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Dr. Miguel Goede

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Society 5.0: We and I

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Table of Contents

Introduction	9
The Global Crisis & Opportunity	14
Is the Market “I” and Civil Society “We”?	35
The Corporation 4.0	45
Democracy	62
West versus East	80
North and South	88
We Are Smart and Living in Smart Cities?	96
Young versus Old	101
Religion	112
Society 5.0: The Alternative	122
How Do We Get There?	146
List of figures	170
References	171

Society 5.0: We and I

Society 5.0: We and I

Introduction

This book is about the current global crisis and the alternative new society 5.0 in which “We” and “I” are in balance. In our current society, “I” has taken priority over “We”, and has consequently caused an imbalance between the public interest and self-interest. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

What is “I” and what is “We”? “I” is extractive: extracting wealth, exacerbating poverty, greed. The word “extractive” I got from the book *Why nations fail*. According to Acemoglu and Robinson (2012), nations fail because they have extractive economic and political institutions. I prefer to state that they have extractive elites.

“We” cares and “I” does not. “We” gives but “I” takes. “We” is abundance. “I” is scarcity. “We” pays taxes and “I” tries to evade taxes. “We” loves, and “I” loves only himself. “We” is open and “I” is closed. “We” are family. “I” is alone. “We” is sustainable and “I” is not.

This imbalance between “We” and “I” also explains why the planet is in peril. “I” exploits the planet in pursuit of money and wealth. To achieve this, the planet is slowly destroyed.

We have an emotional bank account (Covey, 1989). Giving fills your emotional bank account and taking empties your emotional bank account. “I” has a lower emotional bank account balance.

Society 5.0: We and I

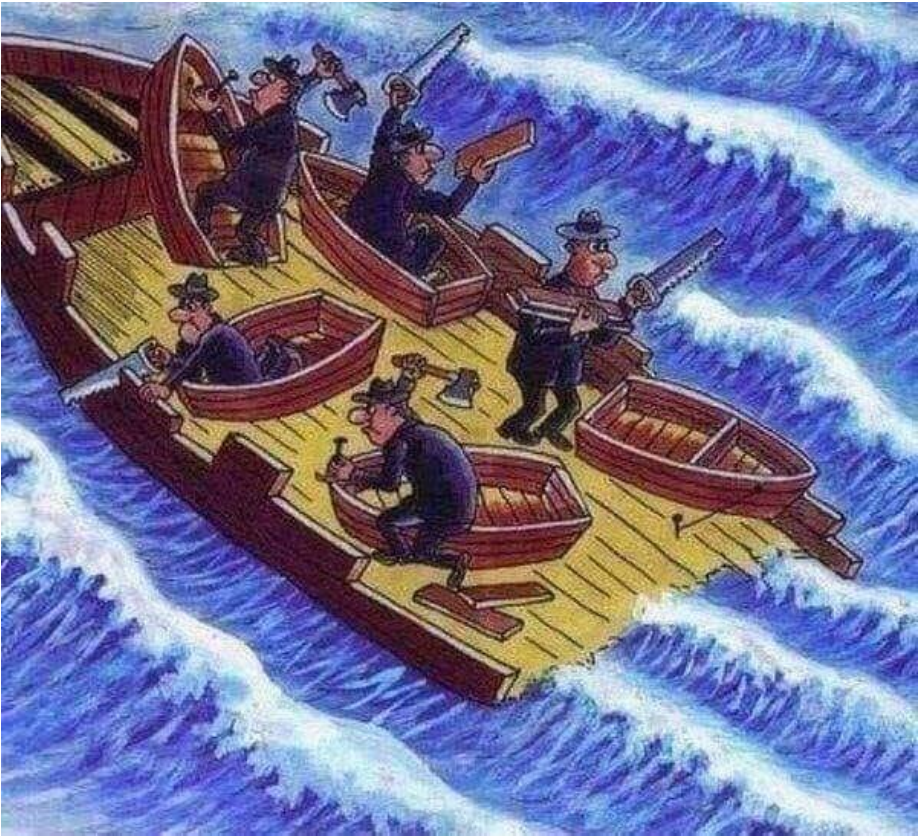


Figure 1: Drawing by Steve Cutts. To me, it illustrates the imbalance between “We” and “I”.

“We” is about inclusion. Accumulation of wealth excludes and therefore kills. It leads to a rich versus poor divide. Poverty leads to loneliness and depression, even if we are poor together. Poverty

Society 5.0: We and I

means illness and death. Ironically, wealth can lead to the same conditions due to the negative impact on the emotional bank account.

“We” is the Sharing Economy, and that is a variation of the Circular Economy. In the sharing economy, waste creation is avoided by sharing and handing used products down to others.

It all comes down to this: “When ‘I’ is replaced with ‘we’, even ‘illness’ becomes ‘wellness’.” This quote is attributed to Malcolm X, the American civil rights movement figure who stirred up much controversy in his life. It reminds me of one of the teachings of my late mentor Wim de Vrijer, who attributed this insight to Adam Smith, the moral philosopher and considered by many others as the father of economics: It is all about the balance between “We” and “I”. “I” should care about “We” because it is in its self-interest. It is *the well-understood self-interest*.

While finishing my manuscript I read an interview with Robert Putman, the influential Harvard-based political scientist, sociologist, and public administration expert, in which he argues that “We” became “Me” at the end of the 1960s (van den Berg, 2019). He illustrates this by referring to songs by the Beatles, like “I Me Mine”. Putman argues that from 1900 till the 1960s the United States was “We”, and he is convinced that we are at the dawn of a new era.

We used to say that we live in an era of change and that change is the only constant. Now we experience a change of era and are not just

Society 5.0: We and I

living in an era of change (Tegenlicht, 2013). We are experiencing an era of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA). Some call it the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). It is characterized by the emergence of robots and artificial intelligence (AI). This might lead to a shortage of meaningful jobs. Of course, there will be jobs in AI and so on, but not all people will be able to acquire the new skills to enter such a position. This is a real concern expressed by CEOs (Fleming, 2019c). Many might find jobs in caring for the elderly because the global population is getting older (Desjardins, 2019a), except for Africa, which will still be young.¹ This, therefore, leads to the question of how people will earn a living. This question is often answered with: the introduction of universal basic income (UBI), whereby people receive an income with no strings attached. This, however, raises other questions in turn: how will we pay for this system? What will people do if they are not working? What will we teach them if there are insufficient jobs? These are the questions this book sets out to answer.

In this book, I explain the current global crisis, and how we should reconstruct society in response to it, and why. I do not have all the answers, but simply want to contribute to the discussion about solving the crisis and transforming society. I start by explaining the crisis we are facing. This involves exploring what the signals are and showing that climate change is probably the key signal that manifests itself in

¹ In addition, Africa is becoming one of the biggest single markets (Chirinda, 2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

other signals. This is followed by explaining that the neoliberal market is the cause of this crisis. The neoliberal ideology has eroded all values and undermined social cohesion. We then move on to the exploration of the phenomena of the market versus society and government, focusing on how the neoliberal ideology (market rationale) infiltrated all the Three Domains (government, civil society, and private sector). This is supported by an analysis of the corporation as the main actor in the neoliberal world. The analysis demonstrates that the corporation if it were human, would be qualified as a psychopath, which poses the question as to whether it can be cured. The discussion then moves on to consider how neoliberalism, in the form of corporations and their lobbyists, is threatening democracy; and how this creates opportunities for populists and other less democratic structures. These are global phenomena, not limited to any one part of the world. The question that arises is whether these divides are useful in this one world. Will smart cities resolve our problems? How will the younger and older generations collaborate to improve the world? Of what relevance will religion be in the future? What is the new society 5.0? Is it the world of purposeful organizations? And how will we get there? Will the corporation be able to adapt to the changed circumstances?

The Global Crisis & Opportunity

Optimists believe that we are living in the best of times (Pinker, 2018), but pessimism (or realism) has its merits too (Nair, 2019). The world is in a crisis. Many focus on an upcoming economic or financial crisis like the one of 2008 (Rogoff & Chainey, 2019). Some expect this financial crisis to occur in 2020, the year of the next presidential elections in the United States of America (Sherman, 2019). In 2019, global economic growth has shown signs of slowing down. The economic growth is at a ten year low (Schinkel, 2019b).

However, the ultimate indicator of this crisis is climate change. The climate crisis is also a health crisis. As Neira (2016) puts it, “The same emissions that cause global warming are also largely responsible for polluting the air we breathe, causing heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, and infections, and affecting every organ in our bodies.” In the summer of 2019 many cities experienced heatwaves, temperature records were broken and even large forest fires occurred (“UK heatwave: Met Office confirms,” 2019). In October 2019 the BBC reported that hundreds of high-temperature records had already been broken (Stylianou & Guibourg, 2019). “Temperatures for the years from 2010 to 2019 were about 1.1C above the average for the pre-industrial period, showing how close the world is coming to the 1.5C of warming that scientists say will cause dramatic impacts, extreme weather and the loss of vital ecosystems” (Harvey, 2019a). The tem-

Society 5.0: We and I

perature might rise by almost 5 degrees by the end of the century. “The findings by the World Meteorologic Organization suggest an increase of 3 degrees to 5 degrees Celsius (5.4 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century. It’s another indication of how far off track the planet is in meeting its target to contain global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius since the dawn of the industrial revolution” (Millan Lombrana, 2019). In Greenland glaciers are in trouble (Ilyushina & Pleitgen, 2019), melting seven times faster than in the 1990s. This is according to 89 scientists studying the poles in a publication in the journal *Nature* (“IJskep Groenland smelt,” 2019). The question is whether Greenland has passed the point of no return (Woodward, 2019). Due to the melting of ice, there is an additional problem. Radioactive material that was buried under the ice during the Cold War is being exposed (“Smeltend ijs op Groenland,” 2019). In Iceland, a funeral was held for the first glacier that was lost to global warming, and many more are expected to disappear (France-Presse, 2019). The glaciers in Alaska are also melting rapidly (Rosen, 2019), as are the snow and the ice in the Swiss Alps. This melting of ice is causing the sea level to rise at an alarming rate, and many cities around the globe are expected to disappear underwater. “In the event of a full ice melt, according to a map from National Geographic, cities like Amsterdam, Netherlands; Stockholm, Sweden; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Dakar, Senegal; and Cancun, Mexico (to name just a few) would vanish” (Woodward, 2019). On the other extreme, records of cold temperatures are being broken and are expected to continue to be broken. In

Society 5.0: We and I

October 2019 the Netherlands recorded the coldest temperature ever in October (“Koudste 6 oktober ooit,” 2019). Still many are unaware of this inconvenient truth or deny these scientific facts (Beck, 2018; Gore, 2006). Since 2005 the sea level has risen 2.5 faster than ever in the 20th century according to a UN expert report (Dongen, 2019). In November 2019 the level of the water in Venice broke records. The town ironically flooded just after the council rejected a climate crisis plan (“Venice floods because of highest tide in 50 years,” 2019). Three hundred million people and their homes are threatened. By 2050 their houses will be flooded once a year. That is much more than the previous calculation of 80 million people (Watts, 2019). The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Some islands face the threat of disappearing under the sea, and this is already happening to some states (Hassan & Cliff, 2019). On the other hand, Australia is experiencing a shortage of drinking water as a consequence of climate change (Robitzski, 2019), and also being ravaged by forest fires. In December 2019 Sidney was covered in smoke (Mezzofiore, 2019). The Victoria Falls dried to a trickle after the worst dry period in a century (“Victoria Falls dries to a trickle,” 2019). In the first week of January 2020, the fires in Australia were worse than those in the Amazon. One of these fires was twice the size of Belgium. About half a billion animals were killed by these fires. The estimates continued to rise to one billion animals killed.

Society 5.0: We and I

Climate change also affects seasonal hurricanes, which seem to become stronger every year. Hurricane Dorian hit the Bahamas in an unprecedented way (“Hurricane Dorian: Bahamas,” 2019). The damage done by Dorian was huge (Yan & Newton, 2019). There are no exact numbers of deaths and material damage, but at least 50 persons were killed, 1,300 went missing and 13,000 houses were severely damaged in the Bahamas as a massive storm surge inundated homes (Lyons, 2019). In 2017 Hurricane Maria hit islands such as Puerto Rico and Sint Maarten, and they were still recovering from the blow at the time of writing, almost three years later.

It is not only the Caribbean and Central and North America that are getting battered by hurricanes. Western Europe and Asia are also taking blows from extreme weather. In October 2019 Japan was hit by a powerful typhoon, Typhoon Hagibis, which claimed human lives and left behind massive destruction (Slodkowski, 2019).

Climate change is not the only factor threatening the jungles. Deforestation is increasing rapidly. This not only threatens flora and fauna but also the indigenous people, who still live in harmony with nature. In November 2019 it was reported that indigenous leaders defending the forest had been “liquidated” – murdered – by “developers”. Some are concerned that in the Amazon this might have reached a critical tipping point (“Deforestation in the Amazon may soon,” 2019). One of the causes is fires, the number of which has increased. It is suspected that they are started by human hands (“Amazon fires:

Society 5.0: We and I

Record number," 2019). Other sources state that the deforestation of the Amazon is related to the meat industry. Brazil is one of the largest exporters of meat. By burning parts of the Amazon, the land is won for breeding livestock for meat production. President Bolsonaro of Brazil has falsely accused NGOs of being involved. It is stated that the number of fires has increased because of Bolsonaro's attitudes and statements on the matter have encouraged people. It was only after great international pressure that he took actions to combat the fires. The issue has been put on the agenda of the G7. President Trump is not yet fully cooperating to stop these fires (Chrisafis, 2019).

Some sources state that the issue of the Amazon is a sort of fake news and that a certain agenda is served by them. But it is not only the Amazon that is on fire: the jungle in Angola and DR Congo is also on fire ("Amazon fires: Angola and DR Congo," 2019). However, the fires in the Amazon raise more concern. Part of the story is politics. The West or Global North wants to get involved in the Amazon, and the issue is therefore blown up (Dekker, 2019). Other sources insist that the fires in the Amazon have reached an irreversible tipping point. Forecasts suggest that the rainforest could stop producing enough rain to sustain itself by 2021 (Phillips, 2019).

Fires are also a concern in Singapore. These fires are in Indonesia and pollute the air in Singapore. They are related to the palm oil industry. The president of Indonesia does not act because he serves this industry ("Indonesia haze," 2019). In October and November 2019

Society 5.0: We and I

California was also hit by immense forest fires. The fires and the black-outs are connected to a larger problem in this state: a failure to live sustainably (Manjoo, 2019).

Climate change might also lead to the loss of productivity:

As climate change worsens, growing heat stress on workers in agriculture and other sectors will cause a productivity loss equal to 80 million full-time jobs over the next decade, the UN warned Monday (Jul 1).

A report from the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that in 2030, 2.2 percent of total working hours worldwide will be lost because of higher temperatures (“Global warming to slash,” 2019).

One of the main causes of climate change is consumption, and not only by the rich but by everybody. Our consumption drives the usage of our planet. To turn this around we need to change our consumption patterns: the way we eat, travel and so on (Monbiot, 2019a). Some argue that meat has an especially significant impact. Although this is true, the ones most to blame are the big polluters. Reality is being manipulated, putting more of the blame on us ordinary people than on the big corporations, especially those in fossil energy (Monbiot, 2019b).

And yet there are still skeptics, among them President Trump, who propose that the climate change crisis is a hoax perpetuated via the

Society 5.0: We and I

media. This is a fair question. My response to it would be: what if it is not true? In that case, we would have made the planet healthy again, but there was no danger to the planet and humanity. But what if it is true? In that case, we would be taking steps to save the planet and humanity. Some state that the planet will survive anyway and does not need humanity. Humanity needs the planet, not the other way around.

In November 2019, 11,000 scientists warned that the climate change crisis is not only real but is worse than many believe (Carrington, 2019a). Other indicators of the crisis are social inequality, plastic soup, exclusion of people from the labor market, extinction of animal and vegetation species, and the extinction of ecosystems. All these problems threaten the existence of humanity and are man-made (Klomp & Nadine Maarhuis, 2018, p. 9). We are losing species at an astonishing rate. One million plant and animal species are threatened with extinction (Vidal, 2016). To cite just a few examples regarding the extinction of species: Half of the dead baby turtles found by Australian scientists have stomachs full of plastic (Gabbatiss, 2018). In 45 years, we have killed 60% of Earth's wildlife, according to a damning report by the World Wildlife Fund that puts the worsening condition of Planet Earth into perspective (Pinto, 2018).

Another problem signaled by the United Nations is the food scarcity, caused by climate change, expected around 2050 ("VN-klimate rapport: voedseltekort," 2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

On the inequality, according to Joseph Stiglitz inequality causes the death of the economy. For too long corporations have not been stopped or controlled, and the losers of globalization and free trade were ignored. That is why not only the economy but also the political system must be restricted drastically. Because the voter has no leverage against the corporations and their lobbyists, voters feel they are not listened to (Meuzelaar, 2019). However, one must be careful of an oversimplification of the rise of inequality (Hasell, 2018). Inequality is currently such a big problem that some of the extremely wealthy have suggested an increase in their taxes (Davison, 2019). These rich might be motivated by the fact that inequality might lead to conflict. In other words, they understand their self-interest, as Adam Smith argued:

To be sure, WWII, like World War I, was caused by a multitude of factors; there is no standard path to war. But there is reason to believe that high levels of inequality can play a significant role in stoking conflict.

According to research by the economist Thomas Piketty, a spike in income inequality is often followed by a great crisis. Income inequality then declines for a while, before rising again, until a new peak – and a new disaster. Though causality has yet to be proven, given the limited number of data points, this correlation should not be taken lightly, especially with wealth and income inequality at historically high levels. (Liu, 2018)

Society 5.0: We and I

Another indicator of the crisis is the disappearance of jobs, as already referred to in relationship to climate change. Technology is another factor that eliminates jobs. Just one example of jobs disappearing is the loss of jobs by truck drivers in the United States:

At some point, as the industry becomes more and more automated, truck drivers will realize that the combination of much more efficient trips and lower need for labor will dramatically shrink their total employment. Those that have other options will flee the field. But for many, their opportunities outside of truck driving will be minimal, and they know it. Many are ex-military; about 5% of Gulf War veterans – 80,000 – worked in transportation in 2012. They will be proud and desperate. What might happen when the 350,000 American truckers who bought or leased their own trucks are unemployed and angry? All it takes is one out of 350,000 to lead the others. It doesn't take a big leap of the imagination to imagine mass protests that could block highways, seize up the economy and wreak havoc.

The best estimates for when this will unfold are between 2020 and 2030. This starts in two years. (Yang, 2018)

Another example of jobs disappearing is the fact that in the Netherlands Albert Heijn Supermarkets is experimenting with supermarkets with zero employees. Everything is done by artificial intelligence, robots, and sensors (“Albert Heijn start proef,” 2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

In the meanwhile, in the rich world of 2019, the jobs are booming. Unemployment is low and the quality of the jobs is good. This means so far the dystopian scenario of huge structural unemployment does not seem to have become a reality as yet (Edmond, 2019; “The rich world is enjoying,” 2019). However, wages have remained stagnant until now, as slack in the job market has kept a lid on growth (Edmond, 2019). This last point contributes to inequality. In December 2019 the number of jobs in the United States kept growing, with the unemployment rate dropping to 3.5%, the lowest in 50 years, and there was pressure to raise wages (Dmitrieva, 2019).

Others see the problems facing the planet and humanity slightly differently: “Obesity, undernutrition and climate change are the biggest threats to the world population, linked by profit motives and policy inertia, a top commission said on Sunday, calling for a binding plan and trillions of dollars to thwart the dangers” (Ryan, 2019). President Obama, meanwhile, is worried about climate change, inequality, polarization in society due to the usage of social media and the phenomenon of fake news (Chan, 2019).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent an urgent call for action to end poverty and reduce inequality, while protecting our planet, tackling climate change and spurring economic growth. Yet the OECD has recently published a study revealing that the world is very far from achieving these

Society 5.0: We and I

aims. Today, one in seven people in the OECD area still live in poverty. (Gornitzka, 2019)

It is no coincidence that the Noble Prize for Economics in 2019 was awarded to three economists for their research into effective ways to fight poverty (Pollard & Johnson, 2014). Sustainable development funding is broken and needs to be fixed.

Poverty leads to exclusion and hence to loneliness. Loneliness has become a big problem in today's society. The ostracized are not just sadder; they are unhealthier and die younger ("Loneliness is a serious public-health problem," 2018; Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). Somewhat related to poverty is the issue of obesity. Obesity is related to lifestyle but also the food industry (Arkel, 2019). One in three low- and middle-income countries are affected by the health-related problems caused by junk food and sugary drinks, which now reach every corner of the globe (Boseley, 2019). A profound transformation of the food system is required, targeting the economic, social and environmental aspects. The absence of this will hinder the development and growth of individuals and societies for decades.

Poverty and loneliness might be an explanation for the global epidemic of depression and other mental illnesses. "I" is alone and is excluded from warmth and love. "I" have to take care of myself. Nobody is looking after me and neither am "I" looking after others.

Society 5.0: We and I

A huge problem that is often forgotten is the problem with drug trafficking and consumption, human trafficking and organized crime. Many try to escape reality by using drugs or emigrating. This is as big a challenge for all governments as all the other problems mentioned. There are a governance problem and corruption is an indicator of this governance crisis (Marais, 2019).

All this does not mean that humanity has not made tremendous progress. For example, we are on the verge of eradicating extreme poverty ("Rosling's 200 countries," 2010), and 32 years ago the world pledged to fix the ozone layer, and we have succeeded in doing so (Gray, 2019). The question is whether the progress is real and sustainable. Nevertheless, many remain unhappy, especially youth. There is no dream of a new utopia (Bergman, 2017). The problem of hunger continues to grow worse, affecting over 820 million people, according to the United Nations ("Hongerprobleem groeit," 2019). This rise in hunger is attributed to climate change. As Ray (2019) puts it.

The fact that world hunger has started to rise after a decade long decline is alarming. In the long run, wealthy and developing countries alike will have to find ways to produce food in a changing climate. I hope this will lead to a rethinking of the entire food system, from diets to food waste, and to more sustainable techniques for feeding the world.

