started and executed without respecting the UN and international law.
<i>Military power</i>	The US, China, Russia. Mass destruction weapons are spread to several nations. The total	The US still by far possesses the largest military power. China also has substantial and increasing military power. Russia possesses less military power but

	mass and spread of weapons are enormous.	is an important regional power. Several countries have mass destruction weapons without fully respecting international agreements. Some of them are relatively unstable nations. Many countries have lots of weapons and large military budgets. A lot of more unclear and questionable actors also have rich access to advanced weapons. Technological status, competence, and development also represent an important dimension. Diverse hybrid war actions become more and more common and important. Traditional military measures become relatively less effective. The war in Afghanistan has shown that it is difficult to exchange military supremacy to results in other societal areas, even if the US uses its enormous military forces and extensive presence as general means of pressure. Nuclear weapons are risky but also represent a certain hindrance of larger acts of war other than local ones. The UN peacekeeping forces are small but should have a potential for a more important role than today.
<i>Economic power</i>	The US, China and EU are the largest economies, but the largest banks, financial actors and multinational companies have more economic power than most nation-states.	IMF is the most important formal global economic instance, having its mandate from G20. The US, China and the EU still are more powerful. Any large changes in global economy are dependent upon cooperation from the US, China and the EU. The financial actors and the multinational companies have despite their economic size very little legitimacy but achieve results by influencing national states, especially the US. They also have started spending large amounts of money in a similar way as nation-states to climate measures and charity. It is a matter of taking with one hand and giving with the other. The result is that ever larger values fall outside democratic societal prioritization. Economic power is often used to obtain other goals like security guaranties. The whole economic system using the US Dollar as basis is closely connected to the US military power.
<i>Natural resources</i>	The US, China, and Russia all have large natural resources of their own. The control over strategic natural resources will continue to be important in global politics.	Control over strategic natural resources must be seen connected with military and economic power. Oil, gas, and rare earth elements are very important. Food will still be basically important. The climate crisis means that resources like coal, oil, gas, and food come into play in new ways. How natural resources are handled by global governance is crucial.
<i>Power of knowledge</i>	Knowledge is becoming ever more important. Intellectual property results in economic power. A strong public sector makes it possible to perform large societal efforts. Technological cutting-edge	This is a diverse area containing different kinds of knowledge. Where are the best schools, universities and bureaucracies? The total level of broad competence in a society shows the potential for large societal efforts. EU has a tradition of being innovative at the cutting edge regarding new ideas in law, regulations, and

	expertise, often in ethical borderland, is a vital element of competition	organization having a global potential. The EU bureaucracy is strong and competent. European Green Deal is a recent example. The US has had a dominant position regarding intellectual property. The US has brilliant universities and a close cooperation between private companies, armed forces and universities. The public sector is relatively weak. China has proved abilities to achieve large efforts requiring broad competence. The UN possesses much valuable competence that hardly is optimally coordinated and targeted. Multinational companies possess much technological and organizational competence.
International fora	International fora are still dominated by the western world and the heritage from the colonization period.	China has gradually strengthened its position but still do not have an influence fully corresponding to its size, population and real power. More generally international fora do not mirror population, real power and the total global situation. The fora must do so to possess necessary legitimacy, strength, and operability.
Influential power	The US has had substantial general influence over time. The American way of life, with maximum personal freedom in a consumer's society, consciously and unconsciously around the world has become an ideal (have a look at today's story).	No clear alternatives to the neoliberal story with the US as the dominant power exist. China has set out several initiatives to increase its influence around the world. They talk about a new world order, but do not present a new holistic alternative. Alternatives must be created. Values then must be taken seriously.
Internal situation	The internal situation in major nations has an influence out of proportion on the global situation. Enemy images are maintained to achieve internal or even personal goals for those in power.	The US is governed in a way that often creates locked situations making major changes difficult. The American society is highly polarized. The president, however, has substantial power regarding foreign policy, for good and bad. The US has defined clear friends and enemies, and it is important for politicians to highlight their position especially for internal opinion and global opinion. China also needs external enemies. Stability and control over a very large and diverse population is crucial and external enemies are used to obtain these goals. Russia needs the western world as an external enemy as part of the patriotic story told to the population to hold on to power. The EU also has internal challenges but usually does not turn problems inside out.

The role of the nation-state in global governance – *We must nuance and rethink*

The nation-state as an absolute concept regarding global governance is about to be outdated. Nation-states range from very large diverse conglomerates like China, India, the US (and the EU) to very small and immature nations. The UN system is based on the nation-state as its formal basis. The EU is an example of an important global actor that is inconsistent with the UN model since the member nations of the EU are members as nation-states.

The conglomerates contain large and diverse groups of populations. To unite groups of populations under large “umbrellas” is advantageous in many ways, supporting peace and economical and practical efficiency. A good balance between a common identity and local identities, however, is crucial. China and India have not managed this balance good enough. They need to use a series of measures, including violence, to keep the nation-state together. The EU also struggles in its own way with this balance. The US has had more time available to find this balance, but local identities still are important. Racial differences still are deeply problematic.

The formally acknowledged nation-states are found on a scale from well-established nation-states with a relatively long history to relatively new nation-states with different sizes and levels of maturity.

We also find societies where the population feel a clear joint identity not coincident with formal national borders. Some of them has a certain degree of internal self-government. They often want more autonomy. This may lead to serious, complex, and long-lasting conflicts, sometimes even civil war. Often the conflicts are about the control of valuable natural resources. There are also examples of large populations that are important minorities in several countries simultaneously, like the Kurds in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria.

In most industrialized countries a kind of national identity developed before the formal state formation. They developed a community basically based on a joint economy even if there were ethnic, cultural, and religious differences.

In most developing countries things happened in the opposite order often not reaching neither economic functioning nations nor a joint identity. Nation-states could be established according to the ambitions of national elites. International acknowledgement was the only thing needed. Self-government did not always mean viability. Governance often became authoritarian or quasi-democratic, often lacking well-functioning institutions. An economy based on raw materials may be challenging when world trade moves towards processed products, services, and intellectual property. In a world dominated by the financial sector and multinational companies, vital decisions are often taken outside the nation-state itself. In many developing countries large populations also live outside the official society. The definition of the borders of many nation-states may also be relatively random when it comes to creating identity and community.

All kinds of nation-states are trying to control large territories, large populations, and as many natural resources as possible as the basis for the strength of their voice globally. By using this mindset both China, the US, and Russia create tensions and problems globally.

A less absolute meaning of the concept nation-state could reduce the challenges listed above. Global governance still must secure the present nation-states a voice in global affairs. The following measures should, however, be considered:

- Increased self-governance for well-defined minority populations.

- Giving such well-defined minorities a voice within global governance.
- Global agreements, regulations, and management of natural resources (also vital for solving climate and nature crisis).
- Provide more flexible opportunities for solving the tasks nation-states are supposed to handle. Such opportunities might include joint international services or arrangements for cooperation.

Large urban regions often are effective units regarding governance. This indicates that wider self-governance should be considered. Cities in fact have a longer history and tradition than nation-states. There are several examples of cities taking clearer responsibilities regarding nature and climate than the corresponding nation-states.

Indigenous people have managed to have their voice heard across national borders. Indigenous people, however, are not a homogenous group, but they have several common features regarding societal organization and relationship with nature clearly different from typical nation-states. They must get a voice in global governance parallel to nation-states.

Economic units are not always coinciding with cultural units based on religion or language. No nation-state, not even the conglomerates, are self-sufficient, not economically nor regarding natural resources. All have mutual dependencies.

Some nations, like China, strongly claims the principle of non-interference with internal matters. Today human rights and values generally are diluted waiting for renewal and new anchoring. Interfering with internal matters is sometimes necessary, but it must be done based on joint accepted values and handled by a legitim global instance.

Global governance and the crisis of climate and nature – We need other approaches than just more money

I take the IPCC partial report of 2022 about damage limitations due to climate changes as a starting point. The report evaluates the status for the efforts made to reduce climate emissions and climate changes. The total emissions have clearly increased in all major sectors of society. Reductions caused by better technologies are far less than the increased emissions due to increased global activity. Focus for measures is increased financing. Financing pointing in the direction agreed upon (the Paris agreement), however, has not happened. National goals are usually based on security of investments, not on what is necessary from the climate situation perspective. Projections are gloomy.

All considerations regarding solving the climate crisis starts with conventional mainstream economy mindset and measures. How much money is needed?

To some degree this is meaningful. The consequences of extreme weather - wildfires, flooding and increased sea level can be assigned a price. This is large scale insurance company business. Focus, however, then is only on symptoms.

Speaking about basic causes is more difficult. On a global scale, more money is created by increased activity. Increased activity means increased emissions of climate gases and increased destruction of nature. We end up with circular arguments. This is thoroughly discussed by Adrienne Buller in "The Value of a Whale". We must consider the natural resources themselves. How should we govern the physical occurrences of oil, gas, coal, minerals and other natural resources?

A similar mindset must be used regarding destruction of nature and use of areas. We cannot simply buy back destroyed nature. We cannot destroy more to create money for protecting more.

Measures concerning climate and nature must be seen together much clearer and specifically.

The dominating mindset using finances, price mechanisms, markets, and financial instruments to solve the crisis of nature and climate is not working. This mindset in fact is a hindrance for real solutions. Green growth also mainly transfers problems from rich countries to poor countries. The real goals of rich nations now are to avoid disruption of the present systems, structures, relations, and way of living in rich countries.

The present regime of agreements is based on internal emissions in each nation together with options for trading climate quotas. The concept of climate quotas is not working according to theory. In addition, there are large loopholes both regarding what principally should be booked and what in practise is booked. Bookkeeping might be rather creative.

A fairer principle must be to consider real total private and public consumption from a country. Then the natural resources and corresponding emissions and use of areas exploited in other countries must be accounted for. This represents a nation's real environmental footprint. This approach is more complex, but it is vital that international agreements regarding climate and nature are based on such a foundation wall. This represents a crucial challenge for global governance.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine – An example illustrating basic considerations

The Russian invasion of Ukraine from most criteria is absurd. The resulting war is still going on with substantial consequences both in Ukraine and Russia with percussions outside these countries.

I don't have an ambition to analyse all aspects of the situation. It, however, serves as an interesting example for discussing long-term effects on global conflicts and cooperation. The type of response to a crisis is important as a possible basis for a new crisis or a possible basis for improved relations later. It is also important to consider the long-term consequences for populations and not evaluate everything from a temporarily bad regime.

Let us first try to see the world with Putin's glasses. To stay in power and possibly increase his influence is priority one. He is probably not really worried by western military threats. The Ukrainian approach to democracy and EU is more threatening. The situation in Belarus is also still unclear. Threatening an established regime and considerations regarding democracy are about to come unpleasantly near him.

Putin is concerned with how history can be used for his purposes. He is taking World War II as his starting point. The destiny of the world and single nations was determined at the back office by the great powers. Russia had the position of an important victor. Russia is, however, not any longer that

kind of great power. The ending of the Cold War, the process of Glasnost and the later chaos both internally and related to the US is also important. Russia, however, gets more attention than deserved from its real potential. Russia is an example for how a nation can cause substantial trouble for its surroundings without being met by relevant counteractions from the present global governance.

World War II (the Great Patriotic War) and then the Soviet period still is very important for the Russian population. Putin has a good starting point for further building and communicating his version of history. He is, however, not a communist, and restoring the Soviet Union territorially is hardly a realistic goal. Much of the basis for Putin's regime is nourished by US hardline politics over a period especially from the end of the Cold War.

To determine the destiny of nations by the great powers at the back office should no longer be an acceptable method for global governance. Putin must be stopped very clearly. He should not be offered the chance not to "lose face", even if that is tempting. The western world (for the moment mostly without the US) must continue to support Ukraine sufficiently. Territorial conflicts cannot be solved by Putin's recipe. It must, however, be Ukraine that is in the driver's seat deciding upon a possible ceasefire and peace. This comes from the Ukrainian independence and strong will for independence.

The US involvement in the conflict by president Trump has made the whole situation very insecure and volatile. Trump in fact mostly has sided with Russia. It seems that the US involvement mostly is governed by economic considerations for their part. A "coalition of willing nations" has continued the western support of Ukraine in the war. A fine balance with the US making them not totally withdraw is maintained.

It is important who should be paying for the destruction caused by the war. It should not automatically be the common Russian inhabitant as such. Russian oligarchs, however, must be held accountable.

The western response is important also regarding other relations and conflicts like China and Taiwan. Using the Russian invasion as a stepstone for increasing tensions with China is a dangerous, disproportional, and unnecessary response.

Around the world there has for a long time been dissatisfaction regarding western dominance and arrogance. Russia and China share this dissatisfaction with a lot of nations. The western powers have in fact destroyed the important status of International Law by several self-sufficient actions – Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan etc.

We should for a moment go back to the discussions concerning the status of the nation-state. Russia's claim for seeing Ukraine as part of its own basis for power, is in sharp contradiction to Ukraine's clear and strong wish for independence and non-interference from Russia.

The western world earlier was more hegemonial than it is today. More should have been done to strengthen internal democracy, strengthen internal compliance with human rights, and establish more respectful and egalitarian relations with the rest of the world. Own clear practice of good principles and good will is much better than obviously practicing double standards.

The Russian - Ukrainian war illustrates what modern war can be like. Economic sanctions, intelligence, civilians, information, infrastructure and public opinion become included. Nuclear weapons are also used for threatening. The problems using private military forces are also illustrated.

The western world still has substantial military supremacy. The US has many military bases worldwide. General rearmament is a very bad signal regarding long-term global cooperation. The arms industry uses the war for what it is worth. Strengthening and streamlining defensive goals is, however, reasonable. Updating strategies and structures, building competence, training and cooperation is necessary. It is, however, a fine balance between reasonable security needs and measures supporting distrust and escalating the level of conflict. Rearmament and military activity also are contrary to solving the crisis of nature and climate.

During the war with Russia Ukraine has developed very important competence on war especially with cheap drones both regarding offensive and defensive use. This competence is now shared with several NATO members. It is also used as an asset in recent cooperation with rich Arabic countries. Ukraine is working towards being more independent of the US. Intelligence and some weapon-systems is the most important contribution from the US.