Society 5.0: We and I

There is a food crisis caused by climate change. “It’s not just that climate change is ravaging the world’s agriculture. Agriculture is also ravaging the climate” (Hickel, 2019).

There are several scenarios, narratives, and discourses about the future of society and the economy. One of the optimistic versions of the future is that living in smart cities, enabled by technology, we will resolve all issues and we will be happy. By this, people refer to technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), big data, blockchain, etc. (Tapscott, 2018). This is the narrative of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The dystopian scenario is that mankind will destroy itself by the stupidity of chasing wealth. We do not realize that “we are all astronauts on Spaceship Earth,” as the deceased Dutch astronaut Wubbo Ockels and Buckminster Fuller once put it. If we destroy this ship, we will all die.

The point is that the neoliberal market has created the “I”(ndividual) and is unable to think about “We”. The apex of individualism is the selfie-culture: taking a picture of oneself using an iPhone or any other smartphone. The market is the totality of individuals seeking to satisfy their individual needs. Individualism is associated with the concept of competition and many authors consider competition as the drive for innovation. It is also the outlining of the playfield of the game in which the winner takes all (Davis, 2016; Noels, 2019).

First, we were told that the world has become flat and that everyone could benefit from globalization (Friedman, 2007). Then we were

Society 5.0: We and I

told that the internet was not the answer, but that the winner takes all (Keen, 2015). This is the system in which the rich get richer and the poor become poorer (Piketty, 2014). Warren Buffet is reported to have said, “There was a class struggle and my class won” (Aldred, 2019). The trickle-down economy apparently does not exist (Pearl, 2019). In October 2019 *The Washington Post* reported that in 2018, “[f]or the first time in history, U.S. billionaires paid a lower tax rate than the working class” (Ingraham, 2019).

The market redefines every interaction as a transaction that must be paid for with currency. Elderly care and healthcare are no longer care, but business transactions. It is not “no cure, no pay” but “no pay, no cure”. Recent Dutch research indicates that many care providers make huge profits and commit fraud (“Hoge winsten,” 2019). In the Netherlands, many hospitals seek costly and bureaucratic JCI-accreditation (Joint Commission International) as it is demanded by insurance agencies and companies who pay the bills of the patients (Weeda & Harbers, 2019).

The matter of curing or caring, especially of elderly people or people with disabilities, has become an economic issue. Euthanasia and abortion are more and more becoming economic issues. Euthanasia is not only a matter of ending suffering but also of how much money should be spent to prolong life just a little bit longer. Although life has been prolonged as a result of market-driven medical research. In the Netherlands, euthanasia is regulated by a liberal law on the matter. If

Society 5.0: We and I

people express that they want to die with dignity when they are ill and suffering without the chance of recovering, they may request euthanasia, except when they are suffering from dementia. One out of five people will suffer from dementia. Given the nature of the condition of dementia, how can such a patient express his will to die by euthanasia? (Blanken, 2019). In November 2019 the Dutch bureau of statistics published that a majority of Dutch people are in favor of euthanasia for healthy people who are tired of life (van de Wier & Oosterom, 2019). In January 2020 research revealed that over 10,000 people over the age of 55 wished to terminate their lives. The reasons they give for their wish to die were, worries, financial worries, illness, loneliness, the dependency on others and the feeling to be a burden to others. According to existing legislation, honoring their wish is not possible (“Commissie voltooid leven,” 2020).

Abortion has become an option. Organ donation has become a business. People sell their organs and others buy them via social media in the Philippines (Promchertchoo, 2019). This is the basis of a lonely cold world.

When one takes a closer look, it becomes clear that this belief in the neoliberal market has penetrated even institutions such as the judicial system (Wilmot-Smith, 2019). It manifests itself in phenomena such as managers of the courts steering for efficiency at the expense of the principle of due care, for example. The court is considered a com-

Society 5.0: We and I

pany or corporation and the judgments are the output (Chavannes, 2019b; Smolders, 2019).

Even religion and churches have become money-driven. Religion has become a business (Boots & Smouter, 2019). Some would say that this has always been the case. Churches in the United States of America cost the taxpayers billions of dollars on an annual basis. They received an official federal income tax exemption in 1894. While they generate billions (“U.S. churches are costing,” 2015).

Ayn Rand, the Russian-American writer and philosopher, believed in “me before you – first and always”. Rand notoriously loathed and demonized altruism. In her 1959 interview with Mike Wallace, she claimed that altruism was not only immoral but impossible (Cummins, 2016). Is Rand right?

The annals of history show that even if one is talented enough to create enormous wealth, monopolizing that wealth for oneself is a dangerous course of action. Or as billionaire Nick Hanauer puts it, “Beware, fellow plutocrats: The pitchforks are coming.” Wealth is never created in a social vacuum. You may have the genius to design a better mousetrap, but you will inevitably depend on the work of others to implement and distribute your produce and the income of others to enable them to buy your product. The auto industry needs more than a few billionaires to buy their cars in order to stay in business. The finance industry needs employees with sur-

Society 5.0: We and I

plus income to buy their investment products. Put simply, wealth must be distributed to keep the wheels of commerce turning. (Cummins, 2016)

This neoliberal market religion is the cause of this crisis (Stiglitz, 2020). This is the total imbalance between “we” and “I”. Humanity is “we”. “I” is the creation of extreme capitalism or neoliberalism that has replaced all values by one value: money. This does not mean that the government does not intervene and regulate the market, or at least tries to do so (Oudenampsen & Mellink, 2019). The individual is in pursuit of immediate gratification and money is the universal means to that objective. In this way, it has become an objective of its own.

Neoliberalism replaced Keynesianism after the Second World War proved that market economies do not naturally return to equilibrium but that government intervention was needed. Keynes published his theory in 1936. Around the same time, President Roosevelt launched his New Deal (1933–1945) to get the United States out of the Great Depression. The Keynesian school was the economic orthodoxy till the 1970s, but there was a small group of liberals and Marxists who diverged from these views. In the 1970s the economist Milton Friedman became the champion of neoliberalism and his ideas were implemented by Margaret Thatcher and President Ronald Reagan (Engelen, 2019).

Now neoliberalism is the dominant school in economics and still exerts great influence (Harvey, 2016).

Society 5.0: We and I

The main characteristics of neoliberalism ... are the privatization of assets, increased commercialization of the public sector (the implementation of market proxies), the creation of new markets for services previously not subject to free market principles, deregulation, reregulation, the implementation of flanking mechanisms to counteract the effects of neoliberalism and a focus on self-sufficient individuals. (Mosedale, 2016)

Neoliberalism is a variegated concept (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore, 2010). A baseline definition of neoliberalism is a political project that is justified on philosophical grounds and seeks to extend competitive market forces, consolidate a market-friendly constitution, and promote individual freedom (Birch, 2015; Fine & Saad-Filho, 2017; Jessop, 2012). The manifestation of neoliberalism is context-specific, there is no single neoliberal design. Neoliberal strategies are pinned to pre-existing political-economic histories and institutional landscapes, thus creating neoliberal variants; contingent neoliberalism, there is not just one neoliberalism (Mosedale, 2016).

Neoliberalism is relevant in the fields of economic, political, and social life (Grzanka, Mann, & Elliott, 2016). I add the field of psychology, as the neoliberal system influences our way of thinking and our behavior (Monbiot, 2014). Neoliberalism has brought out the worst in us (Verhaeghe, 2014).

Society 5.0: We and I

Others state that neoliberalism has eroded the social contract between the individual and the state. This has left the individual naked, weak and insecure (Hooven, 2019; Wijnberg, 2019). There are those that state that neoliberalism horrifies classical liberals. Classical liberalism does not identify itself with the brutal soulless market (“Liberalism in crisis,” 2019). According to James Traub, the author of the book *What was liberalism?*, at the root of the neoliberal tradition lies a faith in the individual, and deep regard for his or her rights: political, economic, personal. There is, therefore, a tension between liberalism and democratic majoritarianism. In the 19th century, liberals freed slaves and advocated for free trade. In the 20th century, they won voting rights for women, introduced social security, secured civil rights and contributed to beating dictatorships. And now authentic liberals are in a fight for their lives (“Is liberalism really kaput?,” 2019).

Some state that neoliberalism has failed, especially after the financial crisis of 2008, but neoliberalism still holds a dominant position. There is recognition of the need for close regulation plus flanking and supporting mechanisms to ensure market economies and the cohesion of the market societies. Nevertheless, this correction has still not taken place due to the dominance of the US economy (linked to its co-dependence with China) in the world market and with the role of the American state. Alternatives for neoliberalism developed in Latin America have not succeeded and therefore have not become an alternative for the rest of the world. At the end of 2019, Latin America is in

Society 5.0: We and I

great turmoil as many governments are ousted, for example, that of President Evo Morales in Bolivia (“Massive mobilization in Buenos Aires,” 2019). Some argue that Evo Morales and his socialist government were successful, at least during a period (O’Hagan, 2014).

Others argue that capitalism is not in crisis:

The crisis therefore is not of capitalism per se, but a crisis brought about by the uneven effects of globalisation and the expansion of capitalism to areas traditionally not considered apt for commercialisation. Capitalism has thus become too powerful, and in regions such as Europe, it is in collision with strongly held beliefs. Unless it is controlled and its “field of action” reduced to what it used to be, it will continue this conquest of as-yet-uncommercialised spheres. (Milanović, 2019)

I think this is a form of denial and semantics.

At least there is a consensus that capitalism has excesses. We must control the excesses of capitalism and make sure that there is the inclusion of people or we will prolong the crisis and more populists like Presidents Trump and Bolsonaro will come to power. According to Stiglitz, Friedman and the neoliberals have moved away from solid science and become more polemicist. Their work has become shallow. The question is: why is neoliberal still dominant? Globalization is a given, but there is no natural law that states inequality is a precondition for economic growth. It is totally the opposite: the smaller the

Society 5.0: We and I

difference between the rich and poor, the more sustainable economic growth will be. History has shown that government intervention is necessary to rescue the market. This is something that neoliberals hate to admit (Engelen, 2019; Stiglitz, 2020). Stiglitz summarizes where we are as follows:

If the 2008 financial crisis failed to make us realize that unfettered markets don't work, the climate crisis certainly should: neoliberalism will literally bring an end to our civilization. But it is also clear that demagogues who would have us turn our back on science and tolerance will only make matters worse. (Stiglitz, 2019d)

There are alternatives to neoliberalism. This is what Stiglitz and Alexandria Octavia-Cortez call the Green New Deal. This will be explained later in this book. Therefore, the crisis is not only a danger but also an opportunity.² Too often we are driven by fear and we build mechanisms to control that which we are afraid of. However, every control mechanism goes at the expense of freedom (Denys, 2019). We should try to create a society 5.0 that is not built on fear.

² This equation of crisis with both danger and opportunity is frequently attributed to the interpretation of the Chinese symbol used to indicate crisis. While this etymological reading is disputed, the equation remains useful (Mair, 2009).

Is the Market “I” and Civil Society “We”?

Let us continue our exploration. Is it the case that the market is “I” and politics is “We”, and the two do not mix? The market is the playing field of corporations, and politics is arena of politicians and government. Between the two are “We”, civil society or the non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The above is illustrated in the figure below. It cannot be a coincidence that “Government” is on the left and “Market” is on the right (Figure 2). In other texts, it is even presented as a circle, where the extreme right and left meet (Goede, 2018b).

Government or Public Sector	Civil Society or NGOs	Market or Private Sector
We and I meet	We	I
Left	Center	Right
Political parties, Executive branch	NGOs	Corporations

Figure 2: The Three Domains

Society 5.0: We and I

According to Mariana Mazzucato, an Italian-American economist who works at University College London, the overarching problem of capitalism is the lack of an answer to the question of how to improve the whole system. There is no strategy, but rather an emptiness of organizing in government as well in the private sector. This is reflected in the functioning of the market. It is easy to blame the markets, but it is also the responsibility of the government because the market is also a reflection of politics and what we all deem important (Schoon, 2019).

According to the Dutch columnist Marian Donner, capitalism is a system the "I" (individual) cannot escape from. The system continuously demands more and more not only from businesses but also from individuals. Things must constantly be improved. She states that the individual must be freed from the market. It is not clear, however, how she envisages this liberation occurring (Vos, 2019).

However, the market is a myth, part of the ideology of capitalism or neoliberalism. It is presented as all present, but there are two other domains (Haegens, 2019). Neither is there a state versus market dichotomy. Markets are not institution-free fields of action, but markets themselves are political constructions and political projects (Bockman, 2012), as Mazzucato also states (Schoon, 2019).

An example of how the system holds individuals hostage is provided by the case of the resignation of the minister of economic development of Curaçao at the end of February 2019. Why? Because a criminal investigation was started against him as a result of indications he

Society 5.0: We and I

was involved in a decision in favor of a company of which he was the CEO before entering the political arena. At first glance, it seemed like he followed the law by temporarily ending all his personal involvement with the company, but the public prosecution office thought differently and wanted to have a closer look after a member of the opposition brought the case forward (“Minister Martina treedt af,” 2019). A few months later the public prosecution office stated that Martina had committed a felony, but they still dropped the case and desisted from legal actions against the man. Nevertheless, he could not return as a minister awaiting further proceedings. In October 2019 the court ruled that the former minister had broken the law, but would not be prosecuted further. This case illustrates that people from the market sector have an “I” mindset and this intervenes with the “we” mindset of the public sector.

The neoliberal market rationale has been implemented for environmental governance (McCarthy, 2012). An example of this is putting the management of a public beach in the hands of an entity that charges a fee to beachgoers to create funds to maintain and protect this beach. I think this is an oxymoron because nature is endangered by the neoliberal pursuit of wealth. The market does not understand or respect equity, democracy, and the collective good. The well-being of future generations and non-human species must be given much greater weight in governmental governance than it currently is in neoliberal approaches; while the accumulation of capital and property,

Society 5.0: We and I

and the preferences of the privileged should be given a great deal less weight.

The sponsoring of political parties by corporations mixes markets and politics – “I” and “We”. But they do not really mix, because the market wins; “I” wins. Politics (government) has become a market serving corporations (Hertz, 2001). One of the biggest services politics renders to the market is selling public assets to the market. This is called privatization. The consequence is that what used to serve the common good (“we”) now services the owner (“I”). Only people who can pay receive services or good. The others are excluded. It becomes about me (“I”) and not about us (“We”). These ideas are not new. They were very well presented by Noreena Hertz in her book *The silent takeover: Global capitalism and the death of democracy* (2001). This “I” mindset has an ideological foundation provided by people like Ayn Rand, but this is being challenged by those who state that part of the human mindset is to cooperate.

“Ayn Rand is my hero,” yet another student tells me during office hours. “Her writings freed me. They taught me to rely on no one but myself.” ...

Perhaps another way to look at this is to ask why our species of hominid is the only one still in existence on the planet, despite there having been many other hominid species during the course of our own evolution. One explanation is that we were cleverer, more ruthless and more competitive than

Society 5.0: We and I

those who went extinct. But anthropological archaeology tells a different story. Our very survival as a species depended on cooperation, and humans excel at cooperative effort. Rather than keeping knowledge, skills and goods ourselves, early humans exchanged them freely across cultural groups.

When people behave in ways that violate the axioms of rational choice, they are not behaving foolishly. They are giving researchers a glimpse of the prosocial tendencies that made it possible for our species to survive and thrive... then and today. (Cummins, 2016)

Bad biology states that fighting each other is human nature. But there are also theories that humans are by nature empathic and collaborative (Waal, 2016).

We are living the end of left and right; government versus market; “I” versus “We”.

Politics – neither left, right nor center

Perhaps the most intriguing, but least developed, potential impact of new economic thinking could be on politics itself. The tradition of splitting politics into left and right camps dates back to the layout of the French National Assembly in the Revolution of 1789. Over the two and a quarter centuries since, both left and right have seen their political narratives evolve. The left has travelled an arc from Marx and Rousseau,

Society 5.0: We and I

through Victorian social reformers, to Keynes, the New Deal and to modern European notions of social democracy. Meanwhile, the right has travelled from Smith and Hume, through the Austrians, the Chicago revolution, Thatcher-Reagan, and to today's European centre-right parties and America's radicalised Tea Partiers. At the heart of both narratives have been differing views on the nature of the economy, the roles of the individual and the state, and notions of freedom and social justice.

New economics has the potential to significantly reframe these debates. It isn't merely a matter of centrist compromise, of just splitting the difference. Rather it is a different frame that agrees with the right on some things, with the left on others, and neither on still other areas. For example, new economic work shows that Hayek was ahead of his time in his insights into the power of markets to self-organise, efficiently process information from millions of producers and consumers, and innovate. But new economic work also shows that Keynes was ahead of his time in his concerns about inherent instabilities in markets, the possibility that markets can fail to self-correct, and the need for the state to intervene when markets malfunction. Likewise, new economics research shows that humans are neither the selfish individualists of Hume nor the noble altruists of Rousseau, rather they are

Society 5.0: We and I

complex social creatures who engage in a never ending dance of cooperation and competition. Humans are what researchers such as Herb Gintis and Sam Bowles (2005) call “conditional co-operators and altruistic punishers” – our cooperative instincts are strong and provide the basis for all organisation in the economy, but we also harshly punish cheaters and free-riders, and compete intensely for wealth and status.

Traditional economics tends to frame things in terms of market efficiency versus market failure, and those on the right emphasise the efficiency part and those on the left the failure part. This leads to differing views on the justice of market outcomes. The right generally believes that if markets allocate resources in the most societally efficient way then any interference in that process is morally suspect. Market outcomes may be unequal, but that is because the distribution of talent and hard work in the economy is also unequal – in general people get what they deserve. The left on the other hand tends to see unequal outcomes as an injustice in and of itself, and emphasises how powerful interests use markets to their benefit and can abuse or leave behind the less powerful. People often don't get what they deserve and the state must intervene to protect the vulnerable, and correct both unfair processes and unfair outcomes. (Beinhocker, 2016)

Society 5.0: We and I

Some state that if capitalism or neoliberalism does not change it will starve the planet by 2050 (Hansen, 2016).

Others believe that going green will succeed if it is profitable in market terms. This is a huge paradox. Many state that it is production via the market that created the green challenge in the first place.

Due to the huge hegemonic power of neoliberalism and the scale of the ecological crisis, we must be wary in calculating the state-market balance of whether neoliberalism is a tool of governments, or if governments are tools of neoliberalism and the pursuit of short-term exponential economic growth. Neoliberal power is undeniable and its potential is great in environmental governance but it is no panacea and does not address root causes of environmental degradation and climate change. It ignores any debates about pre-analytic vision that ecological economists such as Herman Daly suggest should shift the current economic paradigm from where the environment is a subsystem of the economy, to one where the economy is a subsystem of the environment – thus instilling an upper limit to the macro-economy, maintaining the bounds that nature and finite resources impose (Daly and Cobb, 1989; Daly, 1996; 2002). Neoliberal environmental governance clearly perpetuates the existing paradigm and we shall have to see if it will be forced either by market, regulation or both to perform the possibly paradoxical double-

Society 5.0: We and I

movement of making the ecological reformation of capitalism profitable. (Plastow, 2010)

Singapore appears to have got it somewhat right. Kishore Mahbubani, former Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, states that their success formula is MPH: Meritocratic, Pragmatic and Honesty. The best person for the job; no patronage and nepotism. Not left nor right but pragmatic in solving policy problems: sometimes via the markets, other times by government intervention or leaving it to civil society. And the last part of the formula is “no corruption” (Mahbubani, 2017). Corruption costs a society a great deal. The taxpayers’ money does not get where it needs to and everything, therefore, becomes much more expensive (Gaspar, Mauro, & Medas, 2019).

The Nordic countries also appear to have achieved a more complete answer. They are neither socialist nor capitalistic. The Nordic model is based on equality, trust, and collaboration, not competition. If the element of competition is introduced, as some suggest (and as a consequence growing inequality, and in turn an erosion of trust), it will mark the beginning of the end of the model. Nordics pay the highest taxes in the world (Pas, 2019). In exchange, many services – such as education, social welfare, and health – are not distributed via the market. Their citizens declare that they are very happy about their lives. This balance of the Nordic countries is not everlasting but needs to be managed constantly. They are facing challenges such as immigration, relatively high unemployment, the population is aging, and the gov-

Society 5.0: We and I

ernment's social spending is high too. All these issues are related to a big welfare state and competitiveness (Milne, 2014). Sweden is facing the problem of street gangs, and this is escalating (Savage, 2019).

The current crisis has made even people in the United States reconsider socialism. The symbol of this the 28-years-old Democratic representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (Eaton & Wyns, 2019). The opinion that we do not longer need to choose between capitalism and socialism is gaining ground and momentum, even in the United States (Smith, 2019). This was noticeable in the presidential pre-elections in the United States in 2019, but also in the President Obama era, resulting in Obama-care.

It is telling that, in the UK, bringing utilities back into public ownership (undoing privatization) is being discussed. This occurred after a proposition by the Labor Party regarding the public ownership of water, energy, post, and broadband, during the election campaign. The response of the public seems positive because they never really liked privatization. Others think that this is not a good idea, but scholars are bringing forward that public ownership is not such a bad idea (Hall, 2019).

The Corporation 4.0

The corporation has become the dominant actor in the neoliberal society and is driving innovation and globalization (Bakan, 2012; Goede, 2018b; Hertz, 2001). The greed of the corporation is the real problem, and not the presence of China as some seem to imply (Kras, 2019). The crisis we are facing is the result not only of the imbalance of “We” and “I” but also of the imbalance we created between Earth, the market and society (Klomp & Nadine Maarhuis, 2018, p. 13). This can also be put as the triple bottom line, or three Ps: people, planet, and profit. I prefer to refer to the imbalance between the domains of government or public sector, civil society or NGOs, and the market or private sector (see Figure 2).

Corporations destroy the ecological system in their pursuit of profit by creating jobs that contribute to destroying the system (Hansen, 2019). Plastic seems to be a major problem. The deforestation in Brazil and other places broke all records in 2019 (McVeigh, 2019; Watts, 2019). Species are becoming extinct (Briggs, 2019). Corporations are on their way to destroying other planets as well. Elon Musk believes it is a good idea to make a nuclear bomb explode on Mars. It might improve the condition for life on that planet, he says (Hamilton, 2019).