China seems to hold a low profile. They do not sanction Russia economically and they do not directly supply Russia with weapons. China is probably not interested in chaos and unpredictability. The relation between China and Russia is asymmetric. China is much more important for Russia than the other way around. For China the principle of non-interference is important. If they want to put pressure upon Russia, this will not be done openly. It is interesting to consider the parallelism between the conflicts Russia-Ukraine and China-Taiwan, also in the light of the discussions about the role of the nation-state above.

Protesting Russians constitutes a small minority. Especially elder people and rural populations are mainly indifferent or positive to the war. Most Russians continue their lives as usual. A massive political apathy seems to be a Russian characteristic. Putin went for a quick victory. A long-lasting war can change opinions. It is difficult to form a reliable picture of what is really happening inside the Russian population. Local or regional conflicts may come to the surface. Putin is prioritizing lots of resources to weapons instead of living conditions for most Russians. This might over time have unexpected consequences.

What about boycotting everything that is Russian? We should look for nuances. Most important is sanctioning everything supporting Russian war conduct. Everything used for propaganda purposes should also be boycotted. This includes sports. General boycott of all contact and cooperation over time, however, is dangerous. All well-based cooperation is useful in the long run.

The chaos created by Russia makes it possible for several western countries to escape overripe internal problems for a while. Other nations have their agendas related to the Russian invasion. Israel do not want to ruin the relation to Russia because of its conflicts with Iran and Syria. Turkey looks for opportunities being at both sides. The United Arab Emirates is a major investor in Russia.

The war has repercussions regarding supplies of food and energy and world economics. Poor people worldwide risk paying a substantial part of the bill.

Human rights organizations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch (HCR) and International Criminal Court have been able to determine losses of civilian lives and the use of illegal weapons in Ukraine. Russian leadership risk being convicted of war crimes.

The sanctions against Russian economy show that is possible to rapidly perform major changes in economic rules of the game. All sanctions, however, have not been consequent nor successful.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is not the only war or complex conflict going on today. The present global governance gives little room for optimism. It is, however, not new moves in great power chess that is needed. The Great powers must instead focus on joint global challenges.

The Middle East – Some considerations regarding an extremely complex situation

It is not possible to comment the historical background for the region shortly in a proper way. The European colonial powers, however, have wide-reaching responsibilities. We have ended up with strongly mutually hostile regimes using the image of an outer enemy to the extreme. The more moderate nation-states in the region are also trapped in this situation.

The main interest for the US is probably related to the economy, controlling regional oil and gas. The US is strongly supporting Israel leadership and Israeli politics. The internal popular attitude in the US now is, however, more diverse. Israel is using Holocaust for all that it is worth, but is still in fact copying many of the worst sides. We can properly use words like genocide and apartheid describing what is happening in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon. Israel is a complex and divided society, but what turns out towards the neighbouring world is an extremely militarized and violent nation. A dominant attitude seems to be that attacking is the best defence. What will that lead to in the long run? The Palestinians have no clear voice representing all Palestinians. A Palestinian nation-state seems far away.

Iran is the dominating Shia muslim country controlling different Shia muslim organizations in several neighbouring countries. Resent Iranian society has gone through several very different époques, however, leaving some heritage of nation building elements to build on. The present regime is religiously based and is very repressing towards its own population. External sanctions combined with brutal and partly incompetent governance over time leave the population with a collapsing economy and a society largely kept together by force. Trying to exchange the present regime with a regime established and supported by the US and Israel, however, is no solution for the Irani people.

Most of the other Middle East countries are Sunni muslim with many of them with strongly religious regimes supressing what usually are considered basic human rights. These countries do not represent a joint force. Most of them are allies of the US hosting US military bases. Their strong oil-based economy is partly used to buy weapons. Their military experience and competence, however, hardly matches the arsenal of weapons. They bet on luxury tourism and sport events basically separated from contact with their own population. Their population is an upper class leaving the daily operation of society to guest workers both skilled ones and unskilled workers from poor neighbouring countries.

The war between the US and Israel on one side and Iran on the other side was probably started by Israel for internal reasons (Netanyahu's personal ones?). The US had no clear reasons for starting this war now. The Trump administration has come out with a series of mutually inconsistent proclamations to justify it. The US is probably in deep shit, as is the global economy. Have a look at the economy chapter about winners and losers in times of war and conflicts.

Neighbouring countries have been dragged into the conflict without being warned or consulted. This means that the US is responsible for a hell of a mess on many levels and in many directions. The US is hardly part of a lasting solution, not for the regional tensions nor for the Palestinian situation.

This is a very unclear situation both in the short term and the long term. It is not about picking a winner. My considerations are on all measures lowering the external enemy attitude giving room for internal processes in all of the regimes involved. It is obviously necessary to counterbalance and reduce the power of fundamentalist religious leaders altogether. The US presence seems to rather increase tensions than lower them. The Palestinian people also are dependent on a lowering of tensions in general. They hardly have any clear supporters in the Arab world. A clear voice from the rest of the world against genocide and apartheid is definitely needed. In the end, however, solving the Palestinian situation is fundamental for Middle East long-term solutions altogether.

Important issues to be taken to a final holistic discussion:

- Focus on joint global challenges
- Build mutual confidence by cooperation on joint challenges
- Start a process towards new mechanisms for global governance
- Strengthen organization for enforcing and following up rules of the game
- Start a process towards disarmament and reduction of mass destruction weapons based on new agreements
- Strengthen the UN peacekeeping forces

Options – *Direction, scope and context*

First a short summary of the main themes discussed so far (nature, values, information, economy, governance):

Man is an integral part of nature. Global heating and massive destruction of nature is an existential threat for life on earth, including humans. It is a joint challenge and a joint responsibility. What all of us do today has wide consequences for life and humans far away both in distance and time. We cannot grow or buy us out of the crisis that we have created. Handling global heating and destruction of nature requires reducing our general material consumption and our use of areas substantially (both inside and outside own nation-state). Luckily, there is no direct connection between consumption and quality of life and welfare, especially not for rich industrial countries and other elites. Quality of life and reasonable welfare can still be kept.

Our relation to nature must be based on sound knowledge. We must make total knowledge effectively available for the common good. Measures for handling global heating basically mean specific regulations of physical natural resources together with technological solutions. Measures for preserving nature, however, often also require more specific and local competence and more nuanced regulation and accountability. Measures in both fields should be considered jointly.

We need a healthy information ecosystem to be able to cooperate constructively. This information ecosystem cannot, as is the case now, build on systematic and massive exploitation and manipulation of the weaknesses of human nature from the interests of economy and power. Large private interests without any legitimacy must not be allowed to ruin community conversation globally. It is also unacceptable that authoritarian regimes exclude their populations from global community conversation.

The dominating mainstream economic mindset using finances, price mechanisms, markets, and financial instruments to solve the crisis of nature and climate is not working. This mindset in fact is a hindrance for real solutions. Green growth mainly transfers problems from rich countries to poor countries. The goals of rich nations obviously are to avoid disruption of the present systems, structures, relations, and way of living in rich countries, hardly to save nature and climate.

We need an understanding of the economy starting with considering value for society. Nature and human needs must obtain priority based on their intrinsic value, not priority as a byproduct of production and consumption.

The logics of the financial sector only focussing on pure financial goals, pulverization of accountability, and short-termism must be replaced by focus on results “on the ground”.

Human rights and democracy must be taken seriously. What that means must be revitalized and anchored.

Technological development, included military technology, must be governed from a joint ethical perspective.

The world needs global governance with sufficient legitimacy and resources reflecting all of this, and finally the abilities to enforce and follow it up. The global society must cooperate regarding the decisive common global challenges.

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Hopefully you now have got a better basis for rethinking.

You should ask yourself:

What on earth are we really up to?

Must we rethink matters? – Think what we so far have considered “unthinkable”.

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It becomes clear that the present story (page 20), and the total mindset behind it, cracks when meeting the totality of the present global challenges. Values, rules of the game, processes, and mechanisms simply are inadequate when more than production, consumption, and making money must be seriously considered (have a look at attachment 2). We badly need better approaches, with foundation walls taking nature and basic human needs for everybody properly into account.

But is it possible and worthwhile looking for such approaches? All other approaches than the neoliberal model have so far totally failed. The only option is to close our eyes, and continue the struggle for global hegemony, and unlimited freedom of consumption for those already at the top?

We, living in the rich part of the world still have the choice between trying to start a controlled process heading for a better world for everybody, or end up with ever increasing inequality and injustice, before the crisis of climate and nature hits us all in the end. The poor part of the world has less choice.

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Humble ideas – *Trying to reset the compass course*

I take the chance to present ideas for comprehensive solutions at a principled level for basic global challenges, even if I realize that these ideas will be considered utopian by a majority. I still hope that they can serve as a starting point for thinking about the structured process needed. Most important is that goals and measures in an honest way meet the severity and scope of challenges, that the direction is right, and that solutions in different areas support each other. I try to describe a future world meeting these criteria in a holistic way.

We should of course not hesitate but do what is possible regarding the crisis of nature and climate within the existing world order and with the toolbox now available. As we have seen, the results so far are not at all encouraging, regarding neither mindset nor practical measures. In parallel we therefore should start a process towards basic changes in structures and rules of the game. This is where my ideas come in.

My ideas might not in every way give the best answers. I am humble regarding this mission. I do not present a fixed conclusion. I rather try to present the most important fields and questions we must attack in a systematic and holistic way. Other contributions and a broader process is necessary. I hope my contribution will inspire others as well to systematic and holistic rethinking.

To define and implement solutions having the necessary direction and scope will be very demanding – it is easy to say impossible. To achieve far-reaching solutions, however, they must first be imagined and described. It is therefore important to try to describe results that we must achieve no matter how distant and utopian they might seem to be. We need the right images in our heads. It was possible to end slavery in its historical shape. It was possible to achieve universal voting rights. It was possible to establish the UN system. It was possible to adopt the Declaration of Human Rights - And who should decide what is utopian regarding the future? I don't think those trying to invest in further destruction of climate and nature are the right people for this decision.

I use the important issues taken from each major perspective discussed as a starting point for a final holistic discussion. From this starting point I end up with a simple set of overall goals:

- **Long-term cohabitation and effective protection of nature**
- **Global economic rules of the game serving the many**
- **Global governance functioning in a democratic way**
- **Ethically governed global technological development**

The overall goals must be anchored among the most powerful formal global participants. The process leading to implementing practical measures is, however, comprehensive and probably long-lasting. The goals must stay fixed, serving as the basis for the overall process.

It might seem meaningless to focus on completely overarching goals, principles, and frameworks when the house is burning, and enemies are threatening us all the time. The right goals, being

followed up, however, give the necessary guidance for all more practical levels, and are crucial for effective and holistic implementation.

More specific measures for each of the overall goals are presented in a logical sequence to follow. The sequence for implementation must, however, be somewhat different. Prerequisites for implementation, strategy for implementation, and suggested sequence of implementations are discussed together after having described the measures under each single goal.

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From the discussions so far, it is obvious that we are very far away from an ideal world. This is also evident to me. I, however, also see how locked up we are in our world view, and how clever we are to cover up reality. There is a huge need for new questions and ideas.

Long-term cohabitation with and effective protection of nature

This goal requires a diverse set of measures. Global heating and destruction of nature and natural diversity must be met seriously and honestly. The governance of nature must be based on sound knowledge, and effective measures must be identified. Lighthouse projects underlining seriousness and knowledge should be established. Individual understanding and support must be mobilized.

To achieve long-term cohabitation and effective protection of nature major coordinated changes in several societal fields are also necessary. Community conversation and sharing of knowledge are basic elements. The financial sector must get new rules of the game providing far better long-term based activity and accountability. Consumption pressure by massive advertising must be reduced. The activities of multinational companies must be regulated. Global governance must get the legitimacy and resources for establishing and following up measures. New approaches for global governance may be necessary. Our values are a critical basis. The overall set of global agreements and practices must be reevaluated.

ACHIEVE AN ADEQUATE UNDERSTANDING AT ALL LEVELS FOR THE EXISTENTIALISTIC SERIOUSNESS REGARDING BOTH GLOBAL HEATING AND NATURAL HEALTH AND DIVERSITY CAUSED BY OUR USE OF AREAS AND OUR GENERAL MATERIAL CONSUMPTION

I think that having a presentation of the challenges in total, not only as single elements scattered in the news, and in an honest non-bureaucratic way, is important. This is also crucial for finding adequate solutions. It is, however, interesting to observe how confused politicians were regarding the clear and strong message from Greta Thunberg. They clearly showed us that they had no relevant answers. The seriousness of the message was also soon obscured by obligations already entered, and all short-term challenges appearing all the time. There are always important interest groups,

lobbyists, and the media – always something urgent. In the background we - last, but not least - have the well-established power structures, relations and mindsets.

The crisis of climate and nature makes it necessary to ask basic questions about our way of life and the overall mindset supporting it. This is obviously a very hard mission, indeed. Our missing abilities to rethink economics and our holding on to established power structures and relations seems to be unsurmountable hindrances. It is, however, crucial to be honest. It is necessary to accept the best knowledge available. It is crucial to stop pretending. It is necessary to stop looking for all escape routes to circumvent, hide, or decorate the facts. We must see the challenges straight in the eyes.

Green growth and all kinds of greenwashing is not what we need. We must simply reduce our environmental footprint. We must reduce our material consumption and our use of nature.

Greta Thunberg is the grown-up person in the room. The global elite of economists, finance gurus, bureaucrats, policy makers, and politicians on the other hand are not the grown-up people taking responsibility.

The message from most politicians today goes like this:

«Global heating is serious. Vote for us, and we will handle it. We go for technological and economical solutions in due time. You can still trust in economic growth - We of course will provide it. You can live as you are used to with your habits and also your expectations. »

The message from a politician taking responsibility would go like this:

«The crisis of nature and climate is existentially serious for everybody globally. Our consumption in rich industrial countries must be reduced substantially to reduce global heating and secure the health and diversity of nature. Individuals must prioritize from a personal climate budget. Society must arrange for individual choices to be effective supplying circular economy and well-planned communications and living environments. Society must reconsider common activities being burdensome for climate and nature like production of energy, roads, building and construction and the production of goods that are unnecessary or harmful. The use of areas at the cost of nature and ecosystems must be substantially reduced. Together we must find ways of doing this by strengthening a healthy society where everyone has a voice, and a sufficient level of welfare. We must do the job based on sound knowledge and honesty. “

By using the glasses of economists alone the costs for society by just going on like today will probably be much higher than the costs of implementing necessary measures. Implementing the necessary measures is possible without losing the basic welfare in rich industrial countries. Unlimited private freedom of consumption, however, must end. The rules of the game both for the financial sector, multinational companies and public sector must change substantially.

To be conscious about the totality of the drivers causing problems should make it easier for politicians even if the challenges are large. All decisionmakers, both in nation-states and globally, have with neoliberalism given up their management tools. The management tools must be used again. The basic challenge, however, is changing our mindset. We cannot solve the problems caused by using a specific mindset by continuing using that same mindset.

We can to some degree look at the experiences from the pandemic even if the crisis of climate and nature is far more critical. During the pandemic governments and authorities and the pharmaceutical companies to some degree had interests that were aligned. When it comes to the crisis of nature and climate this is not the case. The financial sector and multinational companies mobilize strong

counterforces. For the population the pandemic was something relatively close and concrete. The crisis of nature and climate seems further away and more abstract making it difficult to mobilize the bulk of the population.

It is a battle concerning understanding and communicating reality. Those with interests in continuing and further developing activities deepening the crisis has got enormous resources. They will try to influence and dominate media and other arenas both with unbalanced information and distractions. Authorities and independent professional environments, together with well-informed and motivated individuals and activist groups, must take their responsibilities.

PROPOSE EFFECTIVE MEASURES BASED ON KNOWLEDGE AND WITH A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The starting point for proposing measures is reduction of material consumption and the use of areas at the cost of natural health and diversity. The totality with both elements included must all the time be considered.

It is not good enough that national states only consider emissions of climate gases inside their own borders. They must consider the total environmental footprint resulting from their way of life and consumption both inside borders and globally. Most rich industrial countries create substantially larger emissions of climate gases and global destruction of nature than what they record based on internal activity.

More energy means more production, distribution and consumption. We do not by default need more energy. Saving energy must be considered before producing more energy. This holds also when energy is renewable. Planning of new renewable energy must be based on documentation of replacement of energy based on polluting sources of energy. The total environmental footprint of projects must be accounted for. Building windmills have several negative environmental effects both on land and sea. Solar panels mean mining and use of areas. A typical example of missing holistic thinking is mining at the seabed to obtain more renewable energy as quickly as possible.

It is not good enough to consider energy only based on a country's own needs and energy balance. Effective planning and technology for transmission makes it possible to consider larger regions in common.

The production of Bitcoin and other crypto currencies must be forbidden because of the very large need for energy and no extra value for society. The use of AI must be regulated because of the potentially extreme use of energy.

The production of Hydrogen is energy demanding. To use Hydrogen for cars and for heating is less effective than direct use of electricity. Hydrogen might have potential as fuel for planes and ships.

The production of biogas often means deforestation or the use of areas that might have better alternatives for use or protection. Altogether biogas is only a limited solution for fuel.

Nuclear energy is the most recent popular proposal for providing more energy without having to fundamentally consider how much energy we need to produce. Nuclear energy has several advantages. The main challenge is long-term societal stability.

Technological solutions for the capture of carbon dioxide are interesting, but the development of such large-scale solutions turns out to be challenging. Capture of carbon dioxide does not substitute attacking the basic causes of emissions. New technology will appear. Technology must be evaluated in a holistic way.

Electric cars charged with renewable energy are a relatively positive measure. Reduction in the number of cars is, however, much better. That results in repercussions regarding reduced need for producing cars, building new roads and parking lots and the reduction of other disadvantages from using cars. Production of a car has an environmental footprint comparable to several years of use. Large cars have a substantially larger environmental footprint than small cars.

When planning residential areas there are many measures available for reducing the use of cars. Zones without cars, reduction of parking areas, facilitation for walking and cycling, sharing of cars, and strengthening collective transport are some measures. Cities may have a key role in achieving relatively quick results. Planning for nature and climate should be seen connected with planning for thriving local environments.

Transport between cities and other urban areas can be facilitated using trains or other emission-free transport. Flight routes between places where emission-free alternatives are well developed, should be stopped.

The regime for using areas must be much stricter than today. Nature and ecosystems should trump economy, not the other way around. Each intervention may seem harmless. The sum of interventions, however, has serious effects. Ecosystems are vulnerable regarding division.

Recirculation of all electronic equipment must be obligatory. There must be limitations in the frequency of launching new versions of hardware and software. Materials and construction making recirculation easier have a potential for improvement.

It is possible to develop building materials resulting in reduced emissions of climate gases. This should be an area for research and development and changes in regulations for building. The whole value chain from evaluating the need for building, to planning and implementation should be scrutinized. Digital ways of working should reduce the need for new buildings for offices. The largest emissions of climate gases are related to fundamental construction elements. That means that reusing buildings often is wise.

When using energy for heating and air-conditioning attention should be paid to possible societal effects. Are they community solutions or do they support an increase in private individual solutions?

Deforestation or draining of wetlands to provide agricultural areas for food for humans, animal feed, pastureland, or plants for bioenergy or fibre must be strictly restricted. Forest may be reestablished, but massive planting of monocultures is not a good measure.

The use of agricultural land directly or indirectly for producing meat must be substantially reduced. The use of agricultural land for dairy products should also be regulated.

We have relevant knowledge regarding the value chain for food, making it possible to recommend best practices, including arrangements for preventing waste.

How the production of food is carried out is essential to take care of nature and the climate. Ecological agriculture and small-scale agriculture should be further developed and be seen as an alternative to intensive agriculture, also including gene-modified plants. Intensive agriculture means risks for depleting and destroying fertile soil. In many places food production and protecting cultural landscape can be considered as a joint task. Today agricultural practices that are bad for nature are heavily subsidized. This must change.

Forestry should have a larger feature of more old-fashioned methods without massive clearings followed by new planting of monocultures.

We should know more about ecosystems in the sea. The oceans must be protected much stricter than today. This must include regulations of fisheries, pollution, and extracting seabed resources. Fisheries should be regulated by global agreements. Methods must be developed that are gentler towards destroying seabed and that reduces bycatch. These methods must be mandatory. Trawling has many highly negative effects. Searching for oil and gas must stop. Extraction of oil, gas, and minerals should stop in a planned way. Some areas like arctic oceans, spawning areas, and coral reefs are particularly vulnerable.

I think that international contact both physically and digitally is positive. The present mass tourism, however, contributes very little to international understanding and respect. There should be regulations regarding building and running tourist destinations from environmental footprint considerations. The way tourist destinations influence local environments should also be considered.

We have already done much that is irreversible. Buildings, roads, and other facilities have been built. Cars, leisure boats, leisure houses, and consumables are produced and purchased.

Regarding buildings, focus must shift towards maintenance, upgrading, and reuse, instead of building new buildings. When it comes to consumables, the focus must shift towards recycling, repairing, and organizing sharing. Higher prizing of using consumables makes it more relevant for people to prioritize.

Global regulations of natural resources will have major repercussions on production and consumption patterns. Such regulations must be built on global agreements where natural resources basically are considered global common resources. This seems to be a far-fetched and revolutionary idea, however, essential to meet the overarching goal of long-term cohabitation and effective protection of nature. Nation-states and companies can as part of such agreements get benefits from agreed production and other efforts, not from a random property right in the traditional way.

For these principles and measures to have the effects needed, they must be enforced at all levels and to an increasing degree by global governance institutions.

PROPOSE POLITICAL LIGHTHOUSE PROJECTS AND MEASURES

Effective measures at the level of nation-states should come from rich nation-states that in fact have the resources and competence to execute relevant measures. Nation-states that contribute substantially (per inhabitant) to global heating and destruction of nature should have an ethical commitment to act. Often, these nation-states are not among those hit hardest by the effects of global heating. Measures must have a lighthouse effect guiding and inspiring other rich industrial countries. The measures should also signal to poorer developing countries that their goals for

development should be reevaluated. They should not automatically be identical to the goals highlighted by rich industrial countries so far.

Norway is used as an example for proposing relevant lighthouse projects and measures at the nation-state level. People in Norway think that living the way they do today is normal, self-evident and even the right and best way of living. The environmental footprint per inhabitant, however, is several times that necessary for reaching climate goals. This calls for substantial changes in our perception and practicing of “the normal”.

Norwegians might object that Norway is a small country with only 5 million inhabitants. The Norwegian contribution to global heating is after all minimal. The great powers must start for getting meaningful results. We are, however, talking about lighthouse effects. Somebody must start. Everybody globally must contribute.

Norwegians are likely to say that Norway cannot take the efforts and costs needed to save the world. It is, however, hard to argue that Norwegians should have an obvious right to eat a much larger piece of the cake than others, now, and in the future. The global “cake” is limited.

I will propose measures although the Norwegian understanding of reality both in population and among politicians today is very far from the understanding of reality that I try to present. I still think that it is important to discuss measures being sufficiently efficient in meeting the seriousness of the situation. This might form the basis for processes of rethinking and maturation. This provides images to be kept in mind. Measures should, however, be adjusted according to better knowledge and new experience.

The nation-state Norway has in many ways been both lucky and clever. It is one of the richest countries, per inhabitant, globally because of access to and exploitation of large natural resources. The exploitation of natural resources has to a relatively high degree been beneficial for most of the Norwegian population. This exploitation, however, has not been by nature’s premisses altogether. The world and our world view are changing all the time. What we once thought was a good thing to be proud of, later with new knowledge turns out to have serious negative consequences.

Most of the year Norway has an electrical energy surplus because of waterpower. In short periods electricity must be supplied from the rest of Europe. Norway also is a significant exporter of oil and gas, as well as contributing to oil and gas activities globally. Companies partly owned by the Norwegian government operate in tropical rainforests without taking proper care of the interests of nature or indigenous people. The exploitation of natural resources has resulted in the building of valuable competence. This competence should be used for new purposes.

The oil and gas activities at seabed are based on the Convention on the Law of the Sea. Other activities like seabed mining are also planned. The intention of the Convention on the Law of the Sea, however, is that countries with a wide seabed should manage resources in a wise way in a global perspective. They should not prioritize fast exploitation for their own benefit alone.

Norway uses substantial resources in other countries to maintain and widen its affluence. Some types of food may not be problematic. The substantial import of meat and food for livestock and farmed fish, however, result in substantial climate- and nature footprints in other countries. The import of bioenergy is also problematic. The import of diverse consumer products also contributes to global emissions of climate gases and destruction of nature. It is important to consider this seriously instead of betting on creative bookkeeping.

Norway emphasizes buying climate quotas to get a positive climate accounting without having to reduce its own emissions or take any other actions. In a global perspective only buying oneself out of problems is not good enough. The systems that climate quotas are based on also need to be scrutinized seriously.

The Norwegian climate goals are not closely related to real global climate emissions caused by the country's consumption and affluence. The present debate related to the Norwegian climate goals means a serious derailment from the real challenges.

Norway tries to market some good measures. Number one is subsidies for electric cars resulting in relatively large share of electric cars. The size of cars, however, at the same time has increased substantially. Number two is the development of green technology, including solutions for carbon capture that, however, still are in a preliminary state. The city of Oslo has implemented some measures for reducing the use of cars.

To supply oil platforms with renewable energy from land is a costly cosmetic measure just for climate bookkeeping. The production of this land-based energy has other bad consequences for nature and indigenous people. It also masks a critical view on the on-going search for and production of oil and gas.

Norway has had a low consciousness regarding the total use of energy, energy efficiency and saving of energy. We are used to low energy prices and abundance. The consciousness regarding destruction of nature is also low. We think that we have an abundance of nature as well. The negative effects of global warming seem to be far away. Norway will not be hardest hit. We can for a while enjoy warmer summers.

We are used to having a welfare society. Economic inequalities are increasing but are still relatively low. The negative effects of global economic rules of the game are not influencing people's lives. The Norwegian society is in fact profiting substantially from these rules of the game. The Norwegian Oil fund (The Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global) built over time by income from oil and gas production, results in substantial financial income and long-term economic security. The total global consequences of the financial system discussed earlier seem far away.

Norway is a stronghold for climate scepticism. We need a better understanding of global consequences, together with a better societal understanding and societal prioritization. It is not all about "Norway LTD". For some reason or other Norway think of itself as a "moral great power". The reality is very far from that position. To get democratic support for the necessary measures required would be the democratic acid test.

It is crucial that a country in such a lucky position as Norway takes responsibility in a global world with joint challenges. Norway taking responsibility would really mean a lighthouse effect. It might first affect other rich industrial countries. It could also inspire developing countries to rethink their goals for development. Norway might contribute with broad competence.

Proposed measures for Norway:

- Planned and relatively quick reduction in oil and gas activities. Stop in searching for new resources.
- Stop for importing meat and animal feed, including feed for farmed fish, and stop for subsidizing parts of inland meat production.

- Total plan for producing energy, using energy, energy efficiency and saving of energy. Renewable energy and technological innovations must be parts of the plan. The plan must result in reduced climate footprint and destruction of nature.
- Total plan for reducing the use of cars, mainly private cars.
- A new regime for building regulations.
- Start work to clarify consequences for nature and climate of both private and public consumption.
- New political and administrative framework for practical protection of nature.
- Initiatives, and substantial professional support to a global regime protecting seabed. Mineral extraction and mining must very clearly be based on precaution principles.
- Initiatives, and substantial professional support to a global regime for managing fish resources and other live resources at sea.
- New principles for managing the oil fund
- Development and spread of technological innovations for renewable energy and carbon capture.
- Start a process for reorganizing work life.
- Start a process for reorganizing aid policy in developing countries.

The present search activities for oil and gas are in vulnerable arctic areas. To stop searching for new oil and gas resources represents a clear signal. Planned reduction and stop in production of oil and gas should be seen in a global perspective. Norwegian oil and gas activities globally must also be reconsidered. Measures regarding reorganization of work life must be part of the plan. Norway should continue being a technologically advanced country.

To stop importing meat and to stop general subsidizing of inland meat production implies substantially reduced consumption of meat. At the same time, however, small scale agriculture should be sufficiently sheltered because of local environments and cultural landscape. To stop importing feed for livestock and farmed fish will have major consequences for inland agriculture and fish farming. Fish farming in addition has serious challenges regarding animal welfare and local pollution. Fish farming in other countries with Norwegian participation should also be affected. Society must support the process of change. The consequences of these measures for other countries, including aid policy, must be considered.