The legal body of the corporation is a psychopath seeking profit and not caring about anything else (Bakan, 2012; Noels, 2019). To

Society 5.0: We and I

illustrate this point, consider the food industry. This industry, in general, does not care much about the health of the consumer, it is primarily interested in making a profit for the shareholder (Sample, 2019). For example, aspartame should never have been admitted to the market because it is not good for our health (“Aspartaam is één van de meest,” 2019). Nor is the food industry interested in the environment. The use of toxins to produce products is a common big mistake as it affects the ecosystems (Breugelmans, 2019).

This trait of the corporation manifested itself from the start of the corporation. The British East India Company founded in 1600 was violent and relentless (“The astonishing and violent rise,” 2019).

Corporations cannot be truly checked by (government) agencies because corporations corrupt these agencies, just like they corrupt universities, science, and politics. A form of such corruption is the funding of scientific research. Research in some instances hides the negative effects of products from the industry and society. For example, in November 2019 Cambridge accepted a £6m donation from Shell for oil extraction research (Gayle, 2019).

These practices are also very common in the pharmaceutical industry. Big pharma succeeds in making even healthy people addicted to drugs (Keizer, 2018; Mersch, 2019).³ Big Pharma is not in the

³ The legalization of marihuana is a blow to big pharma but is only a drop on the hot plate (“Big pharma stands to lose,” 2019). In

Society 5.0: We and I

healthcare business but in the business of making money from sick people. In Europe alone, people spent 120 billion annually on cancer medicine. Every year new medicine is presented as a great breakthrough, but in reality, the effect is just marginal. The only ones who benefit from this situation are pharmaceutical companies (Mersch, 2019). At the end of 2019 Dutch investigators reported on a bizarre case where a pharmaceutical company increased the price of a medicine 60 times (Geest, 2019). Some see a similarity between big pharma and organized crime (Wright, 2015).

Another example of the psychopathic nature of the corporation is the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico by British Petroleum in 2010. This was caused by people taking excessive risks, by continuing to drill even after all red flags were raised, in the pursuit of profit. The negative impact on the environment in the Gulf of Mexico and the shores was indescribable (Berg, 2016).

A further illustration of the perverted mentality of corporations is provided by the case of Boeing, which delegated the developed of the Boeing 737 Max's flawed software to low-paid temp workers and recent college grads (Premack, 2019). Due to deficiencies with the software, two airplanes crashed, killing hundreds of passengers (Lion Air in October 2018 and Ethiopian Airlines in March 2019).

the meanwhile, it looks like big pharma has taken over the cannabis business.

Society 5.0: We and I

It also reminds me of the case of VW:

It's been dubbed the "diesel dupe". In September [2015], the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that many VW cars being sold in America had a "defeat device" – or software – in diesel engines that could detect when they were being tested, changing the performance accordingly to improve results. (Hotten, 2015)

Another example of the behavior of corporations is the death toll of building the stadiums for the Soccer World Championship in Qatar. Nepal estimates that 1400 Nepali citizens were killed ("Nepal estimates," 2019). The right to host the championships was initially won by Qatar by bribing FIFA officials (Laughland, 2017).

Some claim that the corporation was not always so extremely psychopathic and that the spiritual father of the pathological corporation is Milton Friedman who won the Noble Prize for Economics in 1976 (Schwab, 2019). Friedman argued

... that the only responsibility of business is to maximize profits, regardless of the social and environmental costs. This was a perceived reality that became the defining goal for businesses. It convinced corporate executives that they had the right – some would say the mandate – to do whatever they thought it would take to maximize profits, including buying public officials through campaign financing, destroying the

Society 5.0: We and I

environment, and devastating the very resources upon which their businesses ultimately depend. (Perkins, 2016)

According to Kate Raworth, discussing the clothing industry, Adam Smith foresaw that division of labor would lead to extreme forms of exploitation by the psychopathic corporation (“Kate Raworth over de kledingindustrie,” 2019). Many of today economic problems are the result of a simplistic interpretation of the ideas of Adam Smith:

The founding idea of modern economics is Adam Smith’s invisible hand, and this great idea, badly over-simplified, was the foundation of many bad ideas of the last generation. The invisible hand tells us how an economy free of government regulations may work, not how it does work. Competitors will push prices down to maximize consumer buying, pure and simple. The government need not regulate these competitors. Increasingly, the profession took a dogmatic view. Financial deregulation, a low minimum wage, reduce government invest – these were all results of a purist interpretation of the invisible hand. (Madrack, 2016)

It was never about the self-interest alone. It was always accompanied by moral behavior in the economy and public policy. Self-interest is an oversimplification (Bowles, 2016).

Not only universities but the whole educational system caters to the corporation, the market, and neoliberalism. The university system

Society 5.0: We and I

reproduces the logic of the market, neoliberalism (Engelen, 2019; “Op de universiteit,” 2019). Fraternities and sororities are the breeding ground for the neoliberal personality. In the fraternity, the stronghold privileges and the weak are oppressed and humiliated (Lijster, 2018). The mission of education is not to educate persons and citizens, but to form workers for the labor market (Goede, 2017).

In pursuit of a place in the knowledge economy, many ignore blue color jobs. Nowadays these jobs are well paid (“Blue-collar jobs like plumbing,” 2019; Rometty, 2019). Business based on craftsmanship is back (Bakker, 2019). There is a growing consensus that we need to refocus on vocational training in school. Many young people do not have basic technical skills (Wyman, 2019). Countries like Switzerland and Finland are doing very well in the area of vocational education training and their graduates are very employable (Whiting, 2019).

Some think that the more advanced corporation 4.0 is cured of the psychopathology of the previous version of the corporation. This is not the case. Perhaps this will be the case with corporation 5.0. In this context, 4.0 and 5.0 refer to the Fourth and the Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR) (Figure 3).

Society 5.0: We and I

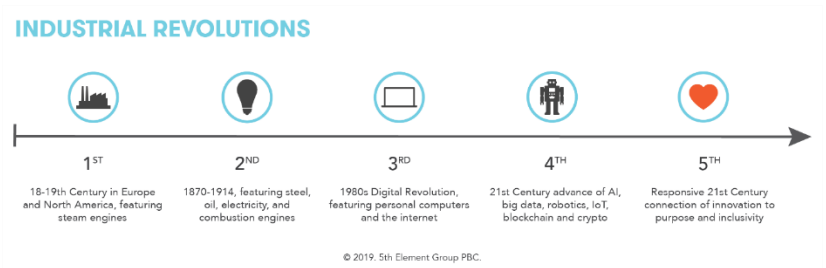


Figure 3: The Five Industrial Revolutions (Gauri & Eerden, 2019).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is about digitalization. This digitalization extends to the extent that technology and human are integrating (Figure 4).

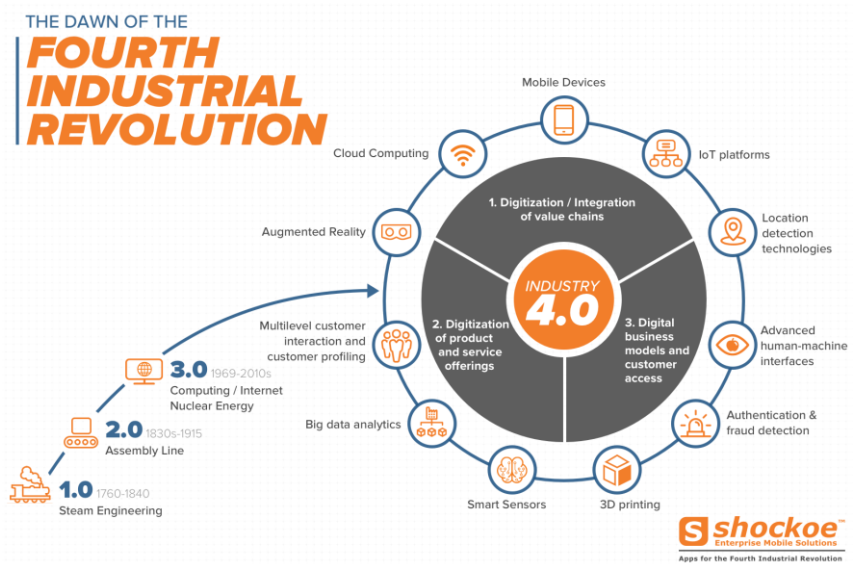


Figure 4: The Fourth Industrial Revolution (Moore, 2019)

Society 5.0: We and I

According to Noels, besides being psychopathic, corporations have another disease he calls “gigantism”: development to abnormally large size. It is the result of the conviction that growth and concentration of power and decision-making are good. This notion of big is beautiful is not totally new. It goes as far back as the ancient Greeks and the Romans. Now corporations have become too big and are hurting the economy, by reducing competition and thus innovations; by making it difficult for small businesses and newcomers. Noels is not alone in thinking. Tepper (2018) for example argues, “We need a revolution to cast off monopolies and restore entrepreneurial freedom.”

Gigantism is not only the problem of corporations alone but also of governments, particularly in Europe. In Europe, the government is big because of the many government programs that are in place to intervene in the market. In China, the government is big because many corporations are owned by the state.

Gigantism is also a problem in education and healthcare. School and other institutions keep getting bigger and bigger. It is all based on the notion that economies of scale lead to efficiency. What is not taken into account are the hidden expenses: this growth is at the expense of the planet and the next generation. Young people, especially in developing countries, are excluded from jobs, as indicated by the rate of youth unemployment (IMF, 2019).

Today, there is more and more concentration. A few corporations dominate an entire sector. R&D is dominated by a few corporations

Society 5.0: We and I

and so they further increase their dominance by getting hold of the innovations from their origination of the process.

One of the phenomena we see is that profits keep rising but wages are getting lower. Profit margins keep going up. This illustrates the power of corporations. It illustrates that the power of corporations is increasing and that of labor is decreasing. It is about technology replacing people, and eliminating jobs, hence keeping a lid on wages (Charlton, 2019d).

The point is that these profits of corporations are often based on structures that benefit the privileged at the expense of the economy. This can be illustrated by the following examples. Not only do they put small companies out of business and generate abnormal profits (see the cases in the technology and pharmaceutical sector), they also disrupt regions. The Champions League (the European soccer tournament) is an illustration of how giants ruin soccer: only big clubs win and make money. In the beer industry, we see the concentration, and the taste of beer has become a mainstream taste. Indeed, this has happened not only with beer but in the whole food industry. In the automobile industry, all cars look more and more alike. Companies like Walmart and IKEA do not create jobs but destroy jobs. Big pharma has made sickness their business. Natural remedies are replaced by chemicals. The world of giants has created a high number of obsessed and depressed people who are now catered to by big pharma, according to Noels (2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

The hormones that lead to gigantism among corporations are low-interest rates, according to Noels (2019). Interest rates have been dropping since the beginning of the 1980s. These rates enable corporations to take over other corporations by creating debts and to grow and concentrate. In 2019 these low-interest stimulated debts reached an all-time high of 250.000 billion US dollars (Boer, 2019; Curran, 2019).

Globalization is another hormone encouraging gigantism, by enlarging the playground of corporations. One of the things they do is evade taxes by forcing governments into a beauty contest of offering the most beautiful tax arrangements for corporations. Corporations pay fewer taxes than small companies and citizens. One of the many examples is Amazon, one of the biggest corporations in the world. It will pay 0% in federal taxes in the US, even though it earned more than three billion US dollars (Pagano & Kovach , 2019).

Corporations use their power to influence lawmakers to shape laws to protect and increase their power. In May 2019 the big Anglo-Dutch corporation Shell explained to Dutch parliament that what they were doing regarding tax evasion was legal and that they do not write the laws but parliament does (Hofs, 2019).

The giants of today are technological corporations. They create platforms and enslave the users of these platforms. The technology corporations have replaced the oil companies at the top of the list: data is the new oil.

Society 5.0: We and I

All these behaviors of corporations are insufficiently corrected by other stakeholders such as government, employees or consumers, to name a few. There are a few cases, though, according to Noels (2019), in which positive steps are being taken. Europe is tougher in facing giants compared to the United States. In the US giants are too big to fail and are bailed out by politicians in government.

Giants oppress people. Walmartization leads to obesity, according to Noels (2019), and crime is on the rise. There is a correlation between exclusion and crime. There are advantages of Walmartization but these do not outweigh the social consequences such as the closing of all small shops in town. The middle class is squeezed and destroyed.⁴ Working in one of these giants is not healthy. The rate of burnout is extremely high (Cassar & Dominik, 2019). Roy (2019) states that from a global perspective the middle class is growing, especially in Asia. Soon the middle class will be the biggest class on the planet and

⁴ An Economic Policy Institute (EPI) “The Productivity-Pay Gap” vividly displays a disturbing trend that, for the last 45 years, essentially all of the economic gains from America’s increasing productivity has gone to the elite and upper-middle class, while workers’ real wages have remained roughly flat. In their report, 1973 serves as a demarcation line: Prior to that date, worker gains in terms of real wages increased with an almost lockstep 1:1 relationship with productivity. After 1973, however, despite the continued trend of increased productivity, the promised “trickle-down” to all workers from neoliberal supply-side economics hasn’t happened (Hamilton, 2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

not the poor. This is the effect of the emergence of the middle class in China and other countries.

Giant governments just do not show much empathy. Big schools have to deal with more aggression and crime. Megacities oppress the individual, says Noels. Due to the large scale, people become just a number (2019).

Corporations have become focused on financial markets, financialization, and not on the real economy. These companies are starting to experience less growth and debt problems (“Have we reached peak financialisation?,” 2019; Egan, 2019). This phenomenon is related to gigantism. Wolf (2019) calls it rentier capitalism: rewards over and above those required to induce the desired supply of goods, services, land or labor. Some aspects of the problem are that the financial sector attracts bright minds and deprives other truly productive sectors of these minds. Wolf also addresses concentration and, as a consequence of it, the decline of competition, productivity, and innovation. He also mentions the relationship between rent-seeking and radical tax avoidance (Wolf, 2019).

The fact is that growth is not endless. It has limits. The main boundary is the productive capacity of the Earth itself (Coughlan, 2019). Therefore, we need to tame the corporate monster.

The gig economy is sometimes disruptive and challenging for corporations. In reality, it is another form of extreme exploitation of

Society 5.0: We and I

workers, who have to take care of their own social and health packages, including pension arrangements because self-employed and no employer is contributing (Loach, 2019; “The Guardian view,” 2019).

In monetary terms, the size of the world’s gig economy exceeds \$200 billion in gross volume, an amount that’s expected to more than double to approximately \$455 billion by 2023. The majority (more than 75%) of those currently generating income through alternative work arrangements do so by choice. For 86% of females in the gig economy, freelancing provides more than an opportunity to make a living – it’s an opportunity to receive equal pay. (Roy, 2019)

Some corporations have started to think differently about neoliberalism and the capitalistic system:

The great global enterprises are not waiting for grand new theories or perfect answers. Their leaders already use an institutional or social logic to supplement economic or financial logic in guiding and growing their enterprises. Institutional logic cannot be captured by cost-benefit equations or reduced to the language of economics, and yet it turns out to be a powerful driver of financial performance.

Leaders in the great companies can tell a different story about the basis for their decisions. In so doing, they are able to produce new models for action that can restore confidence

Society 5.0: We and I

in business and will change the world in which we live. (Kanter Moss, 2011)

The Fourth Industrial Revolution requires a new form of leadership. Some consider this new leadership the real innovation of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

[T]he 4IR has a disruptive effect on leadership: the old model, the carrot and stick, toxic leadership and organizations based on fear and control do not work. A new model is needed, a model where leadership has not only a functioning radar to understand what is happening across the company, but also a moral compass to steer the ship in the right direction, guided by ethical choices and responsibilities. Not merely a change, but a true shift towards humane leadership, where trust and respect permeate organizations. (Gallo & Hlupic, 2019).

To adapt to the wave of changes that are transforming our economy, policy and business leaders should consider the following guidelines to ensure no one, male or female, is left behind. First, we need to redefine work in the context of the digital economy. What constitutes work in an expanding gig economy? What social protections are in place to keep workers healthy? What about keeping them safe as they work from remote and informal environments? Second, we must remember the changing labour force demographics and cre-

Society 5.0: We and I

ate solutions to support the workforce of the future. Third, governments and businesses must take action now to proactively retrain their workforce. For example, the US government could re-skill more than three-quarters of its technology-displaced workforce with a \$19.9 billion investment and generate a positive return via taxes and lower welfare costs. Finally, we must apply the gender lens to all decision-making going forward – and not only because it’s the right thing to do. Gender equity is a \$12 trillion global economic opportunity. So when we collect data, let’s gender-disaggregate it. And when we train and re-skill workers, let’s ensure women and girls aren’t being left behind. The challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution have the potential to expand the economic pie for all and bend the arc of history toward inclusion. We have the choice to be stronger because of it. (Roy, 2019)

One corporation that has tried to transform itself is IKEA. Ingka Group, which owns most IKEA stores, will by year’s end 2019 have exceeded its 2020 target of producing as much renewable energy as the energy it consumes (Ringstorm, 2019). Australian tech company Atlassian has adopted a target of net zero emissions by no later than 2050. The 2050 target builds on the company’s decision early in 2019 to commit to adopting 100% renewable energy by 2025 (Murphy, 2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

Some ask whether CEOs should be activists to change the world and contribute to solving the global crisis (Bloomgarden, 2019). Along that line of thought, in August 2019 around 200 CEOs declared that shareholders should not be the only stakeholder group to be served, and that other stakeholders should also be taken into account. This declaration is perceived by some as a turning point (Goodley & Neate, 2019). This philosophy of serving all stakeholders and not just shareholders is not new. It was proposed in the 1970s. The documentary *Real Value* focuses on companies seeking more than just profit. They are all small local companies striving to be sustainable (Borkowski, 2015). According to the moviemaker, the approach seems to work. Others remain skeptical and state that this is just a beginning. According to the skeptics, these CEOs should reflect on how they are paid, specifically with regard to the exploitation of tax- and regulatory loopholes, and laws regulating corporations (Wolf, 2019).

Many remain skeptical when it comes to the transformation of corporations as a possible solution for the crisis. For instance, some believe that whatever Shell does to produce alternative energy, it will always remain an engine of death. Green investments are considered public relations stunts to cover up their continued presence in fossil fuel production (George, 2019). In October 2019 a Dutch television program presented how Shell in its own scenarios for the future predicted climate change movements and the fact that NGOs would take corporations and governments to court. In spite of this knowledge

Society 5.0: We and I

Shell did little to nothing to mitigate climate change. The piece wonders how the public can trust a corporation that behaves like that (Tegenlicht, 2019s). A Dutch lawyer is considering a case against Shell to demand a better policy to reverse climate change. Earlier he successfully led a case against the Dutch government. The judge ruled that the Dutch government is not doing enough the stop climate change and should improve its policy on this matter (De Zaak Shell, 2019). Shell is not the only corporation with this credibility issue. All big oil corporations face this challenge (Fulton & Sperling, 2019).

Democracy⁵

Democracy is a way of living in which the collective decisions (“We”) are taken by individuals (“I”s) expressing their individual preferences. While democracy has deep historical roots as far back as ancient Greece, the reality is that modern democracy is a very young phenomenon. The United States was the first democracy and is approximately 220 years old. Most democracies were born after the Second World War (Desjardins, 2019b; Hertz, 2001).

Subsequently, neoliberalism has gotten hold of democracy (Maarten & Pegtel, 2019). The system has transformed in a way that it is now driven by markets or corporations. Corporations finance campaigns of political parties and candidates in return for their support and at the expense of the people or the general interest (Goede, 2019). In some instances, it is organized crime that takes a hold of democracy.

Some believe there is a global elite with a neoliberal agenda (Sapinski, Philippe, & Philippe, 2016; Sprague, 2016). One of the consequences is that the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. Even employed people with a middle-class income are struggling to make ends meet in countries such as the Netherlands and the United

⁵ Part of this chapter was published previously in my article *The future of democracy: the end of democracy as we know it* (2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

States (Hunnicuttt, 2019; “It’s expensive to be poor,” 2015; Kok, 2019; “Ook Nederlanders,” 2019). Workers are being further exploited. By introducing several flexible legal constructions to manage workers’ contracts, workers have been stripped of several protective arrangements (Trommelen & Woutersen, 2019). The number of families in the Netherlands in need of food from food banks rose by 8% in the first half of 2019. The number of food banks is growing. At the same time, it is becoming harder for food banks to obtain certain items (“Aantal gezinnen,” 2019; Noodkreet Voedselbank Spijkenisse, 2019). In the Netherlands, many are becoming poor due to their medical expenses, which are not covered by their insurance. They sometimes need to sell their houses and are not able to go on vacation or get divorced (“Zorgkosten brengen Nederlanders,” 2019). Another alarming fact from the Netherlands, one of the richest countries in the world, is that the number of homeless people is increasing. The number has almost doubled, to nearly 40,000, in the space of ten years (“Kabinet schrikt,” 2019). In December 2019 the Dutch national ombudsman denounced this situation of the rising number of homeless people and urged the government to do something (“Ombudsmannen: kabinet moet,” 2019). In the Netherlands, a December 2019 study by the bureau of statistics indicated that the percentage of people living in poverty remained constant at 7.9%, although the economy was growing (“Armoede blijft gelijk,” 2019). As this discrepancy grows, corruption rises (“As inequality grows,” 2019). The situation in the United States has gotten to the stage that a growing part of the population (over 40%) is

Society 5.0: We and I

considering socialism as an alternative to the current system (Ratner, 2019).

To illustrate the discontent with the above-described situation of inequality, I present the case of the British millionaire Julian Richer who at the age of 60 gave away his fortune in protest of the inequality in society. He gave money to hundreds of charity organizations and shares to all his hundreds of employees (“Britse miljonair,” 2019).

Another issue facing democracy is the widespread protest by young people all over the world, who have no right to vote and have no other alternative than to protest (Runciman, 2019). There is a democratic deficit: the young affected by the decisions taken democratically are excluded from the process. Based on this fact, I expect the voting age to be dropped in the coming years.