Power suppliers and power-intensive industries make their prognoses. We seem to have an enormous need for more power as quickly as possible. Norway, on the other hand, has hardly been considering energy efficiency and energy saving. We will develop new solutions, and industry will produce goods that are needed. It is, however, necessary to prioritize within framework conditions set by nature and climate. The need for energy must also be seen in a wider perspective than for Norway alone. Renewable energy produced in Norway can reduce the need for energy produced by coal in other European countries. Technology for transferring and storing energy will become important. Norway has the competence to contribute to better overall management of energy.

Norway uses a national plan for transport. This is kind of a wish list for local communities, car users, and to some degree also users of railways and other public transport. It is only a matter of how far down the list we are willing to go. A total plan for reducing the use of cars must have a very different focus. A wide set of measures are necessary. Measures for urban development, substantially reduced building of new roads and parking lots, and better public transport must be part of the plan. Maintenance and improvement of existing roads for transport of goods should be prioritized instead

of capacity and speed for private cars. We must also take care of nature when considering the need for roads and railways.

Building activities are important elements in climate accounting. The whole value chain from evaluating the real need for building to planning, implementation and maintenance should be scrutinized. This means a new regime for building regulations. Norway should also support research and development regarding building materials and methods that are better for climate.

Better systematic clarification of the consequences for nature and climate from both private and public consumption would be useful. Then the total environmental footprint in a lifelong perspective must be included. This will improve individual basis for prioritizing. It will also improve the understanding of measures at societal level limiting individual freedom of choice. Such a systematic clarification would have transfer value both to other rich industrial countries as well as developing countries.

Theoretically nature in Norway has legal protection. A far better framework resulting in practical protection is, however, badly needed. The recommendations from the UN-panel report regarding biological diversity is a starting point. The tools for practical implementation and enforcing are crucial. It is important that decisions are taken at a level of management, being able to evaluate matters holistically. The necessary knowledge basis, using precaution principles, and clear principles for decisions are important. All innovation is not technological innovation.

Norway has got comprehensive competence exploiting resources at seabed by its oil and gas activities. This competence should not be used in a race towards quick exploitation of diverse seabed resources for own benefit. Norway should instead be instigator for a knowledge-based and fair global regulations regime. Searching seabed for minerals is tried to be justified by the need for minerals for a "green shift". The Norwegian search for minerals is also part of great power competition.

Norway has got comprehensive competence regarding management of fish resources and cooperation regarding fisheries. Norway should take initiatives for intensified global work for regulating global fisheries. They should prioritize the needed competence and resources for such work.

The Norwegian Oil Fund should prioritize specific well-planned projects beneficial for reducing environmental footprints. The fund must be willing to take higher risks. This might obviously go at the expense of requirements for profitability and will be much more work intensive. At the same time the fund should be an active participant in activities for better frameworks for the financial sector leading to abolition of tax havens. The oil fund should also be used for restructuring oil-based activities, including alternative use of competence and adjustments of competence.

Technological innovation should continue, including solutions for carbon capture. Work enabling large scale use should be prioritized.

Processes should start towards restructuring work life. Such processes must include the consequences of the measures discussed above, basic societal priorities, and the more general matters discussed earlier.

Processes should be started regarding Norwegian aid policies. Developing countries should not automatically adopt the same development goals as Norway so far has had. Several of the measures discussed above for Norway should also include considerations of consequences for developing countries. In addition, Norway should contribute to the lighthouse measures for developing countries to be discussed below.

All these measures will imply considerable signal effects. Plans, however, must be implemented and followed up. Individuals will be significantly affected by necessary regulations, but the total welfare reduction is after all limited. Measures that directly affect individuals will be discussed in more detail below.

Today Norway basically is a well-functioning society. Most people are thriving. This is something that must be taken care of. Increased material welfare, however, is not the crucial ingredient making it a good society. At the same time, it is necessary to understand that we are part of a global world implying responsibilities. Today we are a much worse global participant than we would like to think. The lighthouse measures proposed are demanding. They, however, also include many positive opportunities. There are needs for innovations in many areas, but within a new framework.

It is necessary to have a closer look at the degrees of freedom available for Norway to implement the measures proposed. Norway is closely interwoven in international agreements and systems. Such arrangements are fundamentally challenged by my proposals. A basic goal must be to influence the other participants in the international system to contribute.

The world, together with our perception of it, is changing all the time. What once was seen as good and self-evident may after all need rethinking.

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The following lighthouse measures are relevant for many developing countries:

- Restructuring agriculture from meat production for exportation to more diverse food production being more climate friendly, ecosystem friendly and with more specific local benefits.
- Systematic and critical scrutinizing of projects and systems based on climate quotas and green washing. Consider and if possible reverse measures that do not pass a critical examination.
- City planning for typical megacities in developing countries aiming at a modest increase of population welfare without an accompanying destruction of nature and emissions of climate gases. A key element must be not to use the models from rich industrial countries in an uncritical way. The “mission model” from Mariana Mazzucato might be used, and cooperation between cities sharing ideas and experiences is important.
- Independent knowledge-based analysis of the consequences of trade agreements regarding agricultural products from developing countries seen connected to agricultural subsidies in rich countries. Poor countries must also be protected from large fluctuations in international food prices.

These proposals are basically in accordance with development initiatives by the UN-system and the UN development goals. The proposals, however, have a more precise prioritization of nature and climate. They must be implemented using global competence and global resources. We are not only considering financing measures. Focus must change.

All the proposed measures have the need for changes in global economic rules of the game in common. Changing these rules of the game will reduce risks and support beneficial results substantially. They will change framing conditions in a positive direction.

PROPOSE INDIVIDUAL MEASURES

Let us first have a closer look at general elements that are important to influence individual behaviour regarding climate and nature:

- The vision must be felt to be important enough. To secure the survival of nature and livelihood for us and future generations should indeed be such an important goal. There is, however, not automatically so. It is easily felt to be too far from everyday life.
- Own effort must be felt as being important.
- We always have a side glance at others. We are influenced by our environment, and we ourselves influence our environment.
- We are influenced by media and policy makers. We need the basic knowledge to act wisely, but most of us also need support and backing for our choices all the time.

How changes in society can happen is a complicated matter. It is often said that basic changes must come from below in society. It must be a potential there waiting to be released. This means that besides individual choices and actions the right political communication and signals are important. The introduction of regulations of public smoking is a very interesting example. It was possible to change well-established habits at a large scale. These habits were generally accepted and to some degree they also implied social status. The regulations clearly challenged established customs regarding individual freedom. A key factor was policymakers with a clear vision, clear communication, and the guts to see the case through. We could hope for a similar history regarding climate and nature. We need policymakers defining the goals clearly. We need policymakers that dare to be honest. Measures must be seen in a lifecycle's perspective including all consequences. We need policymakers that can challenge unlimited individual freedom reducing the common good. It is no doubt that how we shortsightedly live today are crucial for future global livelihood.

I will go through a set of relevant specific areas seen in the perspective of individual behaviour in relation to societal interactions, tensions and mechanisms.

- There is little attention, if any at all, about general consumption. General consumption has a lot of repercussions regarding use of nature and natural resources, emissions of climate gases from production, transport, and distribution. Relevant information about consequences of different kinds of consumption in a lifetime perspective is in short supply. There is an enormous need for relevant counterbalances to the massive resources used for advertising in favour of ever-increasing consumption.
- Electronic equipment and digital solutions in general are important. Recycling of electronic equipment must be much more regulated and obligatory. The introduction of new models and new versions of software making new hardware necessary should be regulated. An overall consciousness and prioritization of the use of digital solutions is necessary.

- There is substantial engagement regarding diets without meat, less intake of meat and limitations for dairy products. Ecological production and diverse improvements in the agricultural production-, distribution- and handling-chain are also considered. Such initiatives are positive. These initiatives deserve more support. They are easy to understand and close enough to everyday life.
- When it comes to the use of cars, focus is on conversion to electric cars, not on the total general use of cars. There is a total lack of attention on the resources needed and the emissions resulting from production of cars, the side effects from building roads and parking lots, and local pollution from particles. It becomes very easy to believe from policy makers and media that buying an electric car (maybe it is an extra car) is all you need to do to save nature and climate.
- There is much attention about air traffic. The use of airplanes is, however, one of the fields not included in book-keeping relevant for international climate agreements. There is a potential for reducing the use of air traffic for business and public administration purposes because of electronic solutions and new ways of working. When it comes to private use of airplanes, tourist traffic seems to be increasing. Private use of airplanes should, however, be a field for individual prioritization. The use of private airplanes should be strongly regulated.
- Reuse and recirculation get attention and should get even more attention. It is important that individual efforts and public efforts fit together such that individual efforts in fact are effective leading to real results for climate and nature.
- Pollution from plastic products is a field where individuals can do a lot. Consumer power have led to some societal measures.
- Leisure activities increase in scope. Some of them has substantial and increasing environmental footprint. Some of them, however, has a small footprint. Culture and social life should flourish.

Individual choices and habits are important. They may, however, easily end up being only symbolic. Society must not be allowed to put all responsibility on minor individual choices. There is a substantial need for larger societal changes. The most important individual actions then are those heading for societal and political changes. This means that changing total material consumption and influencing others to do so, is crucial. We must reverse the consumption spiral.

Consciousness regarding the totality of the challenge outlined here is open for individual and group activities heading for change.

RULES OF THE GAME FOR THE FINANCIAL SECTOR

Economic rules of the game favouring the financial sector represent major drivers for climate change and destruction of nature.

Measures for changing these rules of the game are more specifically discussed under GLOBAL ECONOMIC RULES OF THE GAME FAVORING THE MANY to follow.

SECURE KNOWLEDGE-BASED GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Knowledge-based global governance is the foundation wall for meeting the challenges of global heating and destruction of nature.

First the recommendations from the UN expert panels must be taken seriously. These panels are excellent examples of a starting point for knowledge-based global governance and global cooperation.

Independent professional environments and institutions must be strengthened.

The opportunities of common digital platforms must be used effectively.

CHANGING HOW TO WORK ON AGREEMENTS REGARDING NATURE AND CLIMATE

This is discussed more specifically earlier. The basic take-aways from that discussion are:

- Discussions and measures regarding nature and climate must be closely connected.
- Nation-states must be responsible for their total use of global resources and their total emissions of climate gases.
- Reduction of consumption and use of areas must be clearly prioritized.
- Saving nature and climate is about much more than money.
- Global regulations must be established to reduce the exploitation of natural resources.

REDUCE MASSIVE ADVERTIZING

One important measure to reduce consumption is to reduce the general pressure from advertising. This is especially the case for advertising in social media being almost ubiquitous. Users should seek out commercial APPs themselves instead of getting commercial content all the time when they look for other content and other functionality.

Global economic rules of the game benefitting the many

These rules of the game must be built on a vision of a healthy market-based economy benefitting the many, not the few, in rich industrialized countries, without keeping on destroying nature and climate globally. The rest of the world must first of all get opportunities, but also help, for a fair development on their own premises. What is meant by “development” cannot automatically be identical to the interpretation delivered by rich countries so far.

Measures regarding the financial sector and multinational companies must be global ones. Other measures securing this vision can be on diverse governmental levels like nation-state, region, city or municipality.

The following principles must be applied:

- The market-based economy must be only part of the total economy. Climate, nature, and societal infrastructure and thrive must have their own basic priority, not a priority as a byproduct from production and consumption.
- The rules of the game for the financial sector must lead to the removal of short-term speculation, prioritization according to goals and consequences on the ground, and increased

accountability for all participants. Substantial regulation of the speculative part of the financial sector will imply only limited harm to essential products and for people in general.

- Re-evaluation of investments that are seriously contradicting the global goals for climate and nature. Investment security cannot always have priority one.
- New rules of the game regarding intellectual property.
- Radically changing economic thinking and practical economy will have many repercussions not only for the economy itself. The process of change must be considered a task for society at large. Most people and small businesses must be shielded. Society must use the “muscles” available.
- The process of change must be gradual. This vision must lead the way over time.

Rules of the game for the financial sector and for intellectual property are crucial. To change rules of the game requires necessary legitimacy. This is discussed more specifically later under the main goal “Global democratic governance”. The basic understanding of the economy and prioritization and budgeting processes outlined earlier are important. Community conversation is important also for the economy.

RULES OF THE GAME FOR THE FINANCIAL SECTOR REMOVING SHORT-TERM SPECULATION, PRIORITIZATION ACCORDING TO REAL-WORLD GOALS AND CONSEQUENCES, AND INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

A world struggling with the crisis of global heating and destruction of nature cannot shield investments done, and still being done, in increased production of energy, both fossil and renewable, and increased consumption far into the future, such that they are economically and financially profitable for businesses and investors.

The present organizing of finance implies spreading accountability in such a way that nobody is sufficiently accountable. Investments, according to new rules of the game, must have a clearcut documentation that they are beneficial enough for clear and legit interests beyond pure financial profit. Both consequences for climate, nature, working conditions and salaries must be sufficiently evaluated. Projects must be clearly governed in such a way that the relevant stakeholders beyond shareholders are sufficiently involved.

Many nation-states used to have laws and regulations for projects, investments, and finance. Globalization implied that national borders became less important. Not all such regulations were useful, but also in a global world we need regulations securing nature and climate and the needs of local communities. Working conditions and salaries are also important. These considerations must be met by planning, implementing, and further follow up. Why should projects be started if this is not the case?

The financial sector, with its financial instruments and products, its funds and claims for financial profit, has a clearly different kind of logic and priorities. Many large funds want to be seen as having an ethical or green profile. They sell their shares in some companies not aligned with some relatively general high-level ethical claims. They usually do not intervene more closely. The result is a relatively large relatively neutral portfolio, without companies associated with products that are in the negative searchlight of media, securing profitability. Only very few companies in the portfolio, however, deserve the label green or ethical forerunners.

Companies and projects that do not care much about climate, nature, and ethics, tend to be financially profitable. Such projects, resulting in bad consequences, will often easily secure financing. This means that the total logic of the financial sector makes it difficult to obtain positive results without totally changing the rules of the game.

It is kind of a Gordian Knot that must be cut off. This cannot happen in single nation-states. The bulk of great powers must together stand behind it. The relevant global institutions, IMF, World Bank, and WTO, must be involved. None of the present rules of the game has any democratic legitimacy. Changing them does not really imply a democratic challenge.

Reasonable predictability is important for economic actors. Fair treatment and clear rules of the game are important. We cannot, however, let the considerations for economic actors be what gets top priority all the time. We may speak of "Force Majeure" when existential challenges for mankind are what makes measures necessary. We should also remember that investments and measures done over time by many economic actors very often are done against better judgment.