There are several consequences of the deficiencies of democracy. One of them is the rise of populism. Populism is a reaction to the current crisis. Kenneth Rogoff, Professor of Public Policy and Professor of Economics at Harvard University, and former chief economist of the IMF, has expressed concern with “the growth in populism worldwide”:

I strongly agree with trying to have a more egalitarian society. I don't think that simply going back to 1960s socialism is really the answer to that.

I would like to see more market-oriented policies to try to improve education, improve the distribution of income. I wor-

Society 5.0: We and I

ry that that's not the direction that we're going; that we'll see a much cruder, more Neanderthal approach to trying to solve these problems. We've seen it a little bit in the United States in recent years. I worry that that's something we may see in other countries in the not distant future. (cited in Rogoff & Chainey, 2019)

Some state that pointless jobs contributed to the rise of populism. Jobs that grant no satisfaction to the employee and does not create real value for the organization ("Bullshit jobs and the yoke," 2018). These jobs contribute to people's dissatisfactions, which they then express during elections by voting for populists who promise radical change if they get elected.

Another factor contributing to the rise of populism the fact that problems are too complex and too big, so voters buy into simple solutions proposed by populists. A good example is Brexit in the UK. This usually leads to bigger problems, as is well illustrated by the meltdown of Venezuelan society after the populist Presidents Chaves (1999–2013) and his successor Maduro (from 2013 till the time of writing).

One might think that nationalism and populism are "We", inclusive. They are not. They are excluding mechanisms, creating an "us" against "them" society; the elite against the people. The same is true about religion. The world of today is full of segregation by race, gender, nationality, and religion, to name just the most obvious ones. The next citation illustrates how populism divides:

Society 5.0: We and I

From the start, Trump's deal with the oligarchy has been simple: he'll stoke tribalism so most Americans won't see CEOs getting exorbitant pay while they're slicing the pay of average workers, so most Americans won't pay attention to Wall Street demanding short-term results over long-term jobs, won't notice a boardroom culture that tolerates financial conflicts of interest, insider trading and the outright bribery of public officials through unlimited campaign "donations".

The only way to overcome the oligarchy and Trump's divide-and-conquer strategy is for the rest of us to join together and win America back.

That means creating a multi-racial, multi-ethnic coalition of working-class, poor and middle-class Americans who will fight for democracy and oppose oligarchy.

White, black and Latino; union and non-union; evangelical and secular; immigrant and native-born – all focused on ending big money in politics, stopping corporate welfare and crony capitalism, busting up monopolies and stopping voter suppression.

This agenda is neither "right" nor "left". It is the bedrock for everything else America must do. (Reich, 2019)

Society 5.0: We and I

The political elite is split into a right elite with a commercial background and a left elite that has risen on the social ladder thanks to an education in the 1950s and 1960s. The (left) elite has isolated itself from the less educated basis of the left, according to Thomas Piketty in his latest book (Milanović, 2019; Collier, 2020). This may have also contributed to the rise of populism.

There is an interesting phenomenon in the Netherlands regarding education. The society is the result of meritocracy: everybody can go to university if they are sufficiently intelligent. Those who have improved their position through the meritocratic system now do everything in their power to pass their privileges on to their children. This has created a society of unequal opportunities (Thomas, 2016). This phenomenon is also seen in the United States. Several celebrities were investigated in 2019 in connection with attempts to get their children into the right universities. In this context, it is interesting that in Great Britain there is a debate on abolishing private schools to create a more level playing field to stop privileges for the rich and to create a more meritocratic school system (Ryan, 2019).

Lately, there are concerns that even Canada may fall for populism (Levinson-King, 2019), and there are concerns about the possible rise of populism in Australia. After the re-election of Justin Trudeau as president, the threat of populism in Canada was stopped for now.

Another issue with democracy is ungovernability. Western countries are becoming ungovernable. Too many small political parties

Society 5.0: We and I

make it difficult to form coalitions. A few related phenomena are, big protests, like the yellow vests. Referendums like Brexit (“Are Western democracies,” 2019).

Given all this, in what direction is democracy heading? Based on my research I conclude that below the surface things are changing.

[The] Democracy index is a measure of democratic performance introduced by the EIU. Statistical tests indicate that there are significant variations in democracy indices between countries, but no significant variations between years. This means that global democracy has become stagnant in the sense that no significant progress or regression has been observed. Democracy is a popular alternative to hybrid or authoritarian regimes, but the nations’ recent democratic transitions have brought no improvements to life in society. Rulers of many developing countries are abusing this democratic identity and under this umbrella are doing all kinds of inhumane things to control their opponents, resulting in suffering for the ordinary people. In many multi-party democratic countries, only two main parties have been ruling the countries for decades or centuries. In some countries, both of these main parties are corrupt and people have no choice. It was proved that democracy does not bring peace in society. (Rahman, 2014)

Society 5.0: We and I

There is a global movement toward less democratic forms of government. The Democracy index states that 2017 was the worst year for democracy since 2010-11, reflecting the global financial crisis of 2008, during which 89 countries declined in their score compared to the previous year, 2016. This is three times more than the number of countries that have improved. Asia was the worst-performing region. In China Xi Jinping further consolidated his power. Venezuela was downgraded to an authoritarian regime.

I agree with Madeleine Albright, who in her book *Fascism: A warning* posits the question: “Can it happen here?” She refers to the rise to power of fascism at the beginning of the twentieth century (Berman, 2018). In democracies, autocratic leaders emerge and systematically break down institutions to remain in power, regardless of their ideology. Lech Walesa comes to the same conclusion. He misses leadership in democratic countries. He misses the leadership of the United States on the global stage. In Poland, he saw how this lack of leadership left space open for the rise of populists (Hirsh, 2019).

The Turkish journalist Ece Temelkuran identified seven steps towards the creation of a populist regime:

1. Create a movement.
2. Disrupt rationale or terrorize language.

Society 5.0: We and I

3. Remove the shame: Immorality is hot in the post-truth world.
4. Dismantle judicial and political mechanisms.
5. Design your citizens.
6. Let them laugh at the horror.
7. Build your own country. (Temelkuran, 2019)

Even the big election win by the Conservative Boris Johnson, on 13 December 2019, can be explained this way. The discontented voters left the other parties they no longer trusted, such as the Labor Party, and voted for Johnson. In the period before the election, Johnson attacked all institutions, even elections, and monarchy, and often used “alternative facts” (Chavannes, 2019a).

The problem seems to be neoliberalism. It is an extractive economic institutional arrangement, leading to inequality, and this is a threat to democracy. This is in a nutshell part of the explanation as to why the US has regressed from a full democracy to a flawed democracy. This is why the Netherlands is also regressing slowly on the Democratic index. It is neoliberalism that will prevent countries such as Russia, Mexico, and Colombia from progressing on their path toward full democracy (Rossem, 2018a).

The factors that are endangering representative democracy are globalization, de-sovereignization, and marginalization of community. The nation-state is getting weaker. By applying the shock doctrine

Society 5.0: We and I

(Klein, 2007), governments serving corporations implement measures that benefit the elite. Aftershocks such as natural disasters, but also after human-made disasters such as wars or financial crises, governments implement measures to strengthen neoliberalism. Some state that the financial crisis of 2008 was a shock that was used to fortify capitalism (Zizek, 2015).

Neoconservatism⁶ has some overlap with neoliberalism but is less extreme in its conviction that the market works, is a variant of the political ideology of conservatism that combines features of traditional conservatism with political individualism and a qualified endorsement of free markets. Neoconservative ideology has helped to dismantle state regulations and transfer wealth to the richest 1%. Now, they are in a position to influence much of state legislation in their favor. They and their fortunes are protected by hosts of lawmakers, managers, accounting firms, lawyers, tax consultants, think tanks, radio stations, film studios, publishers, media outlets, researchers, ghostwriters, lobbyists, bodyguards and other lackeys in their service. Neoliberalism has reduced all relationships to financial transactions and all has become

⁶ Neoconservatism (commonly shortened to neocon when labeling its adherents) is a political movement born in the United States during the 1960s. Neoconservatives typically advocate the promotion of democracy and interventionism in international affairs, including peace through strength (by means of military force), and are known for espousing disdain for communism and for political radicalism. (Wikipedia)

Society 5.0: We and I

about money and the accumulation of wealth. Professionals sell their advice and services for money. This has led to moral erosion and corruption. As private property is the golden calf of capitalism, and unregulated capitalism has become the bible of the ruling class, they can even mobilize police forces and ultimately the military on their behalf. Here, the nation-state and its government remain important agencies, as they can easily be played off against each other (e.g., tax evasion). Nevertheless, the rich still manage to be admired in public as the true heroes of society, the stars of success and the personification of what was once called the American Dream. This is the end of democracy as we knew it, and the definite takeover of plutocracy (Hamm, 2014). The bottom line is that professionals are not independent and do not serve the general interest but are for hire by the elite.

Some call it the lobby-crazy. In December 2019 Transparency International published a report stating that the Netherlands is more corrupt than perceived at first glance. There are too many ties between politicians and corporations (Vlaanderen & Wiemers, 2019).

These days it is not about who votes anymore, it is about who decides who runs. It is what is called the green primary. Green refers to dollars. Only 0.02% of the voters substantially finance the campaigns. The elected candidates serve the financiers. Democracy is no longer for the people nor by the people (Lessig, 2015).

Many democracies are also infiltrated by organized crime. Just to mention a few: Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico and even the Nether-

Society 5.0: We and I

lands. Drugtrafficking seems to play a major role (“In de drugshandel,” 2019), as does money laundering.

There are indications that Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) has contaminated the democratic process and therefore democratic society. The link might be tax evasion, among other factors. The Panama papers, The Paradise Papers, and such exposés have taught us how criminals and terrorists manage fortunes, and also that politicians all over the world have inexplicable wealth they hide. It is not unlikely that the origin of this wealth is corruption (ICIJ, 2018). Some of the tax havens such as Nevis are extremely secretive (Bullough, 2018). This indicates that politicians are self-serving and not working in the public interest (Goede, 2013). One in three people in Latin America is bribed (McVeigh, 2017). The corruption scandal Odebrecht in Latin America and the Caribbean illustrates how widespread corruption is (Graham-Harrison, 2017).

Besides these arguments, there is the issue that neoliberalism is sometimes justified by the claim that inequality is part of human nature and that work as we know it is normal. These assumptions can and should be challenged (Arfken, 2018).

In general, labor unions have lost much of their power. It appears they have been trapped by the social dialog. A hundred years ago they were enclosed in the International Labor Organization (ILO) and their straitjacket is getting tighter all the time. The irony is that there is no real alternative.

Society 5.0: We and I

Given the current crisis, what are the possible scenarios for democracy? The following scenarios of the future of democracy seem feasible:

- State capitalism;
- Global governance;
- Governance by algorithms;
- Governance by populist and autocratic rulers;
- A takeover by plutocrats.

A mix of these scenarios is also an option. I will expand on these in the following paragraphs.

China and Singapore, with state capitalism, represent a tempting theoretical alternative to democracy (Zizek, 2015). Both countries have achieved an improvement in their scores of the Human Development Index. That is why some believe that the fate of democracy will be decided in Asia (Beller, 2018). The question is whether the economy of the more democratic India will be more inclusive. Indications are that the rich will get richer and the poor will bear the burden (Corrigan & Di Battista, 2018). Recently India has lowered corporate taxes ("India's government delights businesses," 2019). This will make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

The future of governance is global governance, not only because the issues are global (pollution, climate change, migration, and security), but also because the corporation and the elite are global (Robin-

Society 5.0: We and I

son, 2017). Events like the climate treaty of Paris and Agendas 21 and 2030 are indications of the direction we are heading concerning global governance (Samans, 2019). In this sense, it is very worrying that President Trump in November 2019 began the formal withdrawal from the Paris Treaty (Kann, 2019).

According to Held (2015), the great problems of the future will be global and require global governance. They will have to do with climate change and security. The United Nations is a prelude to such governance. National and regional governance will remain relevant for implementing global policies. Cities will also emerge as important entities to govern, as 75% of the world's population will live in urban areas. To illustrate this point, in December 2019, on the eve of a two-week summit on climate change, the U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres declares that the world should end the war against nature, assuming the role of global leadership and governance. He asks governments to do more to reverse climate change (Binnie, 2019).

Another possible future scenario is the dystopian "Brave New World" or "Nineteen Eighty-Four". We are already being watched via our cameras. The movie *Idiocracy* is surprisingly realistic, depicting a democracy dominated by a dumbed-down majority.

Strengthening local government and encouraging self-organization, enabled by ICT and social media, might restore trust in democracy (Bula & Espejo, 2012).

Society 5.0: We and I

The importance of the media as a factor in politics was identified in the first televised political debate between Kennedy and Nixon. During Obama's first campaign in 2008, the power of the Internet was identified. Brexit was one of the first events that clearly illustrated that something was very wrong with the use of the media in a democracy. The system was shown to be far from perfect and could be manipulated by populists via social media (Heaven, 2018). The elections in the United States were also marked by the fact that the data of 87 million Facebook users ended up with the firm Cambridge Analytica, who used the data to manipulate voters via social media (Vox, 2018). The fact is that the media is owned (direct or indirectly) by neoliberal corporations, and they are hence used to justify the neoliberal system. We cannot rely on the media to transform the system (Phelan, 2018).

ICT held a promise that it would better democracy. The early days of President Chávez in Venezuela illustrate this. Elections in Venezuela, applying electronic voting, were once celebrated as the most advanced elections by the Carter Foundation (Fiorini & Sabella, 2018). Thanks to ICT, the information would be available, and the technology for electronic voting and direct democracy would be available.

Social media has created the illusion of transparency and appeared to be a platform for democracy, but has become a weapon to attack democracy by abolishing privacy. People withdraw from the public sphere to protect their privacy, leaving the public sphere for populists and their followers (Goede & Neuwirth, 2014).

Society 5.0: We and I

The interrelated factors of globalization and technology have created the challenges of migration and e-voting from abroad.

The reality show serves as a metaphor for democracy. Politicians are cast. They perform and the viewers vote via the media who has to leave the show (Goede, 2010).

In the domain of the media, the phenomenon of fake news has manifested itself. By using fake news, perceptions of millions are influenced.

Investigative reporting, once an important pillar of democracy, appears to be crumbling. Investigative reporting seems to deliver evidence that that politicians are not to be trusted and so unintentionally plays into the hand of the populists, as the disillusioned voters are willing to consider the populists (Luyendijk, 2018).

Some think that elections and hence democracy in the future could and should be replaced or complemented by algorithms.

All indications are that Big Brother as described in Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has become a reality (Abbas, 2012). By applying technology the state is controlling the people, not only when voting but all the time. This was demonstrated by the cases of Julian Assange and Edward Snowden.

In reality, the world is increasingly governed by the Deep State – also called the Secret Government (Moyers, 1987) or the Invisible Government (Bernays, 1928) – uncontrolled by

Society 5.0: We and I

democratic mechanisms, time and again discussed by some “conspiracy theorists,” with massive evidence only recently revealed by Wikileaks and Edward Snowden. (Hamm, 2014, p. 171)

Piketty (2014) indicates that capitalism is not leading to a more just society and wealth is becoming progressively more concentrated. In other words, the outcome of the democratic process is increasingly undemocratic. The above was illustrated by the way the financial crisis of 2008 was handled. Bankers were bailed out by governments and the citizens were not taken care of. This strengthened distrust in democracy and led to protests in New York, Athens, Rome and many other major cities (Abbas, 2012).

The plutocracy is taking over. Not everybody is equal. Hamm (2014, pp. 161-162), drawing on Mills’ work, presents an ideal type of “The Power Elite”. They are a class of their own, involved in the class struggle. It is about four concentric circles. The inner circle is the super-rich. The second circle are the CEOs of the big transnational corporations. The third circle are the international politicians. The fourth ring is composed of top academics, media moguls, lawyers, and icons.

In November 2019 Joseph Stiglitz stated that decades of free-market orthodoxy have taken a toll on democracy. After 40 years of neoliberalism, the verdict is in: the fruits of growth went to the few at the top (Stiglitz, 2019c).

Society 5.0: We and I

At the end of 2019, people in many cities in countries all around the world are taking the streets: Paris, London, Lisbon, Hong Kong, Lebanon, The Hague, Chile, Bolivia, and Colombia. These protests at first glance seem different, but they have in common the fact that people feel left out. It is us against them (Akhtar & Kaplan, 2019). Democracy has not led to cohesion. “We” has been eroded by neoliberalism to a collection of I-ndividuals (Figure 1).

West versus East

Is the West “I” and the East “We”? Is “I” borders and “We” open? We are the world! There are no borders. We all live on Spaceship Earth. “I” is about me. To survive I am part of a group to serve others and me to survive. Nevertheless, we still create borders. We talk about West and East and North versus South.

One of the greatest dividers in this world is borders. The question is: what is the justification for borders in today’s world? Europe, notwithstanding the Brexit phenomenon, illustrates that we can progress towards a world without borders. After the Conservative victory in the elections in the UK on 13 December 2019, voters who did not vote Conservative were unhappy. Scotland and Northern Ireland were talking about leaving the UK and rejoining the E.U. (Chavannes, 2019a). Borders have created problems such as illegal migration, tax evasion and subsequently projects like President Trump’s wall between the U.S. and Mexico. Not to mention wars. It is all about irrational emotions.

Global borders for everything (capital, commodities, goods, and services) seem to have lessened, except for the movement of people. “I” cannot solve the migration issues, but “we” can. Over 13 million people were newly displaced in 2018. Half of them were children. Syria and Venezuela top the list. The number of refugees has increased by

Society 5.0: We and I

70% since 2011. The refugees seek refuge in neighboring countries (Wood, 2019a). In Gaziantep, Turkey, a small industrial town absorbed half a million refugees from Syria and calls them guests (Bürgen, 2019). And it seems to have worked! So it seems that part of the solution is our attitude, to become more accepting and tolerant toward immigrants.

Studies are indicating that the West (or Global North) needs immigrants to succeed (“Why voting with your feet,” 2019). One of the arguments is that immigrants bring in new ideas (“How migration makes,” 2019). Immigrants are also mainly young people who lower the average age and enlarge the productive part of the population that contributes to the public finances.

Till the late 1980s, the East referred primarily to USSR, Russia. In November 1991 the Berlin Wall was taken down, marking the end of an era. George Soros is a member of the global elite who bet on liberal democracy. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1989, he poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the former Soviet-bloc countries to promote civil society and liberal democracy. In 1979 he created a philanthropic organization, then called the Open Society Fund, and began sponsoring college scholarships for black South African students. But he soon turned his attention to Eastern Europe, where he started financing dissident groups (Steinberger, 2008).

Society 5.0: We and I

Russia has adopted the neoliberal model cold turkey and a Russian model evolved (Hirt, Seliar, & Young, 2013). This does not mean that in other senses Russia is not an opponent of the West.

... we explored the transition of Eastern Europe and the former USSR from “communism” (or “state socialism”) to neoliberal capitalism, conceptualizing this process in relation to wider changes in the world economy and the international state system. “Proto-neoliberal” ideas and social forces, we showed, were already present in Eastern Europe and the former USSR prior to 1989. In the following decades, successive waves of neoliberal reforms were implemented by domestic elites, with the support of Western policymakers, business leaders and think-tanks, as well as international organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank and the EU. As events since the 2008 crisis have demonstrated, the logic of the transformation was not simply to liberate the countries of the region from the shackles of “communism” or to unleash latent entrepreneurial talent, as emphasized by neoliberals, but to open up the economies of the region to the exigencies of global capital, while restructuring and bolstering the power of domestic elites. The outcome has been growing disillusionment and public discontent with simplistic attempts to install a market economy and Western-style liberal democracy, as well as with the political forces, at home and abroad, that

Society 5.0: We and I

have pushed this process along. The capitalist triumphalism of the early 1990s has everywhere given way to the dystopian realities of an authoritarian, restrictive and reactionary mode of neoliberal capitalism. (Dale & Fabry, 2018)

So it is simplistic to claim that the West is capitalistic and the East or Asia is influenced by Marx. The East is a more collective society compared to the West. The East is considerably less democratic and yet they make progress. One factor is that autocratic decision-making is swifter compared to democratic decision-making (Goede, 2019; Zakaria, 2008).

Within 70 years of the founding of the People's Republic of China, they moved from a poor Asian country to a dominant power. "China's economy has rapidly expanded since the beginning of market reforms by the government in the 1980s, and the country's infrastructure has grown quickly to match it. For example, China's rail system is now the second-largest in the world, after the United States" (Westcott & Croker, 2019). The East is resurrecting and becoming dominant.

The farther one looks into the future, therefore, the more clearly Asia appears to be – as has been the norm for most of its history – a multipolar region with numerous confident civilizations evolving largely independent of Western policies but constructively coexisting with one another. A reawakening of Western confidence and vitality would be very welcome, but it would not blunt Asia's resurrection. Asia's rise is structural,

Society 5.0: We and I

not cyclical. There remain pockets of haughty ignorance centered around London and Washington that persist in the belief that Asia will come undone as China's economy slows or will implode under the strain of nationalist rivalries. These opinions about Asia are irrelevant and inaccurate in equal measure. As Asian countries emulate one another's successes, they leverage their growing wealth and confidence to extend their influence to all corners of the planet. The Asianization of Asia is just the first step in the Asianization of the world. (Khanna, 2019)

A bizarre note on the difference between the West and East is that in the China youngsters dream of becoming an astronaut and in the US they dream of becoming a star on YouTube (Leskin, 2019). Research shows that China (and other Asian) schoolchildren outperform those in the rest of the world (Horobin, 2019).

China has become the world's biggest creditor. It grants loans especially to vulnerable countries and in this way buys strategic assets and influence in these countries ("Hey, big lender," 2019). The influence of China in many countries in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean is big and still growing. As an example, in November 2019 big Chinese investments were announced in El Salvador. "China will help build several major infrastructure projects in El Salvador, including a stadium and water treatment plant, the two nations said on Tuesday, signaling its growing role in the region after El Salvador cut ties with

Society 5.0: We and I

Taiwan” (Renteria, 2019). A greater example is that President Xi allegedly requested that President Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe resign because he was talking to Western investors (Mushekwe & Kahari, 2019).

China is a police state spying on its citizens and the rest of the world by employing technology, such as face-recognition software, among others. This despite their economic and social results (Martijn, 2019). Recently the Chinese government even started to regulate morality (Cheung, 2019). Human rights are a big issue in China. There are even rumors that China is harvesting donors for human organs from the Uighur Muslim minority (Martin, 2019).

The FBI believes that China wants to dominate the world. Technology, as already stated, is one of the main tools to achieve this objective (Hackett, 2019). However, the fact is that all states are using technology to control their citizens. India is trying to create the biggest face-recognition system to control its population. It is presented as a technology that will increase the effectiveness of the police in the fight against crime (Zaugg, 2019). The world is based on fear and the obsession to control (Tegenlicht, 2019c).

Edward Snowden⁷ explained how the United States has also become a surveillance state controlling its citizens. It takes it a step fur-

⁷ An American whistleblower who copied and leaked highly classified information from the National Security Agency (NSA) in

Society 5.0: We and I

ther, stating that corporations are spying on citizens (Franceschi-Bicchierai, 2014). Harvard professor Shoshana Zuboff explains how corporations are using all our data not only to serve but also to control and manipulate us. They collect all our data, even data such as spell-checking (“Wat is er mis,” 2019). Silicon Valley is spying on people (Carr, Day, Frier, & Gurman, 2019).

Not only ICT is used to dominate the world, but also infrastructure. Some like Japan state that the famous Chinese project “Belt and Road” does not have only commercial objectives but also military objectives (Herskovitz, 2019). The military might use this same infrastructure for deployment. It seems like the United States will respond. It is unclear what this response will be.

At the same time, President Trump has started an economic confrontation with China. It is about trade. China made a surprise move devaluing its currency, the Renminbi Yuan, on 5 August 2019. The protests in Hong Kong in 2019 and the way China and the West went about them is an illustration of the resurrection of the East and how the West goes about it. According to international treaties, Hong Kong in 1997 became a special Chinese administrative region. Hong Kong, which was a British territory from 1839, is formatted according to Western principles and has had difficulty reformatting according to Eastern principles. Hong Kong has become a police state implementing

2013 when he was a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employee and subcontractor.

Society 5.0: We and I

the will of the Chinese state (“Hong Kong a “police state,” 2019). Corporations got involved. Apple removed an app from its platform that is said to be used by the protesters to coordinate their actions, a position the protesters deny. Apple seems to be giving in to pressure by the Chinese government (Cook, 2019). It is a known fact that China uses access to its huge market to impose its will on foreign governments and corporations (Chin-A-Fo & Maessen, 2019). An example of this was the case of Christian Dior having to apologize to China for not including Taiwan – considered a renegade province by the Chinese government - in a map of the country (Valinsky, 2019). Of course, there is also a minority in Hong Kong supporting the Chinese. They are somewhat silent (“In divided Hong Kong,” 2019). Scholars are arguing for the necessity of looking beyond the national state approach of looking at West versus East matters. They state that a transnational capitalist class has emerged and things are not what they seem at first sight (Sprague, 2016). The state is not disappearing but transforming to serve the global elite (Sprague, 2012).

The enlightened part of the transnational elite states that the system is in crisis and advocates transnational governance institutions to stabilize the system. They even foresee a rebellion of the popular, working-class and leftists against the transnational capitalist class. But this segment is facing a few challenges of its own (Robinson, 2017). Maybe this explains the uproar in many cities around the world at the end of 2019.

North and South

There is a North versus South divide. The North contains the rich countries and in the South the poor (Figure 5). Is the North “I” and the South “We”? The West-East and North-South divisions overlap. To me, there is the following distinction. The first has a more ideological, political and power connotation. The second is more about economy, wealth and well-being.

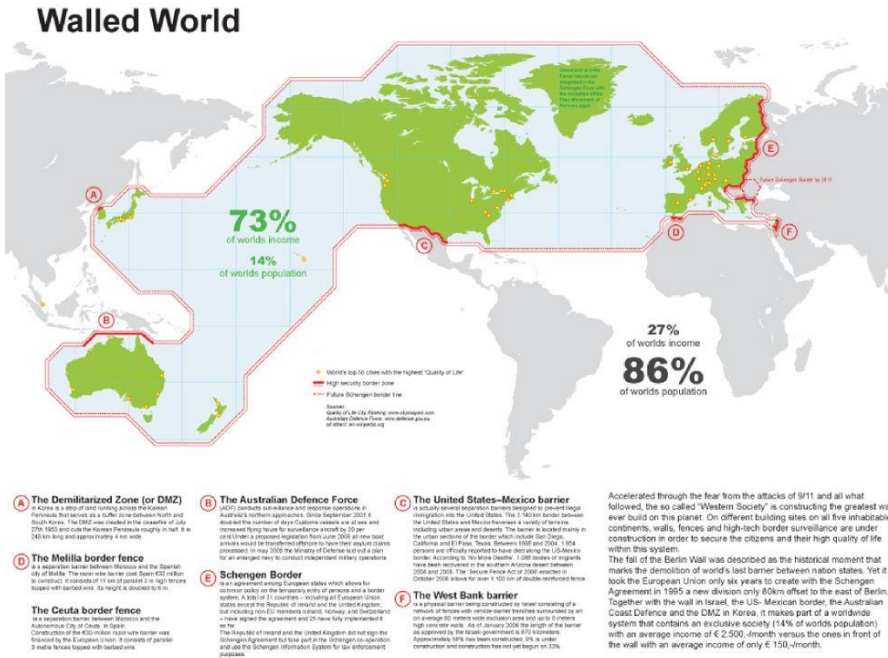


Figure 5: The rich world, developed world, First World or Western world by another name: the walled world. Image: TD Architects (Jacobs, 2019a)

Half of the world's poor live in five countries.

Of the world's 736 million extreme poor in 2015, 368 million – half of the total – lived in just five countries. The five countries with the highest number of extreme poor are (in descending order): India, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Bangladesh. They also happen to be the most populous countries of South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Society 5.0: We and I

ca, the two regions that together account for 85 percent (629 million) of the world's poor. (Katayama & Wadhwa, 2019)

During the 1970s large loans were granted to countries, particularly in the Third World. This led to the debt crisis. Via institutions dominated by the West, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The World Bank, Western institutions and approaches were imposed on these countries via Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP). "Structural adjustment represented a serious attack on democracy in the global South. It meant that key decisions over economic policy were made not by national parliaments, but rather by bankers and technocrats in Washington and New York" (Hickel, 2016).

The corporation, via donations to political parties, has compelled politicians to serve its interests (Hickel, 2016). This is not new. The role of the Military-Industrial Complex (MIC) has been documented since the 1960s (Cox, 2014). However, there are new strategies. Corporations and their owners use charity as a strategy to enforce their agenda. Countries like China and Venezuela use state-owned companies to intervene in other countries. War has changed. It is not only about cyber warfare but about economic warfare.

Therefore,

Neoliberal reforms have undermined democratic sovereignty over the past 40 years, but they have also set off a popular backlash that is growing bold enough to make de-

Society 5.0: We and I

mands for new and more radical forms of democracy (Juris, 2008; Maeckelbergh, 2009). It is still too early to tell, but the end of democracy as we knew it might also mark the beginning of something else. (Hickel, 2016, p. 151)

China has lifted 850 million people out of poverty, creating a huge middle class. China did so by pursuing industrialization, liberalizing the private sector, welcoming foreign investment and embracing global trade. Since Deng Xiaoping launched “Reform and Opening Up” in 1978, China has pursued export-driven industrialization, liberalized the private sector, welcomed foreign investment, and embraced global trade. As millions of farmers moved from fields to factories, they earned wages, saved, and sent their children to school. China still faces two big challenges: inequality and corruption. Besides lifting millions out of poverty, the income gap widened. And corruption also has risen. “Under Xi’s leadership, more than 1.5 million officials, including some of the most senior members of the Communist Party of China (CPC), have been disciplined” (Yuen Yuen, 2019). Asia’s middle class will soon make up 88% of the world’s entire middle class (Roy, 2019). In 2019 alone China lifted another ten million citizens out of poverty. China will meet the SDG regarding eradicating poverty in 2020, ten years ahead of schedule. The next goal after making moderate prosperity accessible to all Chinese citizens is to make China the most advanced (socialist) country by 2050 (“China expected,” 2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

In November 2019 some think tanks start reporting that China is now the biggest diplomatic power in the world (Westcott, 2019). In the U.N. it has started to flex its muscles to promote its worldviews, something it has not done in the past (“In the UN, China,” 2019).

Africa is forming one of the biggest single markets (Chirinda, 2019). This will boost the economic potential of the African continent. Also, the whole world is facing the fact of aging, except for example Africa and other countries of the South. Experts state that Africa should innovate and not industrialize (Liu, 2019). Ethiopia is expected to become the growth engine of Africa (Raffoul & Raju, 2019).

It is not only Africa we need to keep an eye on but also India. Besides also having a young population, there is this factor that on a big scale their youth, even toddlers, are learning to program. This is a skill that is considered key to the future (Agrawal, 2019).

The famous Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón, who defends Julian Assange of WikiLeaks but also arrested Augusto Pinochet in 1998, and in the past confronted the United States with the practices in Guantánamo Prison, puts it this way when it comes to Latin America. Wealth is concentrated in the hands of 25% of the population. The other 75% is poor. The system is antisocial: if you do not have money, you do not have access to healthcare and education. It is a patriarchal society and (public) funds are inefficient managed, leading to high prices. In other words: corruption is high. The United States never give Latin America a chance. Especially President Trump wants to do away all left-leaning

Society 5.0: We and I

governments. The doctrine of national security⁸ has been replaced by big financial and economic institutions that constantly dictate their demands. It is all about the struggle between two models: the neoliberal model of the corporations versus the model diverse majorities. WikiLeaks has proven that secret agencies do not serve humanity and do not take care of the security of the state. It is all about the interests of the big financial and economic powers. There is unrest in Chile, Argentina, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Colombia. On one side the corporations (neoliberalism) control the governments and opposed to that the people who question neoliberalism. Why is there so much inequality? Why is there nothing done about the climate crisis? It is the governments that started the use of violence against the people. The point is that the people are diverse and there is no one leader. This makes it hard to have a dialog between the two sides. Splitting up (national territories) is not the answer. We are now going through a complex revolutionary moment in history: there are problems between generations, climate change, right-wing populism is coming back, (economic) models are failing, and the enforcing of these models is difficult. And nobody is taking care of the citizens and now they are reacting. The

⁸ In Latin America, this was the basic ideology of military regimes of the late 1960s, the 1970s, and early 1980s. The most important theoretical work in the area was done in Brazilian military colleges. It is focused on internal threat of subversion and class warfare. It is concerned about the link between economic development and internal and external security.

Society 5.0: We and I

youth aged 12 to 15 are demanding changes to reverse climate change. It looks impossible but it can be done. We need to leave our comfort zone and become active. Do we choose the model of extreme inequality that has no regard for indigenous people, like in Mexico, Chile, and Colombia, or do we choose to fight for a more humane society (de Walsche, 2019)?

In the meantime, the 17th summit of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of America (ALBA-TCP) is taking place in Havana. They proclaim themselves to be an anti-neoliberal platform (“Venezuela: Maduro attends,” 2019).

A case that illustrates that this North and South divide is relative is the case of Guyana: “Guyana is set to register the largest economic growth in the world in 2020. According to projections laid out by the International Monetary Fund, the country is expected to grow by 4.4 percent in 2019, and then 85.6 percent in 2020” (“Guyana to register,” 2019). This is probably related to the discovery of big oil reserves. In January 2020 Surinam (Dutch Guyana) also reported the discovery of big oil reserves.

The rich North invests considerably more in education, especially in tertiary education (Charlton, 2019c). Also, the rich North actively attracts talent from the South. This is often from their former colonies.

It is worrying that the poor countries will increase their carbon footprint to address the food shortage and influence climate change

Society 5.0: We and I

negatively (“Poor countries will need,” 2019). For example, in the poor regions of the country, China is breeding pigs the size of polar bears to meet the demands of its rising middle class for meat (“China fokt varkens,” 2019). On the other hand, agriculture, food, and trade policy expert Devinder Sharma writes: “My understanding is that only agriculture can reboot the economy, sustain millions of livelihoods, and reduce global warming.” (Sharma, 2019). As long as this does not include meat production, as this has a huge carbon footprint.

The countries of the South are vulnerable to exploitation by countries and corporations of the North, including China. I conclude that this North/South divide does not make much sense. For example, the crisis of the rainforests is mainly in the South and Australia but affects everyone on the planet. One of the main causes of deforestation is the increase in meat production and other products to meet the needs of the North. It is one world.

We Are Smart and Living in Smart Cities?

The percentage of people living in cities will increase from 50% today to 70% by 2050. Some believe that through innovation we will unite and collaborate and resolve all the causes of the crisis. This type of innovation will come from India and China, for example (Malhotra, 2019) and will be applied in cities in all corners of the globe.

The question is: are smart cities smart? Inclusion is about “We” and exclusion is about “I”. Today our society is based on exclusion. Is a smart city inclusive? The most visible aspects of this are economic and social exclusion. In a society in which the only value is money, people without money are excluded. A decent job means money and hence inclusion. So being unemployed is equal to exclusion – unless there is a universal basic income plan and people have an income and can participate in the market.

It is not only about technology. In Melbourne, Australia neighborhoods are built where people do not need a car because all amenities are within 20 minutes’ walking distance. This has numerous benefits, not only social but also in terms of reducing the ecological footprint (“Australia is building,” 2019). In 2020 Luxembourg will become the first country to make all public transit free (Baldwin, 2019).

The city-states are the future of globalization. Cities might replace corporations as the dominant actor in the economy and the arena of

Society 5.0: We and I

governance. Small states perform exceptionally well. This is because of their good governance and connectivity. We should avoid the possibility of smart cities behaving like giants, as described by Noels (Noels, 2019). Cities must internally decentralize and form networks with other cities. This will avoid big conflicts between cities (Ghosh, 2019, pp. 182-188; Noels, 2019).

At this stage, we have not resolved the dark side of smart cities. The smart city at this stage is a huge menace for the privacy of people (Cecco, 2019; Goede, 2018a). The question is whether people in the future will be concerned about their privacy. For example, in Sweden, thousands are voluntarily implanting a chip under their skin to identify themselves and receive services (Ma, 2018). The expectation is that everybody eventually will get a chip implant (Graham, 2017). If people give up their privacy willingly, this will be no longer a problem.

The cities and city-regions are confronted with neoliberalism with all the consequences of exclusion (Brenner & Theodore, 2005). The process of strategic planning is a key process through which stakeholders make claims on the city. The most powerful stakeholders are investors. They determine the reality of the city. A consequence of this is that others are excluded and pushed out (Lauer mann, 2016). The discourse was greening the economy, but the reality became economizing the green. Bringing green solutions became a big business. The consequence is that those who cannot afford it are excluded via the market (Rosol, Beal, & Mossner, 2017).

Society 5.0: We and I

The role of the local elite in the city is key in enabling the globalization of the city via collaboration with the members of the global elite (Mossner & Freytag, 2014). Tourism in the city has been one of the most effective neoliberal initiatives to revitalize the city. It has not always been the case that this was a top-down strategy. In many cases, there are bottom-up initiatives where locals initiate projects within the neoliberal reality of the city (Ioannides & Evangelia, 2016).

One of the changes cities are confronting is the process of gentrification: the re-use of old buildings and parts of the city, like old factory buildings. In the end, the effect is that people are being excluded and businesses are getting in. It is not a human-centered development (Tegenlicht, 2019a).

There is a link between neoliberalism and urbanization (Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2009). It is about privatization, of the public space and gentrification; privatization of local resources, such as in some cases water services; immigrants and illegality; resilience and resistance to these (Kurečić & Kozina 2016). The city space has become the turf of aggressive neoliberal intervention into urban affairs, an attempt to clean up the city for better business and penalize the poor at the same time. Some talk about roll-with-it neoliberalization (Keil, 2009), roll-out neoliberalism and roll-back neoliberalism (Keil, 2002).

Part of this all is that urban areas are confronted with climate change. Many of the largest cities around the globe are threatened by the rising level of the sea. Often these cities are on the coast or near-

Society 5.0: We and I

by. These cities are growing, especially in the East (van Raaij, Ajrović, & Leunissen, 2019).

There is a growing tension between sustainable urbanism and climate change urbanism. The first is holistic and focused on reducing the eco-footprint, while climate change is more fragmented and financed by the corporation (Long & Rice, 2018).

Urban neoliberalization is hollowing out urban societies for the sole purpose of profit maximization. An example of this is that in Germany a student was fined for getting food out of the waste of a supermarket ("German students say," 2019). Something similar happened in LA, and in Las Vegas sleeping on the streets is now illegal. On the other hand, in 2016 Italy passed a law making it illegal to throw away unsold food. That food must go to charity. According to the source, the list of countries creating this kind of law regarding donating unsold food is growing (McCarthy, 2016).

Exclusion leads to loneliness. According to a publication by the World Economic Forum, loneliness is and will become a big issue ("There are four types of loneliness," 2019).

Scientists are investigating whether cities make us sick (Oosterom, 2019). In smart Dutch society, loneliness among the elderly has become a huge problem. One of the causes is that front office jobs have been replaced by technology. Examples are bank personnel, ticket sales for public transportation, and so on. As a consequence, the num-

Society 5.0: We and I

ber of human interactions diminishes, leading to the isolation of (elderly) people. This has induced supermarkets to create coffee corners where people, especially the elderly, can socialize. Recently a cashier who chats with the elderly has been introduced, to create the opportunity for these persons to socialize and decrease their feeling of loneliness (Heyer, 2019).

In Japan loneliness is a huge problem. Over one million people do not leave their home at all, in many cases for years on end. The Japanese culture of shame seems to be a factor (List, 2019).

There is a resistance at the core of the city against this neoliberalism and the effects, and it is possible that in the future this might roll-back neoliberalism (Keil, 2016). This will reverse the homogenizing of events by restricting urban entrepreneurial and innovation spirit (Laurerman & Davidson, 2013).

Recently the motto has become inclusion, perhaps because we realized the cost of exclusion. It degrades society and makes holding society together very expensive. It might also be the effect of resistance against the development of the smart city. Inclusiveness is now part of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, developing a motto is one thing, making this into a new policy or a reality is a different matter altogether.

Young versus Old

The younger generation plays a key role in creating the future. This has always been the case. There are several theories on the role of the next generation. On the one hand, there are those who state that the youth will save the world and on the other hand there are those who believe that they will accelerate disaster.

A study in Singapore recorded the following perceptions of millennials:

They get their fair share of criticisms from the older generation, and now, a nationwide survey has found out what Singaporeans really think of millennials.

Impatient, overconfident and materialistic – these are among the top perceptions of those aged 19 to 36 years old.

This demographic ranked the lowest – versus Generation X and the pre-independence generation – for being disciplined, loyal and taking ownership of work. Being cautious or hard-working are not seen to be millennial traits either. (Paolo, Grosse, & Lee, 2019)

Studies in other parts of the world found comparable results. Young voters turned their backs on the democratic process and unintentionally helped the anti-democratic populists seize power (Fry,

Society 5.0: We and I

2018). It seems now that young people have learned from this experience and are getting involved again.

On the other hand, baby boomers are also a challenge. They are aging and exerting pressure on pension funds and medical insurance funds.

Is the old generation “I” and the new generation “We”? No, individualistic people are from all generations. The young generation seems to be pro social justice (Jurna, Garschagen, Noshad, & Meri, 2019). Some say the coming back of “We” is related to the new generations. I see people from all generations searching for “We”, searching for meaning.

They say that millennials and other younger generations, Gen Z, are more oriented toward the collectivity. I do not know, although there are cases like Greta Thunberg the Swedish teenager who took a year off from school to activate for the cause of climate change (Foundation, 2019). On 18 September 2019, she headed a global strike of school kids, protesting global warming (Borner, 2019). Psychologists are concerned about the well-being of her and other youngsters like her (Quekel, 2019). *Time* magazine named her person of the year 2019 for her efforts and her impact. She is the youngest ever person of the year (Alter, Haynes, & Worland, 2019). In January 2020, she was mentioned as a candidate for the Nobel Prize for the second year in a row.

Society 5.0: We and I

However, it is not only the young that are protesting against climate change. People of all ages are protesting against climate change in cities around the globe such as Amsterdam and London. The term Extinction Rebellion is used to refer to this movement (“Zeker 80 aanhoudingen,” 2019; “Women breastfeed,” 2019).

Many young people are making a difference, including Mark Zuckerberg, although he is also subject to many critiques regarding privacy and so on. Another example is the Dutch youngster who wants to clean the oceans of plastic. He designed and through crowd-funding built a device to do this (“Nieuwe plasticvanger,” 2019). However, this ocean cleaning project is also criticized. The system is very expensive and removes more than simply plastic from the ocean (Stelling, 2019).

Millennials are also mentally vulnerable (Hoffower, 2019). Youngsters are chronically lonely, rather than simply being lonely once in the while. This has been identified in the Netherlands. These young people need help (“Tienduizenden jongeren,” 2019). Other research also shows that millennials are the loneliest generation ever. For example, 25% report that they don’t have a single friend (“25% of millennials,” 2019; Hutt, 2019). There are more single working women than ever, and that’s changing the US economy for example. The millennials are not happy at work and switch jobs very frequently. This is explained by their upbringing by their parents, Generation X, who taught the millennials that they are special and can achieve anything in life. Hence the millennials have very high expectations (Meester, 2019). A part of

Society 5.0: We and I

the youth is drinking themselves to death (Giordano, 2019). Recent studies are indicating that millennials are reducing the intake of alcohol.

Generation Z is stressed, depressed and exam-obsessed (“Generation Z,” 2019). Their burnout rate is high. Building their resilience is not the answer. We must redesign how we work (Samra, 2019; “Tijd met vrienden,” 2019). Millennials also suffer from mental illnesses because of financial worries (Nguyen, 2019). Many millennials face huge debts due to their studies at universities. In the Netherlands, these debts keep rising (“Studenten weer dieper,” 2019).