This means a need for a global ban of all measures being done to manipulate share prices. This includes a ban for all kinds of inside information, buying a company's own shares, and a very substantial toll on all stock exchange transactions and transactions of currency. Cryptocurrencies must be banned. They imply a formidable need for energy. Cryptocurrencies mainly results in speculation and ways of obscuring activities.

Regarding hedge funds and other funds, they must be split to see the individual stakeholders and individual investments. Banks or other owners of funds must sit with the final accountability if they are not able to achieve this. Tax haven money placements must be frozen until ownership and other considerations regarding the money are clarified and approved. The juridical mechanisms for secrecy and pulverization of responsibility must be removed.

Financial products must be systematically scrutinized. Many of them should be banned to eliminate speculation. This is especially important for financial products related to climate, nature, and food.

Debts that many nations have to financial institutions must be scrutinized and largely be consolidated. The basic needs of these nations are more important than the profits of financial institutions.

These measures imply lots of work and time. Sufficient competence and manpower must be prioritized for these important tasks. The EU, as an example, is no stranger to better quality assurance of projects according to their European Green Deal.

Today it is in fact possible to use established public registers and established information systems in banks and other financial systems to get a relevant overview of transactions and other economic elements.

Global governance for regulation of basic natural resources is fundamental for decisive protection of climate and nature as well as for securing stable and fair framework conditions for developing countries. The necessary economic mechanisms must be shielded from speculation in general and the destabilizing effects of wars and conflicts. Such global regulations might also in themselves represent potent measures for reducing wars and conflicts. The profit generated by wars and conflicts must be channelled directly to a few global funds helping those hit hardest by increased prices and reduced availability.

Food is a basic need for everybody. The world still has problems regarding hunger even if enough food is produced globally. Main causes for this are found in the global market for food, including manipulation of prices and speculation, and customs barriers introduced by rich countries. A price ceiling or other measures for the most basic types of food and also other essential goods made available to the poorest countries should be introduced.

Aid for development of the poorest countries should have financing by a few large enough funds governed by relevant global governance bodies. Direct transfer of money to the poorest should be used more extensively than today. This means less administrative resources, strengthening of local markets and increased self-reliance. Together with improving health- and education services this would be very effective.

To achieve all this, it is necessary with a crystal-clear joint announcement from the UN and the great powers that there is no way to go clear of these measures. It would be advantageous, in fact for all participants, included the financial sector, if they actively cooperated with experts under an UN-umbrella regarding practical implementation and follow-up.

Taxes will always be a nearby and actual measures. Still, I am more concerned about changing basic rules of the game leading to ever increasing inequalities with many adverse side effects. Taxes basically mean treating symptoms without attacking the basic mechanisms leading to increasing inequality.

ESTABLISH BETTER GOVERNANCE OF MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES

The measures discussed above for the financial sector are important also for multinational companies.

Today multinational companies only have obligations via nation-states. This is hardly functioning. Global institutions must be established for relevant governance. Multinational companies, acting globally, must have a sufficiently strong global counterbalance. As discussed earlier, investments and projects must meet the basic needs of nations and local communities. The multinational company's profits cannot be priority one.

An important principle is letting the multinational company take responsibility for the whole value chain with all participants.

It is often useful to see whole business branches together.

ESTABLISH PROCESSES FOR PRIORITIZING WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR SOCIETY TO OBTAIN THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE MARKET-BASED ECONOMY

We have already discussed what mainly gives value for society. This means new processes at all levels to undertake prioritizing. This will be challenging but means a necessary counterweight to the existing dominating understanding of economy. New digital platforms provide opportunities for democratic processes for basic societal priorities at diverse levels. Climate and nature must be secured in such a framework for the market-based economy.

It is necessary to work on practical processes, thus getting practical experience for how the correct features of planned economy can be combined with overall governance and stability of the money-based economy.

Government, policy makers, politicians, and authorities at all levels give away possibilities for governing by limiting themselves to the current understanding of mainstream economy. A wider understanding of the economy can provide a more abundant toolbox.

Some specific tools needed are:

- A new kind of economic instruments to secure that total amount of money is closer to real life values on the ground to avoid the adverse effects of an increasing amount of speculative money.
- Processes for regulating work life and financing public sector that are not based on the present assumption that society's need for work resources automatically is tied to the need for workplaces in private sector.

REGULATING THE NEW DIGITAL ECONOMY

That something is becoming technologically possible automatically should be put in use no matter societal consequences cannot be the main rule. Today we might have been dazzled by the new digital options having occurred at a fast pace.

We should take the rules evolved over time in the physical world as the starting point for regulating competition and societal consequences also in a digital environment.

The introduction of joint platforms for community conversation is first a means for more real democracy. At the same time, however, it means regulations hitting the largest actors in the new digital economy reducing their options for monopoly effects and advertising income.

We need sufficient openness and knowledge about the functioning of algorithms.

Regarding providers of goods and services, local providers must be sufficiently prioritized instead of large global actors. Buying or manipulating visibility should be banned. Platforms for local cooperation should be developed and spread.

Health data is a large area where it is still possible to be in the forefront regarding regulations.

WORK

The overall considerations must be on human thrive given that the most basic need for goods and services for society is taken care of. We cannot continue thinking that traditional workplaces are most important. The need for many of the traditional workplaces will decline because of technological development. The content of tasks will also change considerably. The societal challenge is to organize society in a way giving everybody a meaningful life. A prerequisite for making necessary changes is the way economy is understood, including enough elements of planned economy.

Society will need competence, both technological and practical competence, to produce essential goods and services. Society will also need more general, holistic and advanced competence to take care of increasing research and development to protect nature based on knowledge. Knowledge and

bureaucracy are also needed to govern a more complex society. This means workplaces in public sector. Everybody also needs basic competence to function as good citizens in a society in change.

Executive salaries, options, and other benefits both in private and public sector are drivers for the development of spiralling consumption and claims. High salaries must generally be limited.

Unions should be strengthened. Working conditions and participation should be prioritized instead of focussing on salaries. Salaries must basically be determined from more fundamental frameworks, not only market-based mechanisms.

The recruitment for important societal functions like education and health must be secured in a long-term perspective. The need for this kind of workforce will increase considerably.

Spotlight must be directed on low-wage positions and a divided labour market. Fundamental framework for wages must counteract the trend towards a divided labour market. It must become impossible to exploit vulnerable workforce, also workforce from countries with low salary levels. Minimum wages must in any case be sufficient for a decent life in the country where work is done. To own your own home is an important element for good local societies. Minimum wages must contribute to making this possible. Minimum basic income must be introduced together with other measures discussed.

If everybody has a good enough economic basis for life, work life will be more diverse. Wages and economy as basis for societal status will be reduced. More flexibility in organizing work and leisure will be possible.

Global processes will take time. More regulations of multinational companies will contribute.

Democratic global governance

I propose a new model for global governance that as far as possible will be based on real democracy at a global scale. This will not be a global government, but an organization with a broader mandate than the UN Security Council and with sufficient power and resources to implement and follow up necessary global regulations. This organization should use the human resources and competence from the present UN organization together with other competent resources efficiently.

I first outline basic principles for such an organization, securing legitimacy and democracy, before sketching it a little more in detail. This is a sketch meant to be a starting point for a broader process.

- A Global Council, as the superior formal instance, must represent the majority of the global population
- A Global People's Council has an important role giving input and advice to and control of the Global Council. The People's Council must be a link to the global population. It must be put together in a way mirroring the global population directly.
- The UN General Assembly is basically continued with representation from the established nation-states. It should, however, be further developed including large defined minorities within nation-states and representatives from indigenous people.

- Digital platforms for constructive community conversation with tools for dialogue with sufficient resources for effective follow-up must be established.
- Governance and global spread of the internet is prioritized. Access to the internet and common platforms for community conversation must be seen as a basic human right.
- Expert panels for critical fields must be established. These expert panels should have their own People's Councils.

A new model for global governance cannot exist in a vacuum. Common platforms for community conversation are essential. It is also necessary to establish and anchor a new common set of values. New rules of the game for intellectual property must secure that knowledge becomes a common global resource in practice. The apparatus for enforcing and following-up global governance must be substantially strengthened. Processes must be designed to build mutual trust.

My proposals imply powerful global instances. It is crucial to secure mechanisms hindering undue concentration of power, as well as stuck relations and situations.

A SKETCH FOR NEW GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

The Global Council substitute the UN Security Council, G7(8) and G20. The mandate for the Global Council should include nature, values, knowledge, economy, security, development and community building in a holistic way. The Global Council should build on established competence in the UN-system, IMF, WTO and other competent resources. These human resources must be targeted and organized from the specific needs and perspectives of the Global Council. Decisions are basically consensus based. There must be a gradual movement from recommendations given to obligatory rules of the game supported by follow-up resources and power.

Half of the participants in the Global Council consist of the most important nation-state actors: China, the US, India and the EU. They are permanent members. In addition, 5 (or maybe a somewhat higher number) more nation-states should be temporarily members. From diverse criteria Brazil, Indonesia, Japan, Nigeria, South Africa, Iran, Turkey and UK are obvious candidates. Ideally Africa should also be a permanent member. Today no nation-state or African based cooperation can take this role. None of the participants have veto-rights.

A competent secretariat with enough resources is important. There should be mechanism for recruitment and renewal. Competence should be more important than nationality.

The Global Council must work closely with the Global People's Council with enough power and accountability given to the Global People's Council. The Global People's Council should consist of minimum 2/3 of representatives chosen by random draw among the global population within some frames securing participation from all over the world. The rest might for example be elected from the world of NGOs. The representatives are replaced gradually. The representatives have two main tasks to take care of: Give input, advice, and adjustments to the Global Council and to actively communicate with the global population by means of common platform for community conversation. This platform is discussed later.

The Global Council also must work closely with a Council of Nations being built from the present UN General Assembly modified and expanded.

The processes and rules of the game between the Global Council, the Global People's Council and the Council of Nations must be wisely elaborated. This means a kind of Constitution securing balancing power. The popular voice must have enough weight in a kind of power balance. There must be mechanisms for handling distrust. The Councils must be sufficiently shielded from lobbying. This is critical for the Global People's Council.

These central Councils are supported by the following expert panels:

- Ethical and technological panel for technological development
- Governance of nature and climate
- Digital governance
- Information governance

Ethical and technological panel for technological development includes both digital developments, included AI, and medical and biotechnical development prioritizing ethical governance of development. This panel will be further discussed below.

The present UN panels for global heating and for biological diversity should be seen more in a common context. The joint panel should also be able to give methodological advice for evaluations of practical consequences of diverse measures.

The panel for digital governance must take care of architecture, security, and data for internet and common global platforms. The panel should be an instigator for spreading internet and platforms for global democratic processes.

The panel for information governance will be responsible for content and information policy for common information platforms. The panel will be responsible for establishing and following up the total information architecture and for fact-checking methods and resources. The panel will have the superior responsibility for data in common platforms.

Regarding economy and trade, IMF and WTO must be restructured having very different goals and mandates than the present organizations.

Each of the expert panels need a people's council at a smaller scale than the Global People's Council. They should use digital tools for real interaction with the global population and for transparency. The different people's councils should interact closely.

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It is reasonable to be sceptical to powerful global organizations. Necessary internal diversity is crucial. Transparency, principled and practical processes and rules of the game must secure a balance between participants. The distribution of responsibility and authority between global organizations and nation-states must be basically reconsidered.

Multinational companies and financial institutions must use the same channels as private people, NGOs, and activists to influence agendas and decisions, removing lobbying. Regarding the implementation of measures, it might be useful to be able to cooperate with them in several fields.

SECURE GLOBAL COMMUNITY CONVERSATION AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE

Instead of today's platforms with algorithms built for maximum activity and effective spread of advertising for commercial purposes, and a mixture of all content, information platforms must be more delimited and clearer. A proposal for structural division:

- Platform for community conversation with opinions, politics, and discussions
- Platform for news
- Platform for facts and popularized science meaning a strengthening and expansion of a platform similar to Wikipedia
- Social media platform without economic mechanisms and content
- Platform for buying and selling, advertising, ordering, and logistics

The present social media platforms should be downscaled and closed in a structured way.

This means building global platforms with public resources with open interfaces and algorithms. They must interact and be open for all content providers, including ordinary users, within a set of rules of the game. They can also allow supplementary applications to be developed within a set of rules of the game. The platforms have fact-check organizations and resources. They must have tools for dialogue giving options for input and response. These tools are important for the global governance organization outlined above. Search is crucial and must be adjusted such that it is clear what kind of content the search is about, and that the prioritization is according to the actual type of content. The tools used in the platform for community conversation must be free from AI. This is mandatory.

The common public platforms are essential for global democratic governance. Only platforms at a global level can replace the almost global platforms owned by private companies today.

The platforms must be secured against surveillance. The users must have freedom of speech within wide limits. They must be shielded against reprisals from those in power.

The dominating technology companies of today are beginning to meet different kinds of resistance. This resistance, however, is not coordinated. The US basically protect American companies, even if they in some ways are seen as problematic. The US is concerned about economic effects like the creation of monopolies. The EU has different claims to take better care of the users of the present platforms. Many national states are concerned about fair taxes. Nobody has, however, seriously raised the principal question of the distortion of the total global information ecosystem, and the random and not transparent handling of information, users and relations to authoritarian regimes.

Even without the US onboard the largest global players have means to force the technology companies to cooperate. Closing their platforms would be a serious economic threat. It would, however, be useful to cooperate using their competence in building the new public platforms. It would also be useful to use their comprehensive infrastructure and operating organizations for global public infrastructure. How this could be achieved is partly a matter of tough negotiations. The fundamental information ecosystem considerations must have priority one.

CHANGE THE RULES OF THE GAME FOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Rules of the game for intellectual property must change to make total knowledge more democratically accessible and useful for the common good.

The rules of the game for intellectual property were meant to result in a balance between motivation for innovation and society's benefits from the results. The present rules of the game are often leading to monopolies where economic and juridical measures secure the owners of intellectual property exclusive rights for very long time. Society must pay a high price for access even if society often has participated substantially in the creation of the result. Intellectual value creation is basically collective.

Regarding motivation for innovation, it is important that many people and diverse people get the opportunities to participate in the innovation process through openness of results and processes. Innovation is improved when it becomes possible to stand on shoulders. Such openness will improve total innovation.