Not only is the mental health of millennials a concern, but suicide is the second-leading cause of death in America among Gen Z’s (the generation younger than the millennials). It’s a worse epidemic than anything millennials faced at that age (Kiersz & Akhtar, 2019).

Age has become a significant criterion for segregation. The younger generation increasingly excludes the older generation, blaming them for problems like climate change (Utrecht, 2019; Ahlers & Boenders, 2011), the pressures on pension funds and health care funds. To illustrate this, in New Zealand a young member of parliament silenced an older member by calling him a boomer. The incident went viral (Yahye, 2019). It seems that the experience of the baby boomers is not valued. It is forgotten that the baby boomers also invented the internet and the smartphone that influenced the younger generations. The baby boomer went from a progressive generation to the most selfish gener-

Society 5.0: We and I

ation, according to millennials. They exert relatively too big an influence in a world they will not live in for very long anymore (Huff, 2019).

The dislike is somewhat understandable if one takes into account that for example in the UK the millennials in their thirties will earn less than the older generation did in their thirties. This has not happened since the 1930s. It is not only about technology and 4IR. It is also about policy choices and tax regimes (Willige, 2019; Collier, 2020). Some call it downward social mobility (Hill, 2019). The millennials will have to work and save much harder for their retirement pension (Fleming, 2019b; Collier, 2020).

What does not help the relationship between the young and the old is President Bolsonaro calling Greta Thunberg a “little brat” after she called him out as a reaction to the murder of indigenous leaders and people defending their territories, on 10 December 2019, during a global conference on the climate crisis (Stickings, 2019). On 12 December, the day after Thunberg was named *Time*’s person of the year, President Trump attacked her in the media, stating that her being named by *Time* was ridiculous and that she must do something about her Anger Management problem.

Steven Brill, the author of *Tailspin*, has ideas on this matter baby boomers. They are presented in his article “How baby boomers broke America” (2018). American society has evolved from a meritocratic society to a society of the protected against the unprotected. It has become a society of extreme inequality. The American middle class is

Society 5.0: We and I

no longer the world's richest. The U.S. is still the richest country but has the highest poverty rate among nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Few basic services seem to work as they should. And the number of lobbyists is extremely high, at 20 per each member of Congress. Money has become everything. Fifty years ago things were different. There was a better balance between the energizing inequality of achievement in a competitive economy and the community-binding equality promised by democracy. The achievers won and divided America. Also, a civil service emerged that protected incompetent and corrupt workers, while on the other side are the unprotected many. These unprotected needed a government to ensure good public schooling, enable small businesses, keep health care accessible, safe workplaces, decent minimum wage, a fair social security system, a good mass-transit system, a fair political system, and fair labor laws. The protected do not need this. This divide is the result of the fact that those based on their merits could attend the top universities. These baby boomers went to work for fast-growing law firms that served large corporations. Paying high salaries, they could attract most of the talent and there was not enough talent left to serve the public interest. The focus was now on those who could pay the most. They opened corporate America and Wall Street with inventions in law and finance that created an economy built on deals that moved assets around instead of building new ones. Regulatory agencies were overwhelmed by battalions of lawyers. The private-sector unions continued to dwindle. The corporation strengthened its right to

Society 5.0: We and I

influence the consumer. Corporations gained more influence over the electoral and political process. The most flagrant example of the achievers' triumph was how they were able to avoid accountability when the banks they ran crashed the economy and many corporations were bailed out at the expense of the unprotected majority. The winners invested their winnings to preserve their bounty, but also to root themselves and their offspring in a new meritocracy-aristocracy. The elite can spend what they want to send their children to the best schools. American meritocracy has become precisely what is invented to combat. The disillusioned people vote for populists, trying to break down the entrenched elite (Brill, 2018).

Someone reacted to the above-presented line of reasoning – on why millennials dislike baby boomers – by arguing that millennials should decline the inheritance of their parents and other baby boomers because this legacy is the result of much to which they are opposed. The only thing is that not many get an inheritance.

The elderly are an issue. For example, in the United States over the next decade, the US workforce is likely to see a tsunami of elderly workers. The share of workers over the age of 75 is projected to grow from 1.8 million in 2018 to 3.7 million in 2028, more than doubling in ten years (Kopf & Cheng, 2019). The elderly are getting older and remaining more vital. 75 has become the new 65. This has serious consequences for retirement and pensions. Pension funds cannot finance the pensions of the big population of the elderly (Sanderson &

Society 5.0: We and I

Scherbov, 2019). Public pensions are jeopardy. Police officers, teachers, and other public workers face a brutal reckoning (“America’s public-sector pension schemes,” 2019). On the other hand, older people are still very committed workers. The workplace is now shared by five generations (Jenkins, 2019). This leaves less room for the younger generations in the labor market.

We live in a world where people age 60 and over will soon outnumber children aged five and under. Demographers predict that in countries that are ageing well, more than half the children born today will live to 100 – and some researchers believe that the first person who will live to the age of 150 has already been born. (Jenkins, 2019)

Society must care for the elderly because as they grow older they will need this, as they will not be able to take care of themselves completely. We seem to forget that the seniors can take care of others as well, such as by nurturing children. Part of the problem is that many will grow older without a pension (“Deze financiële top-adviseur,” 2017) and so will be excluded from the market and hence society. In other words, they will be a burden to society, especially for the youth.

Is there is an alternative for this generational rivalry? There have been successful experiments where the elderly take care of infants and young children. Everybody seems to benefit: the child, the parents, and the senior. Another experiment is seniors and university students living together in the same building. In this case, both groups also

Society 5.0: We and I

seem to benefit. The benefit is not primarily the fact that the student enjoys free boarding, but the gaining of true friendship of people from totally different generations.

The younger generation is more into technology than the older generation. The question is: is technology is “I” or “We”? Some believe that technology connects and is “We”. Research shows that technology isolates and it is mainly “I”.

[W]e are over-digitizing our world, instead of going back to nature. New generations know everything about using a computer and a smart-phone, but they can't tell the difference between a pine-tree and a sunflower, if push comes to shove. American schoolchildren, who were smart enough to use computers, were confronted with fresh vegetables. They failed to recognize them! We still think that the way the world has been developing is for the better, but it's not. Our social systems are failing, our economic and monetary systems are failing and the world population is growing to an extent that it is no longer sustainable, in any way. Dying at a “normal” age has become one of the biggest taboos; we all have to become 150 years old, no matter what the costs are. We don't accept natural death anymore, we'll be “harvesting” spare-organs. We don't accept infertility, although our society is filled with orphans. New generations will, in time, find themselves lost in a world that has fallen apart, computer and iPhone in their

Society 5.0: We and I

laps, not working anymore, depending on robots telling them what to do, if at all still functioning. They won't have a clue how to survive half a day in nature. (Luijken, 2019) (edited)

Many worry about the next generation. They state that the next generation will be poorer than their parents. The question is if the two generations should or can be compared to each other. The new generation is aware that they are facing new challenges, like climate change, and they are engaged in this fight to reverse climate change. This is a positive indication that they will do well (Samsom, 2019).

As already mentioned, I have my doubts as to whether these categories of generations are relevant at all (Rusman, 2019).

We're in this social and political moment together, regardless of your age. So, let's please end this ridiculous focus on generations? Crass behavior and self-interest can be found in any age. Same with collaboration and empathy. I sometimes like to think we're collectively living in the era of a new Enlightenment and not on the cusp of a quick return to the Gilded Age. But in either case, we're only going to rise above this moment or continue to perish together. It may be obvious, but we need to build shared lines and work towards our common interests without attention to age. The only generation we should be worried about is the one that accounts for all the living and will be. (Hillier, 2019)

Society 5.0: We and I

It is telling that Finland on 8 December 2019 appointed the 34-year-old Sanna Marin to become the country's youngest prime minister ever. The government will be led by five women in total. She is not the only millennial in this group of five. She takes over after her predecessor lost confidence due to the way he handled a strike that lasted two weeks (Virki, 2019). The fact is that millennials and younger generations are thinking about their place and role. This will not be limited to just a few incidents. Based on all these ideas and events, I expect the voting age to drop soon to at least 16 years and maybe even 14 years.

Religion

Humans have always been in search of a higher purpose. Religions generally preach unity, but in practice often divide. Religion often creates a situation of 'right' versus 'wrong', not only in the case of Islam versus Christianity. Likewise, Protestants and other denominations perceive themselves as the chosen ones and in a sense condemn others, even other Christians.

Some quick takeaways:

Christianity dominates in the Americas, Europe and sub-Saharan Africa.

Islam is the top religion in a string of countries from northern Africa through the Middle East to Indonesia.

India stands out as a huge Hindu bloc.

Buddhism is the majority religion in South East Asia and Japan.

China is the country with the world's largest "atheist/agnostic" population as well as worshippers of "other" religions.

In most Western countries (the North) people pray less than before, except for the United States. It seems that the wealthier a country, the smaller the number of people engaging in daily prayer (Diamant, 2019). There is a correlation between religion and economic

Society 5.0: We and I

development (Fahmy, 2018). The richer countries are less religious. The more inclusive countries score low on religion and the more excluding or extracting countries score high. The United States of America is an exception. Although the US is a rich country it is also very religious and many people are excluded from the market.

This trend began after the secularization process in the West that started after the 1960s. As an example: UK secularism is on the rise as more than half of the citizens say they have no religion. Only 1% of young people identify as followers of the Church of England and atheism is growing, a survey finds (Sherwood, 2019). Nevertheless, many are still searching for something.

For many in the West, yoga and other Eastern traditions have become alternatives. The benefits of meditation for the functioning of the brain and the whole body are scientifically proven, and meditation is being introduced in many schools. It is often called “silence” to avoid any religious connotation. In some cases, this silence is used as an alternative to other forms and punishment and the results seem to be very positive (Johnson, 2019).

In the West but also in other places many are influenced by quasi religions such as “positivism”, believing that through the power of the mind and remaining positive they can achieve everything, also material things. This movement is best illustrated by the film *The Secret* and everything around it. The whole movie is summarized with the state-

Society 5.0: We and I

ment “the law of attraction” (Heriot, 2006). Much is based on the classic by Napoleon Hill (1937) *Think and grow rich*.

One of the assumptions of meditation is that everything is connected, that “we” are one. The claim is that meditating not only benefits the meditator but the collective. Maybe this claim is inspired by some schools of philosophy that state that we are one.

Science is confirming that everything is connected. Even economists are starting to come around. At long last, a new branch called “behavioral economics” has begun to observe how humans actually behave, as opposed to how the model says they should. It has found what most of us knew already – namely, that we humans aren’t just calculating machines of self-interest. (Often, we aren’t very good at that, to begin with.) The research has demonstrated social instincts where economists before saw only economic ones. We care about the fairness of transactions, for example, and not just whether we ourselves come out ahead (Rowe, 2019).

Fritjof Capra, a theoretical physicist from Vienna, Austria, stated already in 1975 in his book *The Tao of physics* that there is a parallel between modern physics and Eastern mysticism. Both lead to the same knowledge (Capra, 1975).

There is also criticism of this mindfulness trend. It states that it serves the status quo of neoliberalism. Mindfulness isn’t cruel in and of itself. It’s only cruel when fetishized and attached to inflated prom-

Society 5.0: We and I

ises. It is then, as Berlant points out, that “the object that draws your attachment actively impedes the aim that brought you to it initially.” The cruelty lies in supporting the status quo while using the language of transformation. This is how neoliberal mindfulness promotes an individualistic vision of human flourishing, enticing us to accept things as they are, mindfully enduring the ravages of capitalism. This critique also applies to the law of attraction. It teaches people they can win in the capitalistic system by attracting wealth by developing a certain mindset. Therefore, more and more people are considering mindfulness and other self-help programs to be part of neoliberalism. It is a way making people accept the system, cope with it and not resist it (de Jong, 2019).

Science has also become a religion in a way, especially in the West. There is a belief that through science humans can control life and have become God or equal to God. This is explained by Harari in his book *Homo Deus: A brief history of tomorrow*. He highlights the influence of medical science and artificial intelligence (Harari, 2016). Currently, science is under attack: first, because of the negative influence of neoliberalism on science. This has opened the door for the second attack from populists who state that science is just an opinion and there is such a thing as “alternative facts”. All this leads to phenomena like “fake news” (“Is liberalism really kaput?,” 2019).

The yin-yang is a concept of dualism in ancient Chinese philosophy, describing how seemingly opposite or contrary forces may be com-

Society 5.0: We and I

plementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the natural world, and how they may give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another.

Yin-yang can also be associated with the “Double helix”, the continuous circular development from chaos to order. This is illustrated in Figure 6.

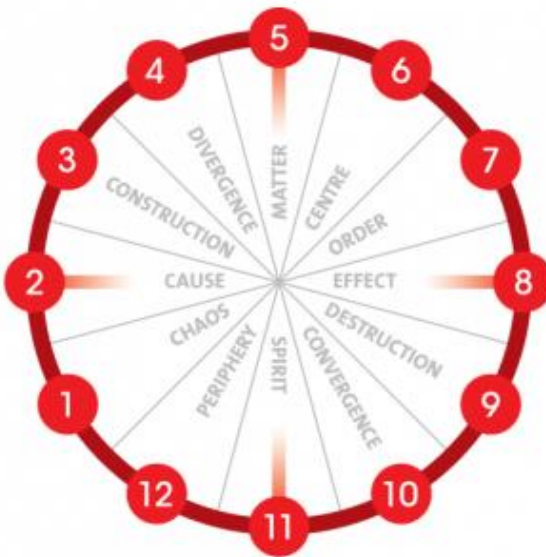


Figure 6: 6 + 1 paradoxes (6 + 1 Paradoxes, 2019)

- Chaos and Order – phase 1 and phase 7
- Cause and Effect – phase 2 and phase 8
- Construction and Destruction – phase 3 and phase 9
- Divergence and Convergence – phase 4 and phase 10

Society 5.0: We and I

- Materialization and Spiritualization – phase 5 and phase 11
- Centre and Periphery – phase 6 and phase 12

Some state that we are in the final stages of capitalism as we know it (yin) and yang is emerging:

I believe our task is to identify the best proposals from many different thinkers and shape them into a coherent alternative. Because no economic system is only an economic system but intrudes into every aspect of our lives, we need many minds from various disciplines – economic, environmental, political, cultural, social and logistical – working collaboratively to create a better way of organising ourselves that meets our needs without destroying our home.

Our choice comes down to this. Do we stop life to allow capitalism to continue, or stop capitalism to allow life to continue? (Monbiot, 2019)

I was surprised to see that my ideas about West and East, yin-yang are not original. In the conclusions of the Shell scenarios published in 2013 I read the following:

The sluggishness of policy reforms described at the outset of Mountains creates social tensions that will eventually find some form of political expression, leading to change. The reforms described at the outset of Oceans create broader con-

Society 5.0: We and I

stituencies with new vested interests that can stifle further reforms. Supply/demand tightness or looseness stimulates market prices and responses that shift the balance of supply and demand. In that sense, one scenario contains the seeds of the other, and vice versa. This feature may be more familiar to those readers with a traditional eastern perspective while the linear quantified features of the scenarios may be more noticeable to eyes educated in western thought patterns. Of course, in a connected world, we are learning the importance of using both lenses. (Shell, 2013)

Because we are all connected, the super-rich are not outside of the social contract, they are also included in the social contract.

The Andrew Carnegies of the world have led us to believe that they are an exception to the social contract; fairness and equality may be fine for the little people, but for masters of industry it is best to leave such quaint ideas by the wayside. But he was as wrong about this as he was about the way that evolution operates. As we move to regulate financial markets it might be wise to consider Darwin's understanding of human society and follow the lead of our ape cousins. By emphasizing cooperation and sympathy with other members of our society we stand a better chance of success than each of us working alone. But if the situation is unfair we should refuse

Society 5.0: We and I

to perpetuate it, even if that means giving up a larger share of the pie for ourselves. (Johnson, 2016)

“We” and “I” areas Yin and Yang. I wish this (We and I) was incorporated into the Double Helix. The extreme of individualism is a wake-up call for us to take care of each other and the whole (planet). There is an awakening going on. Children are demanding we take better care of the planet. Others say that capitalism needs a new storyline.

If you have lived and breathed global capitalism since birth, examining its narrative can feel a bit like a fish analyzing water. But, as Rajan argues, we have to examine it because its flaws and strains are threatening to dry up the entire pond.

It gets tougher every day to deny the human wreckage wrought by capitalism everywhere it exists – the steaming heap of alienation, market failures, inequalities, and rigged outcomes. Proponents of globalization cheer unfettered capitalism as the vehicle for spreading democratic values, freedom, and reciprocal exchange, but in reality, as Rajan notes, entry and participation are not equally open to all. This reality is currently erupting into worldwide unrest and the rise of right-wing populism. Clearly, the official story and what happens on the ground don't match: Lots of people work hard but get little benefit, while plenty who do not work at all get rich.

Society 5.0: We and I

The belief that the magic of markets will result in global solidarity, progress, and wealth for all is sounding a bit like magical thinking.

The official narrative of capitalism is easy to recognize, but the second one is harder to see: You have to piece it together. Marx described capitalism as ideological false consciousness, but Rajan detects something more complex, arguing that if you can show the ethical ideas and the sacred, communal values baked into capitalism's own paradigms and premises, you can begin to hold it accountable for those ideals in the globalized world economy.

For starters, we can acknowledge that human beings are not simply atomistic competitors, but beings that seek to share a common experience and fate. Perhaps that is why the Occupy Movement was such a heady experience for many. The slogan "We are the 99%" was a respite from the oppressive "I" – the painful anomie of individualism that the official story insists upon.

When we speak about this unspoken narrative of capitalism, we can give up pretending that moral and economic values are opposed or somehow separated. We can say clearly, for example, that the financial crisis of 2007-8 was not just a failure of markets, but a failure of morality – for what else can you honestly call it when predatory banks escape justice as

Society 5.0: We and I

ordinary people suffer? We can question who is doing the sacrificing, and for who's [*sic*] good the system is working.

We can also see how the strategic deployment of sacred values and rituals can be used to conceal harmful activities. In Silicon Valley, executives instill eastern values like mindfulness and meditation into workplaces in a way that covers up the exploitation of employees and consumers that many companies are built around. A firm may spy on people to turn a profit, but the espousal of sacred values (recall Google's former "Don't be evil" motto) helps hide the exploitative mission. We can call out executives who ascribe intrinsic value to people, even as they strip away what people need in order to survive.

If we can clearly see the double narrative at work, maybe we can insist that *homo communis* should not be the servant of *homo economicus*, but the master. (Parramore, 2019)

Society 5.0: The Alternative

In 2015 Mikhail Gorbachev, the eighth and last leader of the Soviet Union, already stated that we need a new (economic) model. I find it remarkable that he also referred to the fact that everything is connected:

We badly need a new economic model... We cannot continue living by ignoring environmental problems. The planet is overburdened... We do not have enough freshwater for the people... Billions of people are subject to hunger today. So the new model must consider all these needs. This model must be more human and more nature-oriented... We are all interconnected but we keep acting as though we are completely autonomous. (Gorbachev, 2015)

In January 2020 in Davos Prince Charles used the same words: we need a new economic model (Thompson and Foster 2020).

To get out of this crisis, a new social contract of work is needed:

We need to reimagine the future of work and employment by redefining the employee cycle as well as how workers help deliver our business and create a mechanism that integrates the two.

Society 5.0: We and I

This is the new social contract of work. Jobs become redundant from time to time but people do not need to. It is possible to create employment for life if we are willing to learn, unlearn and relearn our entire lives. (Nair, 2018)

Is the 4IR the answer to the crisis? The Fourth Industrial Revolution is about artificial intelligence, big data, robotics, the Internet of Things, blockchain and cryptocurrency (see Figure 4). However, humans will always be humans. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is about empowering people and not the rise of the machine (Keywell, 2017; Lee, 2019). But this will not happen if 4IR destroys jobs and does not replace them with new ones. Others state that the corporation remains the psychopath. Is 5IR the answer? The Fifth Industrial Revolution pretends to change this and make the corporation more responsive, purpose-driven and inclusive (Gauri & Eerden, 2019).

Society 5.0 is a project that Japan is implementing to move beyond the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In society 5.0 the problems of the 4IR are resolved. The aim of the process is the digital transformation of society and dealing with challenges such as the aging population and other social challenges. The vision is to become a truly human-centered society. It claims to really put people and not technology at the core, contrary to 4IR (Hobson & Burgers, 2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

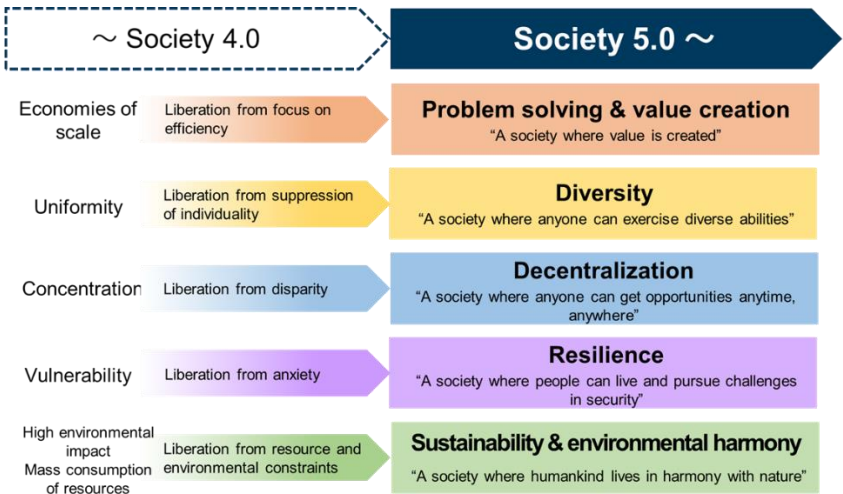


Figure 7: Society 5.0 will liberate us (Nakanishi, 2019)

Up to now, Japan has been the only country talking about society 5.0. It is a society where value is created; where anyone can exercise diverse abilities; where anyone can get opportunities anytime, anywhere; where people can live and pursue challenges in security; where humankind lives in harmony with nature. This is illustrated in Figure 7.

I have decided not to study what the Japanese expect from society 5.0 but to develop my vision of society 5.0. One thing I have noticed by coincidence is that Japan also places happiness at the center of society 5.0 (Harayama, 2019).

According to Dutch Professor Maarten van Rossem, life in society is all about the pursuit of happiness. Happiness is not obtained by applying the propagated happiness formula of happiness gurus. The true

Society 5.0: We and I

formula according to van Rossem entails living a simple life, with no material excesses, shared with family and loved ones. It is also about context. The ten most attractive countries to live in are relatively small countries and have a high average income per capita. The income difference between citizens is not too big. Government services are good and accessible to every citizen. These societies are high-trust societies, meaning that citizens have faith in the democratic process and other institutions. Simply being a rich country is no guarantee of happiness. The United States is proof of this. There is significant poverty, the difference between rich and poor is too big, and a disproportional number of citizens are in jail (Rossem, 2018b, pp. 73-74). The number of homeless in LA is very high and now also in England, the number of homeless people is on the rise (O'Hara, 2019; "A homeless person," 2019). In the Netherlands, the number of homeless people is also rising. In the Netherlands, just like many other countries, there are also working poor. The minimum wage is not enough to live a decent life, leading to stress and unhappiness (Vogels, 2019). Some sources state that in 2019 people in the United States have never been happier. The USA ranks number nineteenth on the ranking of the happiest countries in 2019 (Dobush, 2019).

Joseph Stiglitz also believes that it is best that there be no big difference in incomes in society, and that this is best for sustainable economic development. He also, like van Rossem, is inspired by the Nordic countries such as Sweden and Norway (Engelen, 2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

To achieve happiness everybody needs an income from decent work. John Maynard Keynes in 1930 already envisioned a future with lots of leisure time, arguing that in 2030 we would work 15 hours a week (Bergman, 2017, p. 33). Citizens should be receiving universal basic income. The educational system should be preparing people to handle this available time because people do not have work (Bergman, 2017; Fleming, 2019a; Goede, 2017). Not everybody is convinced that there will not be enough jobs. Others state that many new jobs will emerge and that people need to be (re)trained to fill these jobs (Schinkel, 2019a).

Due to the tsunami of disruptive technology, billions of jobs have been destroyed and many senseless jobs exist. This has changed the problem of unemployment and social welfare. The problem is aggravated by large numbers of immigrants. Universal basic income (UBI), whereby people receive a basic income with no obligations, looks unavoidable.

We are also discussing and experimenting with universal basic income (Bergman, 2017, pp. 55-72). It is not only places like Switzerland and Finland, but also Scotland is trying (Farrell, 2017). The idea is that we must take care of those who are not able to obtain decent work. UBI will overcome extreme insecurity and radical inequality (Nettle, 2018). Inequality has serious psychological consequences, making it difficult for poor people to think clearly and long-term to resolve their

Society 5.0: We and I

problems, sustain and further develop themselves and their family, and grow.

The results of the experiment with UBI in Finland are available. They indicated that people receiving UBI are healthier and function well. The results do not indicate that they join the labor force (Charlton, 2019b). It is not only about UBI but also about having a kind of roof, shelter or house. In Helsinki, Finland they started experimenting with offering the homeless a sort of small house (Henley, 2019).

It is not only Finland, but such an experiment was also carried out in California. Stockton, California, is distributing \$500 monthly stipends to the city's poorest families as part of a basic-income trial. The city just released results from the last eight months of that program: Most participants spent the money on food and clothing. Critics of basic income suggest that cash stipends reduce the incentive for people to find jobs. (Bendix, 2019a; Foster, 2019).

In the Netherlands, however, at the end of 2019, the discussion is moving away from UBI in the direction of making people who are receiving unemployment benefits either look for work, accept any job, or enter a training program preparing them for work. The argument is that it is beneficial for the unemployed to stay involved with other people and be an active member of society ("ledere bijstandsgerechtigde," 2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

The biggest advocates for UBI are the richest individuals on Earth. Mark Zuckerberg, referring to the billionaires, declared, “No one deserves to have that much money.” Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders presented audacious propositions to tax billionaires 97.5% (Miller & Davison, 2019). The Democratic representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and her colleagues plan a bill to boost the top individual tax rate to 59% in 2020 (Davison, 2019a). This is in the context of the presidential election campaign in 2020 in October 2019 (Yurieff, 2019).

Many economists, in general, are still obsessed with creating more jobs and even senseless jobs. Society creates these senseless jobs to distribute income. UBI is an alternative to this form of income distribution, and it will have no negative influences on the economy or society (Gray, 2017). Nevertheless, UBI remains controversial.

This all is the effect of ideas evolved after the development of the machine (robot), which have to do with the elimination of extreme poverty by granting universal basic income to all, as an alternative to the social security system. The assumptions of the social system no longer apply: employment is no longer the norm and unemployment is not a temporary situation. Some people might remain out of the production process permanently. Due to these developments, the economy has grown but many remain excluded and poor, even among those in employment. UBI must correct this wealth paradox: the GDP is high, but a big group is poor (Bergman, 2017).

Society 5.0: We and I

At first glance, some oppose the idea of UBI. If we look closer, however, it becomes apparent that they do not oppose UBI as such but rather the way UBI is being proposed by the rich, rather than as a result of a dynamic democratic process, where the underclass demands better conditions. Others remain skeptical as to whether UBI can be financed:

By contrast, the modern social welfare state that has served developed countries so well was not handed down by tycoons and politicians. It aimed to provide both social insurance and opportunities to people. And it was the result of democratic politics. Ordinary people made demands, complained, protested, and got involved in policymaking, and the political system responded. The founding document of the British welfare state, the World War II-era Beveridge Report, was as much a response to political demands as to economic hardship. It sought to protect the disadvantaged and create opportunities while encouraging civic engagement.

Many current social problems are rooted in our neglect of the democratic process. The solution isn't to dribble out enough crumbs to keep people at home, distracted, and otherwise pacified. Rather, we need to rejuvenate democratic politics, boost civic involvement, and seek collective solutions. Only with a mobilized, politically active society can we build the institutions we need for shared prosperity in the future,

Society 5.0: We and I

while protecting the most disadvantaged among us. (Acemoglu, 2019)

How do we measure progress? More and more scholars state that GDP is no longer an appropriate measurement for progress and alternative indicators are being coined. Life is about the pursuit of happiness, remember?

The old way of measuring – gross domestic product – was good at measuring cars, how many houses we build, certain other things. But it's getting farther and farther from what we really think of as economic progress.

Of course, there are other issues like equality. Economic welfare depends not just on the total income the society has but how it's distributed. We can't get all this in one measure, but we could have better measures of what we have in society. We certainly should use measures of how equally it's distributed more in determining policy. (Rogoff & Chainey, 2019)

Roy states:

Depending on GDP as a measure of success in the Fourth Industrial Revolution will adversely affect policy decisions because technology as a product has a deflationary effect. Instead of GDP, we should measure the health of our economy by what MIT calls GDP-B, where B estimates the benefits we obtain from digital goods and services. Analysts can calculate

Society 5.0: We and I

the value of B by determining how much money people are willing to pay to use zero-price digital services (such as Wikipedia, Instagram or Google Maps). (Roy, 2019)

This is not enough. The new measurements should try to measure well-being. Bhutan has created the Happiness Index. To increase the happiness the government recently increased the wages of teachers and healthcare workers, as part of an attempt to further reduce inequality (Wood, 2019b).

New Zealand is now also becoming more concerned about the kindness, empathy, and well-being of its citizens and introduced its first well-being budget (Charlton, 2019a). In November 2019 Iceland also joined the movement.

Iceland's prime minister has urged governments to adopt green and family-friendly priorities, instead of just focusing on economic growth figures.

Katrin Jakobsdottir has teamed up with Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and New Zealand's PM Jacinda Ardern to promote a "well-being" agenda.

Ms. Jakobsdottir called for "an alternative future based on well-being and inclusive growth."

She said new social indicators were needed besides traditional GDP data.

Society 5.0: We and I

Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz is among several economists arguing that gross domestic product – measuring a country’s production in goods and services – fails to capture the impact of climate change, inequality, digital services and other phenomena shaping modern societies. (“Iceland puts well-being,” 2019)

Happiness is about the economic dignity of individuals in society, according to Gene Sperling, former National Economic Adviser and Director of the National Economic Council for both President Obama (2011–2014) and President Clinton (1997–2001) (Barnett, 2019).

The lack of a noble cause, or a “north star” as he puts it, means the focus is too often on “Debates over political trends, warring policy camps, economic metrics, and winning economic strategies” instead. And they become, “the life-blood of our national political and economic dialogue.” He [Gene Sperling] warns, “They can also come at a cost: It becomes too easy for too many of us to dig in on specific policies and strategies as if they were ends in themselves. Having a clear view of what our end goal for human well-being is – and keeping it front and center – can help all of us be open to new evidence and committed to continually evaluating what works best to achieve economic dignity for all.” (Barnett, 2019)

Society 5.0: We and I

The most popular way to measure happiness is the Happiness Index (figure 8). The Happiness Index is a development philosophy as well as an index that is used to measure the collective happiness in a nation. It includes parameters such as Housing, Income, Work, Community, Civic Engagement, Education, Environment, Health, Life Satisfaction, Safety, and Life-Work balance.

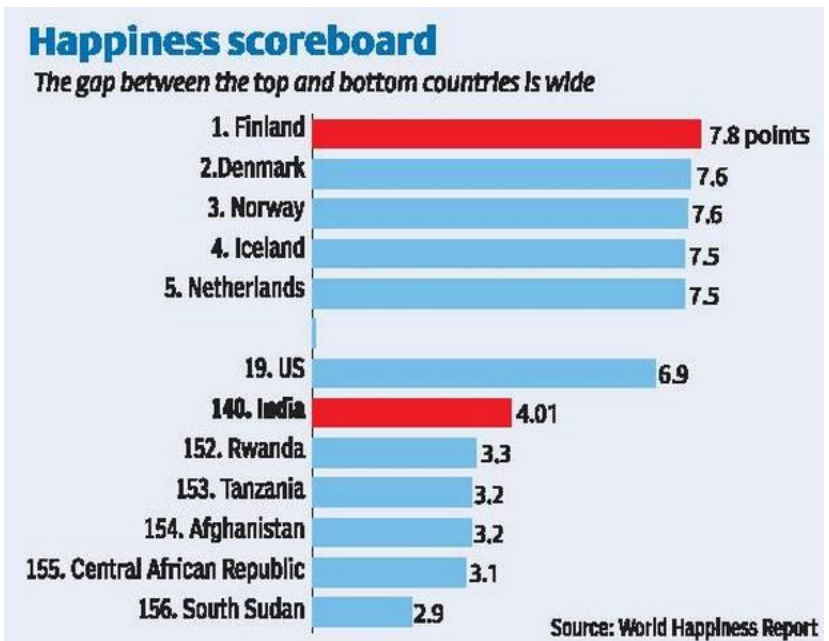


Figure 8: Happiness Index 2019 (“Finland ranked happiest,” 2019)

The OECD has developed the well-being framework (Figure 9). It is about current well-being and future well-being. Current well-being is composed of material conditions on the one side and quality of life on

Society 5.0: We and I

the other side. The material conditions are income and wealth; jobs and earnings; housing. Quality of life is about: health status; work-life balance; educations and skills; social connections; civic engagement and governance; environmental quality; personal security; subjective well-being.

It is not only about current well-being but also about resources for future well-being: natural capital; economic capital; human capital; social capital.

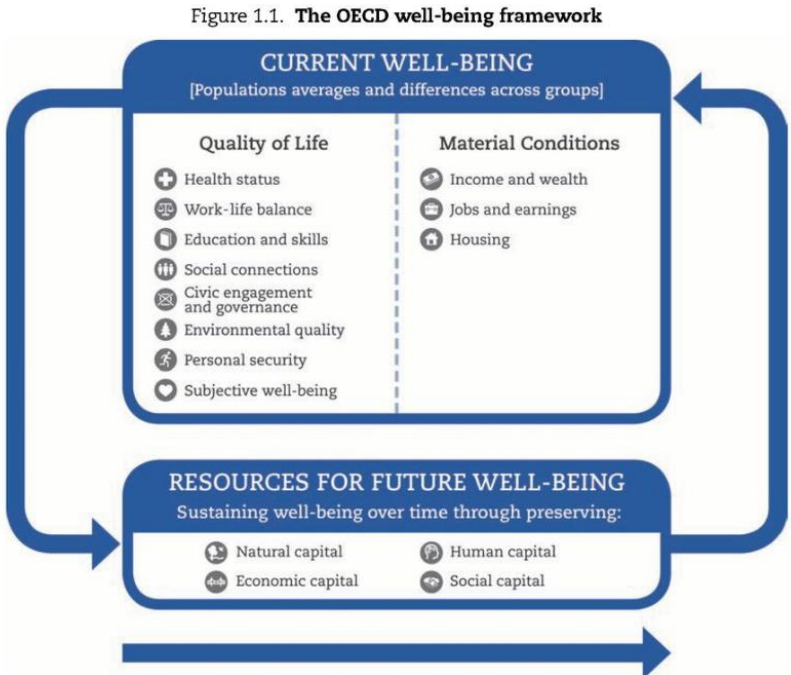


Figure 9: The OECD well-being framework (Button, 2019; Dupuis, 2019; Stiglitz, 2018)

Society 5.0: We and I

Some formulate the solution of the crisis in terms of growing the middle class. This class is indispensable to keep capitalism growing, as they represent the purchasing power in the market (Hanauer & Rolf, 2017). In other words, they do not question the capitalist model. I hoped the argument was to keep the differences between incomes small, to keep inequality within certain limits.

Others believe that a global governance system will solve the crisis. Global governance has become a necessity because the issues we are facing are global. Issues like: climate change, poverty, migration. The UN is expected to become the global governance institution.

In 2015, 70 years after their original rights-based document, the UN took a giant step towards the global government that was only hinted at in their first organizing document. They issued a document entitled “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” This document has 91 numbered sections of the UN’s program for world government. The UDHR is only referenced once in the entire document in Article 19. Unlike the original “mother document” that was under 1900 words, this document is 14,883 words. The 91 items are addressing issues under the five headings of People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership. Additionally, the document provides 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to improve life on the planet. (Ludwig, 2018)

Society 5.0: We and I

However, there is a threat that global governance might fall into the hands of autocratic leaders of countries like China, Russia, and Iran (“VN mag niet,” 2019). Even countries like the United States of America and India are becoming less democratic.

Many depict the future as having less – less quality, less wealth. Mommers’ narrative is different. He formulates the future in terms of more, better and abundance (Mommers, 2019).

Some are experimenting. For example, people are looking for alternative ways to produce food, like growing food in the woods (Dinther, 2019; Goede, 2018) or an urban setting.

An alternative to the neoliberal market is not the government but everything between the market and government. Some call it civil society, others call it non-governmental organizations (Figure 2: The Three Domains). They envision a world where there are no for-profit organizations but all organizations are not-for-profit and how this will contribute to sustainable development (Hinton, 2019).

According to Klomp and Maarhuis (2018), part of the alternative to the current form of the neoliberal society is a meaningful economy (or ethical economy), meaning that businesses should pursue a purpose⁹

⁹ Maarten van Rossum also states that living purposefully is part of the formula of happiness for individuals (Rossem, 2018, p. 27).

Society 5.0: We and I

and/or seek to resolve a problem society is facing.¹⁰ The business model is not to create societal problems but to resolve these and still earn a living. We are talking about being mission-driven. It is the evolution from the agriculture economy, to the industrial economy, to the knowledge economy, to the meaningful economy. In other terms: from food and security, to respect and love, to esthetics and love, to self-realization. The meaning economy is about the following principles: reintroducing conscience in the economy; always putting the interests of community above the interest of an individual; never allowing one to win at the expense of another; produce to make the world a better place and to make money if possible; treating money as a means and not a goal; focusing on the long term and not the short term; not relying on the market for redistribution but actively including as many as possible; pursuing meaningful growth and not growth for the sake of growth (Klomp & Maarhuis, 2018).

The dropping of the shareholders as the first stakeholder by the CEOs in the United States in August 2019 is amazingly in sync with the statement above (Goodley & Neate, 2019). We will get to this later in this book. The World Economic Forum calls it “stakeholder capitalism” replacing “shareholder capitalism” (Schwab, 2019).

Generally speaking, we have three models to choose from. The first is “shareholder capitalism”, embraced by most

¹⁰ Up to now our job determined our identity. At the rate that jobs are lost, our mental well-being is threatened (Eaton, 2018).

Society 5.0: We and I

Western corporations, which holds that a corporation's primary goal should be to maximize its profits. The second model is "state capitalism", which entrusts the government with setting the direction of the economy, and has risen to prominence in many emerging markets, not least China.

But, compared to these two options, the third has the most to recommend it. "Stakeholder capitalism", a model I first proposed a half-century ago, positions private corporations as trustees of society, and is clearly the best response to today's social and environmental challenges. (Schwab, 2019)

Schwab (2019) believes that there is momentum for stakeholder capitalism. This is the effect of Greta Thunberg and the mindset of the Millennials and Generation Z, and the result of self-reflection of executives on shareholder capitalism. He believes that new performance measures for companies are in the making to support shareholder capitalism. These measures of "shared value creation" should include "environmental, social, and governance" (ESG) goals as a complement to standard financial metrics. Schwab has a somewhat naïve expectation that an initiative to develop a new standard along these lines is already underway, with support from the "Big Four" accounting firms and led by the chairman of the International Business Council, Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan. It is naïve because these are some of the biggest stakeholders of the shareholder capitalism

Society 5.0: We and I

What are other alternatives besides stakeholder capitalism? According to Klomp and Maarhuis, **Capitalism** is based on three pillars: individualism, the market, and private property. **Communism** is based on: collectivism, the state and public property. **Commonism** or the **meaningful economy** is based on the Earth as collective possession, nature as the dominant power, and collective property.

This third way is about the ecosystem of the Earth. Everybody is subordinated to the ecosystem of the Earth.

The circular economy is an adaptation of capitalism and not part of the third way. It is an adjustment of capitalism. It is based on three principles: optimal usage of natural resources, substitute fossil resources for renewable resources, innovative production methods to be circular.

The third way is about “Economy for the Common Good”, as coined by Christian Felber. The cooperative association (not-for-profit) is the main actor. The members are owners, supervisors, and participants. All activities take place in the form of a cooperative. All members are equal and collaboration is central.

There is another interpretation of a cooperative. A cooperative is a corporation where the workers are shareholders. Some state that they do not behave differently from conventional companies in the market. They too aim to maximize profit. They are not more altruistic, honest or social responsible than corporations. The difference is the way they

Society 5.0: We and I

are organized and who obtains the benefits. The average income of the worker could rise by approximately 15%. Inequality is further reduced because the cooperatives might pay executives less. The organizational structure might be flatter, making the worker feel less like hired labor. This leads to higher morale and therefore higher productivity. This last claim is not totally backed up by empirical studies. Cooperatives are also less prone to asset-stripping by short-term investors. Cooperatives seem to fuse the best of capitalism and socialism. So why are they uncommon? Because banks and lenders are generally unwilling to lend money to new companies with little collateral and the lack of a proven track record. Another point is that high performers tend to leave because of the egalitarian pay structure. Nevertheless, cooperatives may in the long run eventually contribute to a more egalitarian economy and society (Smith, 2019b).

Another perspective on the third way is the idea of the “doughnut economy”, as coined by Kate Raworth. There is a social foundation and an ecological ceiling. The essence is that the idea of perpetual economic growth is impossible. Everybody has the right to decent social conditions and no one is allowed to misuse the Earth for personal gain.

The doughnut economy is very similar to the regenerative economy. This school states that the ecology is leading, and not the economy. It is about restoring, living in harmony with, and being part of nature.

Society 5.0: We and I

There is also a Buddhist perspective. It is all about happiness as the goal of the economy. It is not about accumulation but sufficiency and interdependence.

All the above can be summarized in a shift from capitalism to commonism (Figures 10 and 11):

Society 5.0: We and I

Capitalism	Commonism
Economy as a goal	Economy as a means
Economy	Ecology
Money	Happiness
Growth	Blossom
Monetary profit	Community progress
Position	Stewardship
Competition	Collaboration
Self-interest	General interest
Externalization of social and ecological cost	Integrating social and ecological cost

Figure 10: The shift from capitalism to commonism (Klomp & Maarhuis, 2018, p. 47)

It is about a shift in society from the current state to a future desired state:

Current state	Future state
Prosperity	Well-being
Monetary	Human
Corporation	Cooperative association
Vertical and rigid	Horizontal and fluid
Centralized	Decentralized
Top-down	Bottom-up
International	Local

Figure 11: The shift in society (Klomp & Maarhuis, 2018, p. 185)

Klomp and Maarhuis (2018) believe in the United Nations' sustainable development goals (Figure 12) and believe that these goals are

Society 5.0: We and I

(business) opportunities. Working towards progress on reaching a sustainable goal is a business model. To become successful, an entrepreneur should contribute to solving a development goal.



Figure 12: Sustainable development goals (Steiner, 2019)

Society 5.0 is about creating a society of altruistic individuals seeking happiness or well-being, not just for oneself. This altruistic society is superior to society formed by selfish people.

You might think that it's a stretch to compare a social insect colony to a single organism, a multi-cellular organism to a society, or either one to human societies – but you'd be wrong on all counts. They are meaningfully compared to each other by Multilevel Selection (MLS) Theory, which partitions natural selection into within- and between-group compo-

Society 5.0: We and I

nents. As a basic matter of tradeoffs, traits that maximize the relative fitness of individuals within groups seldom maximize the fitness of groups, relative to other groups in a multi-group population. The general rule is: Adaptation at any level of a multi-tier social hierarchy requires a process of selection at that level and tends to be undermined by selection at lower levels. Or, as another Wilson (Edward O.) and I put it in a 2007 article, “Selfishness beats altruism within groups, altruistic groups beat selfish groups. Everything else is commentary.” (Wilson, 2016)

There are thinkers and people in the field who are working with volunteers. They assume that due to the 4IR many will be without a paying job. These people will be available for volunteer work to have a meaningful life. The idea is to reward these people with some kind of points system. They can use these points to obtain goods and services from others, including the corporation. These ideas are not mainstream yet.