Regarding society's use of results, the formulations in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, should be the starting point. It is a human right to enjoy the results from science and cultural life.

Rules of the game must be global. Intellectual property must last for a much shorter period than what is the case today. Some kind of one-time reward for breaking results may be useful. Development usually happens when new innovations are built on top of existing ones or when results are combined in new ways. For example, digital solutions are often complex in such a way that meaningful delimitations are difficult to define. Source code, interfaces, and algorithms must be open.

Regarding medicine, pharmacy, and biotechnology public scientific and economic resources and resources from private companies both participate in the development of a medicine or a vaccine. Private companies must be duly compensated for their contribution, but the results and the further use of the results must be openly accessible.

Patents on nature as such, including gene-modified products are not acceptable.

Pirate-copying is considered as one of the largest criminal activities globally today. Straight-forward pirate copying should still be criminal, but the criteria for the strong protection of products and the period for protection should be reconsidered.

STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATION FOR ENFORCEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP SUBSTANTIALLY

This must be done in several areas and levels. This also means coordination, streamlining, and targeting existing competence and resources that are significant in many areas.

ESTABLISH GLOBAL VALUES BUILDING ON THE INTENTION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

High-level values already proposed as a humble starting point:

- Humans are an integrated part of cosmos/nature.
- All humans are equals.
- Humans share a common responsibility.
- Humans need social relations and community built on trust and not overruling the basic individual intrinsic value.
- Governance is democratic.
- You have your personal freedom if you are a responsible fellow human and a responsible inhabitant of the earth.
- Diversity is valuable in both nature and society.

These formulations are explained earlier.

Ethically governed global technological development

This area is mentioned earlier as part of democratic global governance. It is, however, by itself a very important area that must be further discussed. It is also closely connected with other measures discussed earlier:

- Establish global values building on the intention of the universal declaration of human rights
- Secure global community conversation
- Change the rules of the game for intellectual property

Economic rules of the game are important drivers for technological development and the new economic rules of the game proposed will support work on ethically governed technological development.

ESTABLISH AN ORGANIZATION FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY

An ethical and technological panel for technological development includes both digital, included AI, and medical and biotechnical development focusing on ethical governance of the development. The panel must be broadly composed. The background for seeing this enormous field together is that the development becomes ever more complex and interdisciplinary. At the same time ethics is a common factor. Military technology must also be included. More technologically focused special expert groups may be useful.

This ethical and technological panel has a global people's council being used for regular consultations and input. To involve non-experts means that other diverse perspectives are investigated. It also means anchoring and earthiness. In wide-reaching matters other parts of the global governance organization may be consulted.

Governance of technological development is crucial for what it means to be human in the future.

Global security is also closely connected to technological development. Today we have an arms race together with a race regarding technological development. Security and options for disarmament can only be achieved by a joint governance of technological development. This joint governance must be based on ethical considerations, not on economical or military/security considerations.

Process for implementation

The great powers must shift focus from traditional thinking and internal considerations to the global challenges that they all in fact have in common. These challenges cannot be handled without close cooperation. We have so far discussed the basic drivers behind these global challenges. The great powers must speak together on this common basis. Relatively healthy nation-states could have an important role in getting necessary processes started. A re-organization of the UN Security Council according to the ideas of the Finnish President Alexander Stubb in "The Triangle of Power" at an early stage of the process of implementation would be extremely valuable.

Global heating and economy are areas where it should be possible to discuss technological and practical solutions in a pragmatic way. The great powers must, however, be willing to rethink basic concepts and practices regarding the economy. Areas that to a higher degree relate to the ideological basis for cultures may need more time for ripening. Cooperation and results in some areas will, however, create a better basis for trust and more comprehensive cooperation.

The following initiatives and measures should then be considered:

- Continue present UN-based work on climate and nature. Reorganize and strengthen the UN work so that climate and nature are more closely considered together. The agreements on climate and nature should be restructured and re-anchored.
- Start working on regulating the financial sector. The first concrete measures must signal the seriousness of the needs and intentions behind regulations. Substantial taxes for stock exchange transactions and currency transactions, together with systematic scrutinizing of financial instruments especially those related to climate and nature would be a starting point.
- Start working on real changes in the tax haven ecosystem. Continue work on overview and transparency, but with substantially increased intensity and scope.
- Start working on accountability and governance of multinational companies. A starting point would be to make the present recommendations for accountable activities obligatory. Multinational companies must be made responsible for their total value chain. Global instances at the same time must get resources and legitimacy for enforcement and follow-up activities.

Next, as many as possible of the following measures should be started:

- Start processes for establishing a joint set of basic values as a revitalization of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

- Start work on organizing a global council for ethical governance of technological development.
- Start working on common platforms for community conversation and exchange of knowledge.
- Start working on a new organization for internet governance, however with expanded mandate to include digital governance altogether.
- Start working on changing the rules of the game for intellectual property.

These initiatives and measures should be started under the UN-banner because of legitimacy, even if UN is not the basic initiator. By succeeding work on complex matters, trust can be built. In the end real democratic global governance can be established and all the initiatives above can be full-scale implemented.

It is often argued that radical changes must come from below in society. No doubt enough individuals must have a basic understanding of the relationship between their own situation and their own behaviour and deeds, and the societal mechanisms and rules of the game leading to inequalities and injustice and in the end destruction of livelihood for nature and humans. Societal mechanisms, however, are complex ones. Widely accepted myths and ways of thinking together with flaws in the information eco-system play important roles. Somebody on all societal levels must be clear minded and brave enough to contribute to change.

Individuals have different options for influencing society. A clear attitude to own consumption is an important option for contribution to change open to everybody. People in different decision maker positions are also individuals being able to see basic challenges related to their position. They can contribute to changes.

Christina Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac have been close to central decision makers behind the Paris-agreement. They have the following recommendations to individuals:

- Defiant optimism – look outside the immediate situation, accept living with uncertainty and hold on over time
- There are no limits to our mental box – We do not have a zero-sum game
- Imagine a different world – Let go old truths
- Be critical to information (and disinformation)
- Be active wherever you can

These are wise recommendations, but I still think that it is mandatory also to have a clear understanding of the basic drivers behind our global challenges, as discussed above. Decision makers have a special responsibility.

I think that processes with contributions both from below and from top of society are necessary. “Development” and “history” is not just something happening. It is something we create together.

A new story – A new platform for thinking, understanding, discussion, and cooperation

The present global story is not challenged by different single arguments like claims for a higher degree of economic justice and equality, but by considering a fundamentally new and different story. This means a new platform for thinking, understanding, discussion, and action. A story making us cooperate in a new direction.

The New Story

Humanity is based on a new set of values (as a starting point these values are):

- Humans are an integrated part of cosmos/nature
- All humans are equals
- Humans share a common responsibility
- Humans need social relations and communities built on trust not overruling the basic individual intrinsic value
- Governance is democratic
- You have your personal freedom as long as you are a responsible fellow human and a responsible inhabitant of the world
- Diversity is valuable both in nature and society

This set of basic values is not overturned by religion, group identity, or nationalism.

Governance of society is based on knowledge as a common resource.

Platforms for knowledge, information, news, and discussions support community conversation based on verifiability, freedom of speech, and transparency.

Real democracy as a culture at all societal levels based on trust, participation, and co-determination.

Democratic global governance based on cooperation and downsizing of enemy images, with institutions having sufficient legitimacy and resources for enforcement.

Economic rules of the game included a sufficiently regulated market-based economy, for the good of community and nature. Regularly processes at several levels for establishing and maintaining the framework for regulating the economy.

Nature is prioritized from a long-term knowledge basis and perspective.

The contents of this new story are illustrated and concretized through the proposals above.

This new story is unfortunately demanding. What is in our heads must be turned upside down. How we understand the world, based on the neoliberal story, seems to be almost hardwired, as are our habits and expectations.

This new story may seem utopian. It is easy to dismiss it at once as being totally removed from reality. The story, however, continues the basic intention from the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It fills out and clarifies areas that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights could not fully

consider. We often talk about human rights - do we in the end think that they are barely spin of thought?

It turns out that this new story has a much better inner substance and can address the global challenges in a much better way than the present neoliberal story. Maybe we should give it a chance.

I remind you of the observable global challenges that I presented starting this book:

- Humans occupy far too much space and destroy nature at a fast pace,
- Humans are heading out of their traditional roles and frameworks,
- Humans are confused and uncertain in information chaos and lack of values,
- Humans face large and increasing differences in living conditions and prospects,
- Humans have threats of mass destruction hanging over their heads.

Realizing this new story is about finding a new compass course. It is about a necessary process over time with many contributors. I have tried to describe the new story as far as I can - and should - as a skeleton for rethinking, discussions and further processing.

Before it is possible to be optimistic about reaching important global goals like the UN goals for development, we must clear away the obstacles and brakes outlined above.

Ideas are like seeds. They may seem small and unremarkable. Seeds that germinate can, however, bring great and truly incredible results.

The present global situation calls for fundamental and thorough rethinking. What on earth are we really up to? We must leave the comfort zone, and we must have a perspective that is wide enough. We cannot just shoot from the hip without minding where we stand and what we are aiming at.

Power is seldom given away voluntarily. It is, however, important to describe the consequences of power structures and to analyse the mechanisms leading to and preserving power. It is important to fundamentally challenge the very story that power is built on.

We can choose a new story together instead of a new total war and a continued blind travel towards a destroyed earth. To be able to cooperate effectively we, however, must build on a joint basic story.

Attachment 1 - A simple comparison of the present global story and the new story

The new global story	The present global story
Cosmos/nature Humans are an integral part of nature.	Cosmos/nature Nature is raw material that can and should be effectively exploited.
Humans/society/values Clearly defined values. Real democracy. Common responsibility.	Humans/society/values Individual freedom is only delimited by the freedom of other individuals. Society and the common good is not left much room. Questionable claims for «owning» freedom, democracy and human rights.
Knowledge/Information/Communication Knowledge-based measures for taking care of nature. Ethical governance of technological development. Information platforms focussed on community conversation and sharing of knowledge.	Knowledge/Information/Communication Focus on technology. Missing attention regarding the consequences of technology. Information and communication based on economic considerations for effective massive advertising.
Economy What is important in society comes before considerations based on money alone. Clear framework, rules of the game and regulations for a market-based economy in favour of nature and the many.	Economy Capitalism, favouring the few. Focus and priorities only from what can be measured in money, included GDP. Many outgrowths: Speculation, monopolies, pulverization of responsibilities, secrecy, short-termism.
Order/Stability/Security/Power/Violence Joint efforts targeting fundamental global challenges. Communication, cooperation, building of trust. Disarmament.	Order/Stability/Security/Power/Violence Using fear, power, and external enemy images. Defending property and privileges. Rearmament spiralling.

Attachment 2 - Inspiration

Here comes a list of books and other documents having inspired me during the work on my present book. Some of the most important ones are mentioned more specifically in the text.

Author/ Organization/Link	Title/Link	Comment
IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	ipcc.ch	Multiple reports on global heating
IPBES -The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	ipbes.net	Multiple reports on biological diversity and ecosystems
FAO- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Fao.org	Multiple reports on agriculture and nature
Sustainable Development	sdgs.un.org	The Sustainable Development Goals. History, implementation progress, guidelines.
Greta Thunberg	The Climate Book	Broad collection of basic facts together with input from a diverse set of experts, and her own summaries and assessments. We need both individual changes of attitude and major system changes to be able to deal with the seriousness of the climate challenges.
David Wallace-Wells	The Uninhabitable Earth – A Story of the Future	Discussion of the consequences of global heating
Christiana Figueres, Tom Rivett-Carnac	The Future we choose – Surviving the Climate Crisis	Presents a future situation and discusses how to get there. The authors have played important parts in the work on global climate agreements.
Club of Rome Edited by Ugo Bardi and Carlos Alvarez Pereira	Limits and beyond – 50 years from The Limits to Growth- What did we learn and what’s next?	Summarizes the essence of “The Limits to Growth», discuss the reactions evoked, and discuss present relevance
Club of Rome Ernst von Weizsäcker and Anders Wijkman	Come on! Capitalism, Short-termism, Population and the destruction of the Planet	“The Limits to Growth” still is backdrop. Valuable discussion of many of the present global challenges. (I disagree regarding many of the proposed solutions. They have a too narrow technological approach).
Peter Singer	Ethics in the real World	Many practical examples using consequence ethics
Tormod Burkley	Ethics for a full World	Ethics discussed in relation to nature and development
Patrick Curry	Ecological Ethics – An Introduction	Comprehensive overview regarding initiatives related to ecological ethics

Jonathan Franzen	The end of the end of the earth	Essays with nature and climate as background theme.
Lisa Garforth	Green Utopias – Environmental Hope before and after Nature	Broad discussion of utopias as a method for studying different phases of the development of the ecological crisis.
Roman Krznaric	The Good Ancestor – How to think long-term in a short-term World	Diverse long-term perspectives.
Daniel Kahneman	Thinking fast and slow	Fundamental scrutiny of human characteristics.
Denise D. Cummins	Good Thinking – Seven Powerful Ideas That Influence the Way We Think	Many wise and useful considerations.
Jacob Ward	The Loop – How technology is creating a world without choices and how to fight back	We, being humans, are trapped in a cycle of unconscious choices and influences making us vulnerable. AI is the ultimate technological element for exploiting this situation. We must build societies with relevant institutions helping us to raise above our worst human characteristics.
Yuval Noah Harari	Sapiens – A Brief History of Humankind	New perspectives on the history of humankind.
Seyla Benhabib	Another Cosmopolitanism	Thoughts about a global world and basic human rights.
Malai Joya	A woman Among Warlords	Afghanistan – Personal history with general background.
UN	Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights	Recommendations for companies and national states.
UN Human Rights	Roadmap for Eradicating Poverty Beyond Growth	Calling for a decisive shift away from growth-dependent development strategies and towards a human rights economy that places the well-being of people and the planet at the centre of economic transformation.
Aldous Huxley	Brave New World	A classic that still can tell us much about what it means being human.
Margareth Atwood	The Year of the Flood	Possible future scenario.
Margaret Atwood	The Handmaid's Tale	The open and secret life in a totalitarian society
George Orwell	1984	Possible future scenario.
Matthew Syed	Rebel Ideas – The Power of diverse Thinking	On the importance of diversity.
David Graeber	The Democracy Project	Experiences and perspectives regarding the Occupy movement.

Steven Levitsky & Daniel Ziblatt	How Democracies Die – What History Reveals About Our Future	Democracies may end by military coups, but also by several small steps.
Anne Appelbaum	Twilight of Democracy	The illiberal one-party state is not a kind of philosophy. It is a kind of mechanism to get to and to hold on to power. It can be combined with different ideologies.
Aurelien Mondon, Aaron Winter	Reactionary Democracy – How Racism and the Populist Far Right became Mainstream	Democracy is not necessarily progressive. It becomes so only if we make it progressive. How meaning is created and how ideas become common sense is discussed.
Marco Revelli	The New Populism – Democracy Stares into the Abyss	Analysis of populism in many western countries. The McKinsey&CO report “Poorer than their parents” provides important background.
Daniel Kahneman, Olivier Sibony, Cass R. Sunstein	Noise – A Flaw in Human Judgement	Systematic scrutiny of decision-making. Noise, biases, and unwanted group effects are discussed. Noise is far more important than we usually think.
Francis Fukuyama	Identity	Identity as a political matter. How losing dignity threatens our democracy.
Alberto Toscano	Fanatism – On the Uses of an Idea	Fanatism - a very negatively loaded political concept used in many contexts and for many purposes. Establishment contra change.
Yuval Noah Harari	Homo Deus - A Brief History of Tomorrow	On the future of humankind.
Shoshana Zuboff	The Age of Surveillance Capitalism – The Fight for a Human Future at the new Frontier of Power	Discusses how fundamentally problematic it is that Big Tech systematically intrude the world that we perceive. Are we going to get a beehive society ruled by some sort of elite?
W. James Potter	Digital Media Effects	Digital media broadly outlined.
Tom Phillips	Truth	A short history of lies, idiocy, and fake news. The experiences of a fact-checker.
Edited by William Dinan and David Miller	Thinker, Faker, Spinner, Spy – Corporate PR and the Assault on Democracy	The practical functioning and scope of PR, communication, and lobbying.
Nick Bostrøm	Superintelligence – Paths, Dangers, Strategies	The threats from developing artificial intelligence (AI).
Ethan Mollick	CO-Intelligence - Living and Working with AI	Focus on practical aspects of how AI, as new tools for thought, can transform our world.
Rob Larson	Bit Tyrants – The political Economy of Silicon Valley	Close on Big Tech.

Sheila Jasanoff	Can Science make Sense of Life	Biology and biotechnology in a societal perspective.
James Bridle	New Dark Age. Technology and the End of the Future	A basic discussion of technological development in the light of human prerequisites, prejudices, and ulterior motives.
Edward Snowden	Permanent record	On the systematic US surveillance of its population.
Erik Brynjolfsson, Andrew McAfee	The second Machine Age	Discussion on modern technology and human future
Mariana Mazzucato	The Value of Everything	Basic discussion of value in economics. An important book challenging mainstream economy.
Yanis Varoufakis	Talking to My Daughter – A brief History of Capitalism	On economy and the meaning of life.
Adrienne Buller	The Value of a Whale - On the Illusions of Green Capitalism	We cannot go on seeing the world, and the crisis of nature and climate, through the glasses of capitalism. The failures of «green growth» are thoroughly discussed.
Paul Collier	The Future of Capitalism: Facing the New Anxieties	We need an active, but still modest state. We need the market but regulated by meaningful goals safely anchored in ethics.
Joseph E. Stiglitz, Amartya Sen, Jean-Paul Fitoussi	Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress ec.europa.eu	Discussing and identifying the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress, including the problems with its measurement. Considering and suggesting additional information for more relevant indicators of social progress.
Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo	Good Economics for Hard Times	Economics is too important to be left to the economists. The only recourse we have against bad ideas is to be vigilant, resist the seduction of the “obvious”, be sceptical of promised miracles, question the evidence, be patient with complexity and honest about what we know and what we can know.
Joseph E. Stiglitz	The Road to Freedom – Economics and the Good Society	What matters is not only material goods and services, as measured by GDP, but also overall individual and societal well-being, which includes many things that traditional GDP leaves out, including possibilities and assessment of the state of freedom.
Kjell A. Nordström	The Monkey and the Money – A history of Capitalism	Exchanging goods and services is a win-win situation. The toolbox has become more and more advanced. Problems following this development are also discussed.
Rebecca Henderson	Reimagining Capitalism in a World on Fire	Improvement proposals from «inside» mainstream economy. She thinks that the

		multinational companies might be a key for saving the world.
Ha-Joon Chang	23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism	Many interesting analyses regarding market economy in a broad perspective.
Robert Reich	Saving Capitalism – For the Many, Not the Few	On the rules of the game of capitalism – Status and proposals for improvement.
Richard Murphy	Dirty Secrets – How Tax Havens destroy the economy	Comprehensive and thorough about tax havens.
Ekaterina Chertkovskaya, Alexander Paulsson, Stefania Barca	Towards a Political Economy of Degrowth	Collection of articles about «degrowth» as opposed to economic growth.
Edited by Amy Downes and Stewart Lansley	It's Basic Income – The Global Debate	Universal basic income – the principles and the experience
Edited by Arve Hansen and Ulrikke Wethal	Emerging Economies and Challenges to Sustainability	Thorough analyses of new emerging economies.
Rutger Bregman	Utopia for Realists – and how We get there	Universal basic income – the principles and the experience
Naomi Klein	This Changes Everything	Global heating – it is not about coal and oil – it is about capitalism
Kevin Bales	Modern Slavery	Use and throw away. What multinational companies, corrupt authorities and other actors use the global economic rules of the game for comprehensive modern slavery.
Mariana Mazzucato	Mission Economy	She discusses «Missions». How to join all good forces behind the implementation of great goals.
Douglas Rushkoff	Throwing Rocks at the Google Bus – How Growth became the Enemy of Prosperity	Critical discussion regarding the new digital economy. The discrepancy between money and real value is running wild.
Branco Milanovic	Global Inequality – A New Approach for the Age of Globalization	Thorough documentation of global inequalities.
Kate Raworth	Doughnut Economics – Seven ways to think like a 21st Century Economist	New concepts and perspectives on nature and economics.
Elinor Ostrom	Governing the Commons -The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action	Focus on common resources and how they are handled at all levels – theory and experience.
Jeffrey Sachs	Common Wealth Economics for a Crowded Planet	Solving population growth, climate change and extreme poverty by harnessing new technology and global cooperation.

Erik Olin Wright	How to be an Anticapitalist in the 21st Century	Nuanced discussion of capitalism.
Edited by Corinna Burkhardt, Matthias Schmelzer, Nina Treu	Degrowth in Movement(s) – Exploring Pathways for Transformation	Bottom up- Focus on democracy, local initiatives, social justice. Many examples.
Peter Joseph	The New Human Rights Movement – reinventing the Economy to End Oppression	Focus on structure and structural violence. Humans are most important, not things. Memorize Frederick Douglass.
Ross Jackson	Occupy Wall Street – A Global Roadmap for Radical Economic and Political Reform	Broad discussion and justification for the position taken by Occupy.
Richard Susskind, Daniel Susskind	The Future of the Professions – How Technologies will transform the Work of Human Experts	Several expert professions are discussed.
Tim Jackson	Prosperity without Growth – Economics for a Finite Planet	Economy related to ecological resources and human characteristics.
Mark Bittman	Animal, Vegetable, Junk	The real costs of junk food and «American» diet.
J. Poore and T. Nemecec	Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers	Life Cycle Assessment. The food value chain.
State of Finance for Nature UNEP (UN Environment Programme), World Economic Forum	Economics of Land Degradation Initiative	Economical calculations regarding necessary investments for saving climate and nature.
Owen Jones	The Establishment – and how they get away with it	On how «The Establishment» arises and functions. British focus.
Edited by Thomas G. Weiss and Rorden Wilkonson	International Organization and Global Governance	Comprehensive book on global governance both regarding overview and depth.
Steven Pinker	Enlightenment now – The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress	The history of steady progress from the Age of Enlightenment up to the present.
Peter Frankopan	The New Silk Roads – The Present and the Future of the World	The new role and importance of China.
Noam Chomsky	Who rules the World	Global governance with a critical light on the role of the US.

Edited by Anne Stensvold	Religion, State and the United Nations	The influence on the UN-system from religions.
Russel Blackford	Freedom of Religion and the Secular State	On secularity.
Christina Bicchieri	Norms in the Wild – How to Diagnose, Measure and Change Social Norms	How to work systematically for changing social norms.
Anthony Giddens and Philip W. Sutton	Sociology	Comprehensive book on sociological method and applications covering diverse societal areas.
Tim Marshall	Divided – Why we're living in an age of walls	More than one third of the global national states have built some kind of wall.
Oswaldo de Rivero	The Myth of Development – Nonviable Economies and the Crisis of Civilization	On failed attempts of development in underdeveloped countries.
Paul Collier	The Bottom Billion Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It	About one billion of the world's poorest people live in about fifty nation-states mostly in Africa. These nation-states are trapped in poverty where current aid seems to be inadequate. Paul Collier tries to analyse the situation including possible ways out.
Paul Collier	Left Behind – A New Economics for Neglected Places	Forging a new economics based on clever societal processes instead of trusting the solutions from mainstream economics. I believe that the principles are more general than just for neglected places.
Daron Acemoglu & James A. Robinson	Why Nations Fail – The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty	A very broad historical survey as background for presenting a theory that explains why nations succeed or fail. The distinction between extractive and inclusive political and economic institutions is essential. History, economy, and politics are interwoven.
Ursula Huws	Reinventing the Welfare State – Digital Platforms and Public Policies	The welfare state – principals, history, and options. British perspective.
Edited by John McDonnell	Economics for the Many	The basis for economical politics proposed by Labour and Jeremy Corbyn.
Javier Blas og Jack Farchy	The World for Sale – Money, Power and the Traders. Who	Discusses mechanisms and actors regarding trading with the global natural resources. History and present situation.

	Barter the Earth's Resources	
Martin Empson, Ian Angus, Carolyn Egan, Sarah Ensor, Suzanna Jeffery, Amy Leather, Ian Rappel, Michelle Robidoux, Camilla Royle, Kohei Saito	System Change not Climate Change – A Revolutionary Response to Environmental Crisis	Collection of contributions with the following main message – Capitalism is the basic problem.
UNEP (UN Environment Programme)	Unep.org	Various reports.
A European Green Deal	Ec.europa.eu	Comprehensive program.
Joan Fitzgerald	Greenovation – Urban Leadership on Climate Change	Points out the key role of cities to get quick changes. Discusses framework, prerequisites. Examples.
Vincent Liegey & Anitra Nelson	Exploring Degrowth – A Critical Guide	Degrowth as idea and as movement.
Harriet Dyer	How to reduce your Carbon Footprint – Simple Ways to live a Planet-friendly Life	Simple overviews and advice.
Morgan Philips	Great Adaptions – In the shadow of the climate crisis	Focus on adaption to climate crisis. Good and bad examples.
Dana Thomas	The Price of Fast Fashion & The Future of Clothes	"I really don't care, do U?"
Joseph Zárte	Wars of the Interior	Peru, Amazonas. Timber, gold, oil are symbols of progress and welfare. What should we be willing to sacrifice for it? Elida Høeg has written an appendix discussing the businesses run by Norwegian companies (often partly owned by the Norwegian authorities) and the Norwegian Oil Fund in Latin American countries.
Andreas Malm	Corona, Climate, Chronic emergency-War Communism in the twenty-First Century	Compares the situations related to Corona and climate.
Thomas Hylland Eriksen	Overheating – Antropology of Accelerated Change	Perspectives on the Anthropocene.
Lily Cole	Who Cares Wins – How to protect the Planet you love	We are citizens, not consumers.
Tariq Ali and Oliver Stone	On History	Recent history in a critical light.
Alexander Stubb	The Triangle of Power – Rebalancing the New World Order	West-Open society, freedom of speech, law East- Autocracy, non-interference South-Freedom to choose, large young population Alliances based on values or interests?

Jeffrey D. Sachs	A New Foreign Policy – Beyond American Exceptionalism	America's approach to the world must shift from military might and wars of choice to a commitment to shared objectives of sustainable development
Yuval Noah Harari	21 Lessons for the 21st Century	Continuing previous thoughts.
Rutger Bregman	Human kind – A Hopeful History	Trying to justify that humans are mostly kind.
Michael E. Mann	The New Climate War	System change – Don't give up.
George Monbiot	Out of the Wreckage – A new Politics for an Age of Crisis	Looking for a new «story» to replace the neoliberal «story».
Mike Berners-Lee	How bad are bananas- The Carbon Footprint of Everything	Practical information for everyday life.

Many useful books unfortunately only are available in Norwegian.

Author/ Organization/Link	Title/Link	Comment
Dag O. Hessen	Verden på vippepunktet – Hvor ille kan det bli?	Discussing tipping-points.
Anne Sverdrup-Thygeson	På naturens skuldre – Hvordan ti millioner arter redder livet ditt	On nature's shoulders. How 10 million species are saving your life.
Marit Beate Kasin	Naturparadokset – om naturen vi mister og hvordan vi kan få den tilbake	About what extremely valuable nature we are about to lose very quickly. We examine the effects of building massive cottage "villages", reducing livability for wild reindeer, the consequences of building windmills and power lines across one of the last large areas with irreplaceable nature and indigenous culture, power and practices in forestry, wolves, and other big predators, and examples of "rewilding".
Njål Høstmælingen	Hva er menneskerettigheter?	On human rights. Principles and practices.
Arne Johan Vetlesen, Rasmus Willig	Hva skal vi svare våre barn?	Our children might experience dramatically worsened global living conditions. What did we do to prevent it? What do we tell our children?
Kristina Quintano	Smugler eller grenseløs?	Inside the refugee flows from Asia and Africa to Europe
Kristina Quintano	Flukt	The stories of young refugees trying to reach Europe

Mona Ringvej	Makten og ordene	History of democracy
Roman Linneberg Eliassen	Hva er penger	How can the “money-system” better service societal goals today and tomorrow.
Roman Linneberg Eliassen	Hysj, vi regner – Hvorfor økonomer ikke forstår virkeligheten	Basic discussions on economical thinking. Why economists don’t understand reality.
Martin Bech Holte	Landet som ble for rikt	The land that became too rich. How Norway ended up in the trap of the Oil Fund.
Ina Tin	Saudi-Arabia, Sverdet og stemmene	Saudi-Arabia and human rights.
Anine Kierulf	Hva er yringsfrihet	What is freedom of speech. Focus on public conversation.
Oscar Dybedahl, Sigurd Hverven, Ola Innset, Mimir Kristjansson	Ingen mennesker er født frie	Discussions on liberalism.
Bente Kalsnes	Falske nyheter – Løgn, desinformasjon og propaganda i den digitale offentligheten	Patterns in information chaos.
Dag Harald Claes, Helge Hveem, Bent Sofus Tranøy	Internasjonal politisk økonomi	Introduction to international political economy.
Ida Aalen, Magnus Hoem Iversen	Sosiale medier	Social media are made to lock us up, not to open.
Tone Smith, Ebba Boye, Bent Arne Sæther	Økonomisk tenkning – Bidrag til mangfold i økonomifaget	Alternative economical thinking. «It is better to be approximately right than to be wrong in a very precise way”.
Lars Fr. H. Svendsen	Løgnens filosofi	The philosophy of lies.
Hans Erik Næss	Hvordan forstå globalisering – seks begrepspar som forklarer verden	How to understand globalization.
Thomas Hylland Eriksen	APPenes Planet	On global use of the smartphone. The effects on our lives.
Ingrid Hjertaker og Bent Sofus Tranøy	Ustabilitetens politiske økonomi – Om fremveksten av finansialisert kapitalisme	Political economy – on the emergence of financialization.
Simen Sætre	Petromania	How oil is changing societies worldwide, also the Norwegian society.
Mimir Kristjansson	Hva ville Gerhardsen gjort?	On the options for social democracy.
Arne Øgaard	En tredje vei	Quality of life. The road may be more important than the final goal.
Helge Ryggvik	På kanten – Norsk oljevirksomhet i Barentshavet og	Comprehensive criticism of Norwegian oil- and gas business in the Arctics.

	hvorfor det må settes en strek	
Anja Bakken Riise	Mitt klimaregnskap – et forsøk på å leve bærekraftig og løsningene vi trenger	My climate accounting.
Marie Aukrust	Der villgraset gror – Livsgrunnlaget, matforsyninga og beredskap for nye tider	Food and cultural landscape.
Andrew P. Kroglund	Termostat – Hvordan klimaet former oss, forandrer samfunn og forvandler fremtiden	Change of climate in a long perspective.
Terje Tvedt	Verdens historie – med fortiden som speil	World history in a long perspective. The role of water.
Cecilie Hellestveit	Ulykkelige Arabia – Verden etter Jemen	Broad discussion of a complex situation layer by layer from local level to global level.
Elisabeth Eide og Terje Skaufjord	India – På vei mot hindunasjonalisme	Broad discussion on the history and present situation in India.
Kaare M. Bilden	Mat er makt – Myter og muligheter i matens storpolitikk	Food. Discussions on different myths. We produce enough food. Hunger is a structural problem.
Håkon Njøten	Hvorfor kjører pappa Porsche? – En innføring i forbrukeradferd	Behavior of consumption. The processes involved in searching for, buying, using, evaluating, and getting rid of goods and services.

Postscript – The Trump Agenda – *A new way of the world?*

The election of Donald Trump as President of the US with his Make America Great Again (MAGA) agenda, and his group of loyal supporters, gaining power, seem to have changed the way of the world for the time being. Trump obviously brings new challenges to the global situation. The global challenges outlined earlier in this book, however, basically also still are equally relevant. These challenges do not automatically disappear. I will try to sort things out.

I must make my analysis regarding the consequences of the Trump agenda based on proclamations from Trump himself and the Trump administration, together with the flow of news that all the time emerges in the media. What structured ideas and strategies, personal motives, populist considerations, ulterior motives or hidden events that exist behind the veils must be left to guessing. The Trump agenda, nevertheless, manifests itself in acts and consequences that are clearly observable. It is important to consider the total effects even if the single measures and proclamations seem chaotic. It is important to consider both short-term and long-term consequences.

Threatening and creating insecurity are frequently used instruments. Just trying to swirl up as much attention as possible together with straightforward lies, fog laying, and noise creation for its own sake are other instruments often used. It is tempting to see Trump as a kind of mad clown and entertainer and focus on the comic sides of his appearance. His agenda and his relatively broad support, however, must instead be taken seriously. It is important to try to find the important stuff in chaos, sometimes with the risk of getting it wrong.

We are used to consider the neoliberal “story”, with its strong priority of the economy, to be the normal way of life particularly in the western world. Trumps agenda is in many ways the extreme version of our neoliberal “story” stripped of all attempts to give it a humanitarian look. It is also combined with ultra-conservative religious content. The uncritical applications and extensions of the neoliberal story over a span of time, as discussed in this book, however, has made Trump and his agenda possible. Such political phenomena don’t happen in a vacuum. They happen in an environment already prepared.

The challenges to humanity previously outlined are taken to a new level with the Trump agenda:

- The destruction of climate and nature is accelerating, cutting out all measures for coping with the challenges or those measures having some effects of moderation.
- What is basically human is heavily challenged by a set of values that counteracts what has been achieved over time regarding basic human rights. This is combined with technological development “on drugs” without any proper governance. We are not talking about the future. The challenge is here and now. The Trump agenda now has many elements of the dystopic future described in different ways by among others George Orwell, Margaret Atwood, and Aldous Huxley.
- Information is actively used for manipulating and destroying knowledge and truth. This is supported by the tools made available by technological development. All societal institutions supporting knowledge are counteracted. Meaningful community conversation is strongly counteracted.
- Differences in living conditions and prospects are systematically widened both in the US and globally. Oligarch power structures have become normal.

- The threat from mass destruction weapons becomes even more severe with an unstable situation without international law being respected and with the most powerful country actively supporting instability.

I will substantiate this further by going through the most relevant discussion points previously discussed regarding nature, values, information, economy and global governance that are most heavily influenced by the Trump agenda.

It is important to recognize the scope and omnipresence of challenges.

I will then illuminate what are the most basic contradictions to a controllable route to a better world where challenges are met by knowledge and cooperation. I will as part of this review also discuss repercussions in other countries following from the implementation of the Trump agenda.

Nature

The Trump agenda focus on an aggressive short-term exploiting of natural resources. Together with short-term economical profit motives there seems to be a more strategic goal of using control over natural resources as a means for extending the US and Trump power basis.

His agenda is working against knowledge-based protection of nature. He has withdrawn from the Paris agreement and from contribution to the work of IPPC. The results so far from the IPPC work are totally neglected. The Trump administration is stopping diverse existing internal regulations and projects for protecting climate and nature. He is reducing or stopping US research regarding climate and nature. He is also trying to influence research institutions worldwide. This is the politics of the ostrich hiding its head in the sand.

This means accelerating the general destruction of climate and nature. Tipping points get closer. Many projects are basically irreversible. Throwing knowledge-based protection of nature and climate away means removing all the brakes towards what we know will mean catastrophic development.

Values

The Trump agenda means an extreme individualism. MAGA (Make America Great Again) is a slogan for egocentricity at all levels.

The Trump agenda use active manipulation of people as a legitime measure for reaching their own goals. Human relations and thriving diverse local communities are actively counteracted.

Universal Human Rights are considered basically irrelevant. The Trump administration, however, highlight freedom of speech. Their definition of freedom of speech is the freedom to use all means for trumpeting their own agenda without accepting fact-checking. At the same time other utterings and information channels clearly are hindered.

The Trump agenda actively counteract the most basic human rights for very many people internally by demolishing medical and social support for people needing it.

The Trump agenda support ultra-conservative Christianity very actively counteracting and suppressing diversity, equality, and inclusion.

The handling of immigrants is very brutal, and their most elementary legal rights are neglected.

Abruptly cutting development aid globally means throwing millions of people directly under the bus.

The Trump agenda is demolishing societal structures that are crucial for having democracy, preparing a route to autocratic rule. Neglecting and fighting the legal system may lead to a crisis and confrontation related the American Constitution.

The Trump agenda is deeply inhuman. It is spitting on people that are the most vulnerable ones.

Information, knowledge, communication

Truths and facts are regarded as irrelevant and are actively counteracted. Universities and education at all levels get reduced financing and diverse override.

The worst mechanisms of social media are actively amplified. Fact-checking is reduced or omitted. At the same time informational noise is actively generated. AI is an important helper for destroying knowledge-based information ecosystem and community conversation. The owners of the platforms for social media show their irresponsibility very clearly waving their tails to power.

Community conversation has very bad opportunities. Throwing knowledge and facts away is misleading people on a new magnitude of scale. Disinformation bubbles, however, also are dangerous for the administration itself and all people responsible for making decisions. A society built on “opinion” and disinformation will not be a sound and efficient society in the long run.

Economy

High tariffs against many countries, both previous friends and enemies are implemented. This war of tariffs neglects current agreements. The arguments for tariffs against different countries lack a factual basis. The Trump agenda use tariffs as a threat to obtain bilateral negotiations, being the strong party.

Cuts in public spending are also central measures. The seemingly arbitrary cuts in the public sector are justified by economic savings. The real reason is more likely to dismantle the public sector without any recognition and understanding of the real value of this sector.

Tax cuts are also central measures. Priority for billionaires is not a new phenomenon in US politics, but now it results in a kind of oligarchy where billionaires also get direct political influence in daylight open. The oligarchs align with the Trump agenda.

The Trump administration also focus on national debt. National debt is, however, being increased considerably by his overall decisions. Trump occasionally threatens to leave obligations regarding national debt.

The economic policy seems to be chaotic and basically non-rational. This is especially the case for tariff wars. If many Americans experience more problematic personal economy despite rosy election promises, this might affect the total Trump agenda heavily. In the long run it might be difficult to blame Biden for everything.

The Trump agenda might also create risks for the stability of the global economy. Some aspects are: Other countries will choose new trade partners instead of the US. Widespread consumer boycott of US products is probable. Investments in the US are considered risky.

Global production lines are complex. The Trump administration probably lacks competence for handling all this properly. The large rivals like China and the EU probably are far better prepared for a serious trade fight than the US because of competence, own internal markets, flexibility, and strategic products and resources.

Global governance

Trump openly admire autocratic leaders like Putin and is likely to align with them. Personal links to relatively few autocratic leaders is his wishful thinking.

Trump (via among others Musk) is supporting far right parties in many countries. Trying to openly influence politics in neighboring and allied countries this way is a new and dangerous trend.

We observe withdrawal from established global agreements and cooperation. Trump is seeing international relations as kinds of business cases. The economic results for the US, private interests in general and also for himself are basic considerations. He prefers bilateral conversation instead of global agreements. He is creating chaos. Trump is bullying also former allies. He is very impatient wanting quick results. This has led to a saying "Trump always chicken out" (TACO). TACO is, however, not a good description of what is going on. His impatience means he quickly tries something else when his first threats doesn't lead to the desired quick result.

He acts like someone that you hardly can rely on. Putting your own country before global responsibilities in all matters is a principle that is especially dangerous when used by a superpower like the US. Global justice, international law, agreements, and cooperation is made very difficult and unpredictable. The rights and rules of the military and economic strong ones regardless of other considerations are what is considered important.

This behavior has, however, caused several interesting percussions, creating rethinking especially in Europe. Europe is going to take much more responsibility for its own security. The economic priority for increasing military budgets, however, is a reduction in crucial sectors like foreign aid and protection of nature.

NATO is rooted in the Cold War situation. Europe has a real need for better and more effective defense independent of the US. Buying more weapons is part of it, but most important is cooperation and competence at all levels. Compliance with new experience is also important. It is not about winning the last war. It is important that the armament is specific according to the goal of European security. It must not be an instrument for US global aspirations. Considering China as the rival for global hegemony versus the "free world" is the questionable "story" sold in.

Trump is using "divide and rule". He is also very susceptible to flattering. Some leaders like Netanyahu and Putin uses this effectively. Others may also be tempted to do so. It is, however, crucial that nation-states find joint attitudes and answers to Trumps behavior and methods instead of acting alone. Such attitudes might lead to more stable international relations. There are examples showing that this is working.

Internal matters in the US have become critical. The republican party (GOP) has a very important responsibility in turning away from person cultus and the most horrible outgrowths of the Trump

agenda. GOP should to some degree be able to act as a responsible political party caring for the American people and not only billionaires and narrow personal, economic, or party interests. The democratic party, being more diverse than GOP, has a job to do caring for the American people more holistically and not basically driven by traditional narrow party interests. This calls for rethinking and mobilization at a new level. Both parties, however, now are dependent on lobbying and money from the richest people and companies in the US. Both political parties are basically organized for handling elections, not for the long-term political work to be done between elections.

The MAGA agenda is making the US abilities shrink in several dimensions in the long run. Military strength, however, may not be directly influenced, but reducing the number of allies, and showing clearly that you can't be trusted, might not be a route to real increased global power. Attempts to solve complex international conflicts without the necessary knowledge, preparations, continuity, and endurance can't be trusted. The US is putting itself in a more vulnerable economic situation and is also putting the global economic system at risk. The US is putting itself in a bad position regarding knowledge and sound information. Putting people in important positions based on loyalty instead of competence is not supporting an effective administration. This means a less potent country altogether relatively soon. Withdrawing from most international cooperation means less global influence and less access to important new ideas. The present behavior of the Trump administration also creates anti-American feelings and actions many places. It is only military power that is left.

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I think my ideas for a route to a better world outlined in this book still are relevant even if the future road will be even longer and bumpier than it was when I first developed my ideas. I formulated the following "unthinkable thoughts":

- We must focus on both the global and the local level,
- We must make structural challenges visible,
- We must challenge mindsets hiding or distorting reality,
- We must leave the comfort zone both as individuals and as societies,
- We must be willing to consider alternative futures (as outlined earlier in this book).

These "unthinkable thoughts" are in the twisted Trump version:

- Focus is not on the global level or the local level as such, but on how to unilaterally exploit global resources, no matter what the total consequences.
- Global structures are considered from the perspective of the most powerful nations, not global needs as such.
- The mindsets of extreme egoism and egocentricity and of hiding and distorting reality have top priority
- The comfort zones of those in power and wealth are protected and enlarged
- The alternative future means realizing the Trump agenda, with short-termism and without really understanding or bothering about all the long-term total consequences of it.