Thinking about society 5.0 is thinking about post-neoliberalism. Post-neoliberalism is not clearly defined. This will be a power-driven process against the background of the current historical concrete conditions (Brand, 2016). All the alternatives talk about: more government, more public investments, more insurance, less fossil oil, less meat, and less corruption. It is about implementing new rules and new fiscal regulations. And awareness, anger, and activism by the people.

Society 5.0: We and I

There is no denying change, not even by the politicians in the pockets of corporations (Engelen, 2019).

In an earlier publication, I have denominated the post-knowledge society with the term the “wise” or “sage” society. It is not about scientific knowledge alone but also, among others, about the wisdom regarding if and how to apply the technology (Goede, 2011). Society will change because our perception of humans is changing. We no longer consider humans intrinsically bad but essentially good (Bregman, 2019).

How Do We Get There?

Fletcher (2013) quotes Michael Taussig's publication from 1998 to claim, "Truly, it is easier ... to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism." I understand why they state this. Some point out that the next financial crisis is near and that not much has changed since the crisis of 2008 (Elliott, 2019). The causes were not handled. Maybe this crisis might lead to global cooperation to solve the huge problems just like other crises over the last 10,000 years (Murray, 2016). Or maybe the climate change crisis will lead to global cooperation.

Others state that economy is a failing science that we should re-think. "All [economic] models use a few simplifying assumptions, but those underpinning mainstream economics more often distort and detach from reality" (Simms, 2019). This opinion about economists is gaining ground (Tieleman, 2019a). More people are demanding a new economic science and wonder why we have listened for so long to economists and their theories that have led to inequality (Admati, 2019; Appelbaum, 2019; Hanauer, 2020). According to Admati (2019), by the second half of the 20th century, when modern finance arose as part of the economy, it was no longer a holistic science as in the days of thinkers like Adam Smith. It was about models and these have unrealistic and sometimes stylized assumptions. There is a bias toward pro-

Society 5.0: We and I

business and pro-finance and a blindness towards issues like corporate fraud and political forces (Admati, 2019). Maybe the crisis will lead to a new economic science to solve it:

Since the 2008 financial crisis, economic orthodoxies have been collapsing left and right. Under conditions of low unemployment, elusive inflation, weak productivity growth, and high profitability, economists in advanced economies may need to go back to the drawing board. (O'Neill, 2019)

The issue is the neoliberal theory:

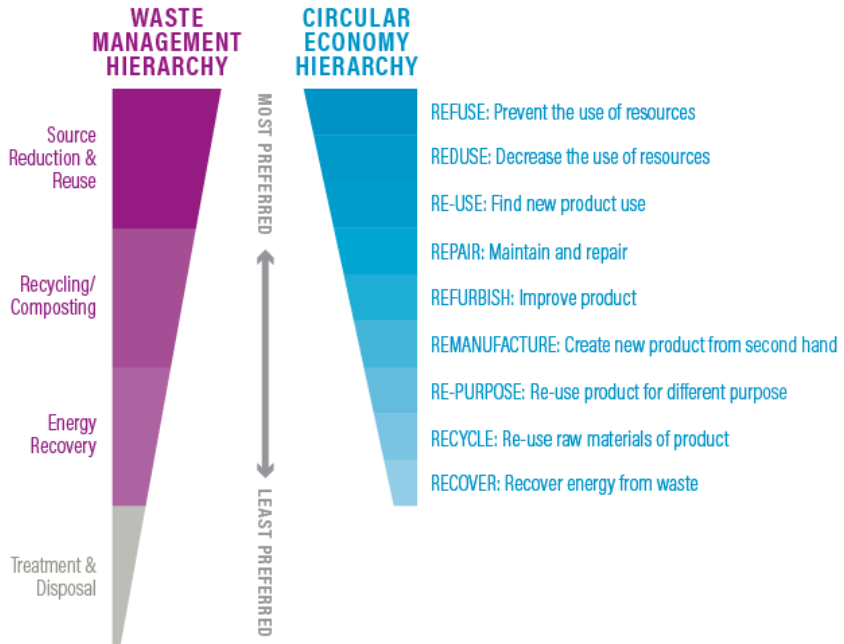
To conclude, the global financial crisis has prompted reflections on what might follow neoliberalism, i.e., alternative scenarios for post-neoliberalism. These were first seriously debated in Latin America and are now being raised elsewhere. Important practical experiments are being conducted at national and regional level in Latin America, as leftwing parties have been elected to power, and, at the local and urban scale, in many other sites around the world (but, for a critical evaluation, see Goldstein 2012). Nonetheless, even if neoliberalism is losing legitimacy, research on its impact should also include the uneven impact of failure. It will prove hard to reverse the legacies of roll-back, roll-forward, and blowback neoliberalism on a world scale and/or to tame it through new flanking and supporting mechanisms. Indeed, as Peck and Theodore (2012) indicate, neoliberalism often “fails forward...” (Jessop, 2013)

Society 5.0: We and I

“We” (society 5.0) is emerging in several forms. In the “sharing economy” we share property. We no longer need to own a car. Not only is public transportation an option but we also share the ownership and usage of a car or other vehicle. This is just one example. It is not about owing something but having access to one when we need it (Gansky, 2010).

In the circular economy, we share and re-use material to save the planet. The aim is to minimize waste (Raworth, 2018). It is not about recycling (Holden, 2019). That is business as usual (Lemille, 2019). The 10 R Model (Figure 13) takes it a step further. It is about: refuse, reduce, redesign, re-use, repair, refurbish, remanufacture, repurpose, recycle and recover (“De Hoornse raadsleden,” 2019; Stanislaus, 2019).

We have to shift our thinking from a Waste Management Hierarchy to a Circular Economy Hierarchy



Source: Centre of Expertise on Resources

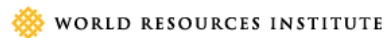


Figure 13: The 10 Rs (Stanislaus, 2019)

Some misguidedly believe that philanthrocapitalism is an important step in the direction of the solution of the crisis but it is not (McGoey, 2016; Rogers, 2019). An example is a philanthropist who donates one billion to protect 30% of the planet by 2030 (Vibes, 2019). Another

Society 5.0: We and I

example is Amazon building a shelter for the homeless (Bendix, 2019b). On the other hand, Amazon is one of the biggest tax evaders in the world.

What's missing in the peppy enthusiasm of today's philanthrocapitalists is sufficient recognition of the historical struggles over private profits and public gain that have shaped labour relations at least since Mandeville's day. When they acknowledge history, which isn't often, today's philanthrocapitalists praise a bastardized version of early political economy, one that ignores the emphasis that Mandeville and later Adam Smith placed on the need for government regulation.

Private enterprise may reap public benefits. But only if state actors, through "dexterous Management," are able to steward wealth in a way that guarantees that public interests are served as well as private ones. Mandeville, the original, unsung hero of philanthrocapitalism, was actually a champion of powerful, interventionist governments. No wonder today's philanthrocapitalists tend to ignore him. (McGoey, 2016)

One of the fierce critics of the super-rich posing themselves as the saviors of the world is *Winners Take All* by Anand Giridharadas. He states that philanthrocapitalism is hypocrisy (Chakraborty, 2019). It is best that the rich pay higher taxes and that these be used to finance UBI.

Society 5.0: We and I

Countries like Canada, Norway, and Sweden are fighting back against pollution and climate change (Scherer, 2019; “Norway recycles,” 2019). The UK has set a target date of 2050 to reach zero emissions (Twidale, 2019). Not only countries are fighting back, but also NGOs. One example is the Dutch project aiming to clean up plastic between San Francisco and Hawaii (“Plasticvanger van Ocean Cleanup,” 2019). In the Netherlands, there are discussions of reducing the maximum driving speed limit from 130 kilometers per hour to 100 kilometers per hour, and similar ideas are being discussed in Germany. In England, they are considering to ban SUVs from cities because they pollute more than smaller cars. The European Union wants to ban all fossil-fuel fueled cars by the year 2030 (“EU-voorstel,” 2019).

Norway is paying Gabon to preserve the rainforest to mitigate the effects of climate change (Dahir, 2019). In November 2019 New Zealand passed a historic zero carbon bill with near unanimous bipartisan support (Mazengarb, 2019).

There are indications that eating less meat might have a positive impact on reversing climate change (“Switching to plant-based protein,” 2018). Some believe that farming can absorb CO₂ by 2050, as more people go vegan (Harvey, 2019b).

Despite the above efforts, however, most countries’ plans are inadequate (Carrington, 2019b).

Society 5.0: We and I

The fact that such significant oil reserves have been discovered in places like Guyana, Suriname, and Norway presents a danger to the effort to reduce the usage of fossil oil to fight back against climate change (Krauss, 2019). Therefore, we need to save the world. We need peace. Some believe that the market and corporation must evolve (“50 climate leaders,” 2019):

At the end of the day, the solutions to climate change must come from the market and more specifically, from business. The market is the most powerful institution on Earth, and business is the most powerful entity within it. Business makes the goods and services we rely upon: the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the forms of mobility we use and the buildings we live and work in.

Businesses can transcend national boundaries and possess resources that exceed that of many countries. You can lament that fact, but it is a fact. If business does not lead the way toward solutions for a carbon-neutral world, there will be no solutions.

Capitalism can, indeed it must, evolve to address our current climate crisis. This cannot happen through either wiping clean the institutions that presently exist or relying on the benevolence of a laissez faire market. It will require thoughtful leaders creating a thoughtfully structured market. (Hoffman, 2016)

Society 5.0: We and I

In her inaugural speech as a professor in Accounting & Sustainability at the Open Universiteit, Karen Maas stated that the corporation must evolve from compliance to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), to Shared Value, to impact. CSR is about “doing no harm”. That is not good enough. Shared value is when the organization is aiming for a win-win situation but still puts financial parameters first. Impact is about the corporation “doing good”, letting go of the financial indicators, explicitly delivering a positive contribution to society based on the unique position and strength of the corporation. According to Maas, a corporation must reach all four levels. According to her, this can be stimulated by implementing additional new performance measures beyond financial performance measurements (Maas, 2019).

Some experts state that using nuclear power is part of the solution. This will reduce the use of fossil fuel. They state that those who are not willing to consider nuclear power have not understood the crisis and urgency. They state that technology has evolved and that nuclear power is safe. The question is whether this is true and if there is a solution for nuclear waste (Martèl, 2019).

They say it is all about controlling the giants. Noels prescribes ten steps to achieve this objective:

1. Fewer interventions by central banks
2. No too big to fail; no bailouts of giant corporations

Society 5.0: We and I

3. Subsidiarity; decentralize where possible in corporations and all sorts of organizations
4. Close back doors that enable tax evasion by corporations. Corporations and small and medium enterprises should pay the same taxes. Stiglitz (2019b) also stated that tax evasion by corporations should not be tolerated any longer
5. Strict anti-trust laws and the enforcement of these laws
6. Prohibition of take-overs by big corporations to avoid concentration
7. A CO₂-tax on international transportation to include these costs
8. Social rules, labor laws to protect children and workers are poor countries
9. Cheaters should be banned for a long time from the game of the global economy
10. There should be more distance between players (corporations), arbiters (central banks) and those who make the rules (politicians). (Noels, 2019, pp. 191-207)

Noels does not explain how these ten steps will be implemented. The powers that be will not give this power up freely. He only remarks that during a crisis of the system there will be an opportunity to implement these steps. But when? By whom? And how?

Society 5.0: We and I

Noels, despite all his criticism of the giant corporations and government, still believes in capitalism and the markets. However, he believes that it must be restructured. We need to move away from our obsession with (economic) growth and understand that it is about sustainability. The economy is about people and how they interact (Noels, 2019, pp. 139-140). Growth should not be at the expense of the next generation and the planet.

According to Noels, the giants are zombies; they do not innovate to compete. We should eliminate these. The alternative is to become smaller, slower and more humane; that is the way towards a sustainable global economy, according to Noels. It is about decentralization and scaling down and putting people first. In such a system people have more participation and hence the system is more democratic.

Gigantism can be reversed, according to Noels. The change should start at the bottom. We should also deglobalize, by which he means we should reduce the global integration. Globalization benefits only a small global elite at the expense of the masses.

Herman Tjeenk Willink, Minister of State of the Netherlands, in his book *Groter denken, kleiner doen; Een oproep* (Think big, act small: a call) agrees with the diagnosis of gigantism (Tjeenk Willink, 2019). He states that today's Dutch government does not reflect sufficiently deeply on fundamental issues such as climate change, migration, polarization in society, and growing inequality (Tjeenk Willink, 2019, p. 11). This is the result of moving most "production" away from the

Society 5.0: We and I

government and the civil society by introducing business management techniques into government and civil society. This eroded solidarity and the most fragile citizens became victims. The cohesion and interconnectedness (we) needed to hold a free society together is lost. The diverse society is now only kept together by the shared democratic rule of law. How well do we take care of the democratic rule of law? (Tjeenk Willink, 2019, pp. 15-16).

According to Tjeenk Willink it was a mistake to consider government as a corporation striving for profit by improving effectiveness and efficiency. It was a mistake to consider citizens as customers. This has led to the opposite: the citizen is confronted with more rules and regulations, forms, control, and higher costs, instead of better performance. The common interest has faded out of sight. Why was this not opposed? Why did nobody speak up against this? A dialog without contradiction is a monolog! A possible explanation is that the Dutch do not have a culture of debate but a culture of seeking consensus by leaders of the pillars (zuilen)¹¹. When these pillars crumbled in the 1960s, they were not replaced by debate or something else.

¹¹ Pillarisation (from the Dutch: *verzuiling*) is the politico-denominational segregation of a society, or the separation of a society into groups by religion and associated political beliefs. These societies were (and in some areas, still are) "vertically" divided into two or more groups known as pillars (Dutch: *zuilen*). The best-

Society 5.0: We and I

Politics is all about deciding who gets what and when. It is about deciding how the common interest is best served. It is about “We”. It is the opposite of the market. The market is individualistic and has short-term objectives. It is about uniformity and not about diversity because it is about quantity and not quality. After all, its objectives are financial and economic and not social and cultural (Tjeenk Willink, 2019, p. 111). We must understand that political democracy cannot work without social democracy (Tjeenk Willink, 2019, p. 114).

Some believe that corporations will change by themselves. Sijbesma, the CEO of DSM, states that great influence comes with great responsibility. Corporations cannot ignore the big problems – the crisis. Corporations cannot call themselves successful in a world that fails to solve problems or prevent problems (Goodley & Neate, 2019; Kreling, 2019).

However, some believe that corporations will evolve and develop a moral conscience:

But even firms and markets are unavoidably infused with moral considerations. These may be countered or developed by example or circumstance. If policy-makers ignore our moral dispositions and concentrate on self-interest alone, then they will threaten the very fabric of a modern market econo-

known examples of this have historically occurred in the Netherlands and Belgium. (Wikipedia)

Society 5.0: We and I

my. The acknowledgement of moral motivation opens a large agenda for economists. It is highly relevant for the theory of the firm. Morality cannot be reduced to individual preferences or altruism. Economic policy is not just about maximizing satisfaction while ensuring that no-one's utility is decreased; it should be about guiding and enhancing our moral dispositions. Especially from an evolutionary perspective, and even in the competitive world of modern business, there is no excuse for ignoring the evolution of moral systems and the moral motivations of economic agents. (Hodgson, 2016)

In 2019 a group of CEOs in the US signed a declaration that states they will not primarily seek profit.

The bosses of 181 of the US's biggest companies have changed the official definition of "the purpose of a corporation" from making the most money possible for shareholders to "improving our society" by also looking out for employees, caring for the environment and dealing ethically. (Goodley & Neate, 2019)

The five new principles at a glance are:

- Delivering value to our customers
- Investing in our employees. This starts with compensating them fairly. We foster diversity and inclusion, dignity and respect

Society 5.0: We and I

- Dealing fairly and ethically with our suppliers
- Protecting the environment by embracing sustainable practices
- Generating long-term value for shareholders. (Goodley & Neate, 2019)

This group of authors also does not explain why they think that corporations will start to behave differently. Maybe the citizens and consumers will force corporations to change (Hertz, 2001). An example: In the Netherlands, consumers are switching to green banks; banks that invest in sustainable energy and so on (Tieleman, 2019b). The European Investment Bank is to phase out fossil-fuel financing. The EU's lending arm will become the first "climate bank" by ending the financing of oil, gas and coal projects after 2021 (Ambrose & Henley, 2019).

Some think that the implementation of blockchain technology will make the corporation and other types of organizations more transparent and make them behave differently and that this will fundamentally change capitalism (Tapscott, 2018, p. 109). However, blockchain is not a given for the future. It is a possibility or a promise. If it is resisted it might never come. At the moment applications like Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies have momentum and that makes people optimistic about the future of this technology (Tapscott, 2018, p. 113).

Blockchain is based on seven principles:

Society 5.0: We and I

1. Network integrity
2. Distributed power
3. Value creation as drive
4. Security
5. Privacy
6. Protection of rights
7. Inclusion. (Tapscott, 2018, pp. 117-143)

According to Tapscott blockchain will transform the corporation in the following way:

- Managers will be replaced by management
- The corporation will be decentralized
- Smart contract and multi-signature
- Trust and collaboration

Stiglitz believes that what he calls “progressive capitalism” is the 5.0 answer to the current crisis. It is not only about corporations:

There is no magic bullet that can reverse the damage done by decades of neoliberalism. But a comprehensive agenda along the lines sketched above absolutely can. Much will depend on whether reformers are as resolute in combating problems like excessive market power and inequality as the private sector is in creating them.

Society 5.0: We and I

A comprehensive agenda must focus on education, research, and the other true sources of wealth. It must protect the environment and fight climate change with the same vigilance as the Green New Dealers in the US and Extinction Rebellion in the United Kingdom. And it must provide public programs to ensure that no citizen is denied the basic requisites of a decent life. These include economic security, access to work and a living wage, health care and adequate housing, a secure retirement, and a quality education for one's children.

This agenda is eminently affordable; in fact, we cannot afford not to enact it. The alternatives offered by nationalists and neoliberals would guarantee more stagnation, inequality, environmental degradation, and political acrimony, potentially leading to outcomes we do not even want to imagine (Stiglitz, 2019; "If capitalism is broken," 2019)

Progressive capitalism is not an oxymoron. Rather, it is the most viable and vibrant alternative to an ideology that has failed. As such, it represents an alternative for escaping our current economic and political malaise. Stiglitz is also a reformist of capitalism, neoliberalism and the corporation. In a way, the ideas of Stiglitz and others go back to the ideas of Maynard Keynes. It is about government intervention to turn the crisis around (Mann, 2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

It is indeed the question of whether we are entering the post-neoliberal era. Many state that neoliberalism is adapting based on its failures and criticisms of it (Grzanka, Mann, & Elliott, 2016; Springer, 2015).

Some state that neoliberalism has entered a zombie phase:

[W]e can define a zombie with the following elements:

It's dead. Yet it's still walking.

It's dangerous. It can kill people, presumably through cannibalism.

It lacks intentional thought or long-term planning. It acts compulsively.

It continues to decay. It's not capable of getting better or being reformed. It just has to be killed. (Knight, 2012)

Beck (2018) states that the world will not change, transform or something else, but undergo a metamorphosis. This is because all institutions will fail and we cannot handle climate change. The only perspective that can address these issues is the cosmopolitan perspective. My understanding of his concepts of "metamorphosis" and "cosmopolitanism" remain intuitive. Beck states that technology, especially medical technology, has created the situation in which humans feel like they are God, intervening in matters of life and death. Climate change is forcing humanity to look at things from a cosmopolitan per-

Society 5.0: We and I

spective. Climate change can only be handled from a global perspective, through global governance. The question is whether democratic institutions can handle climate change or whether a takeover by technocrats is inevitable. Another issue that must be dealt with is the concentration of wealth. What are we to do about the growing levels of inequity in the world? (Beck, 2018).

Beck (2018) is not the only one pointing to the idea of Homo Deus (Figure 14). Harari has put Homo Deus very prominently on the map (Harari, 2016).

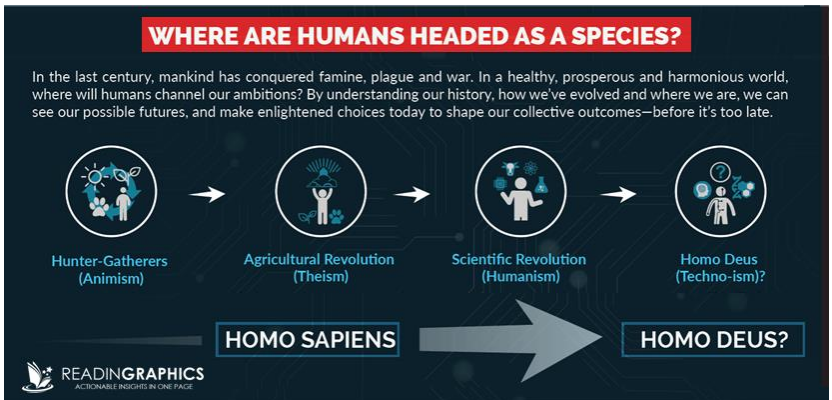


Figure 14: From homo sapiens to Homo Deus (McRae, n.d.)

For the good part of human civilization, most people believed that the future was pre-ordained by the gods, fate or other forces of the universe, and that only prayer could change one's destiny. It was only from the middle of the 18th

Society 5.0: We and I

century that people came to realize that the future could be different from the past, and that their destiny could lie in their hands.

This new way of looking at the future, of seeing it as a wide, open horizon rather than a circular loop, had much to do with science and technology, according to social scientist Helga Nowotny.

But the focus on – and even obsession with – technological innovation might cause us to overlook that social innovation is just as important. The more technological innovations we create, the more social innovations we need to accompany them.

The field of medicine, for example, is undergoing amazing technological disruption. But its full potential cannot unfold without equally innovative changes in how health systems are run and how healthcare is delivered. Advances in our ability to exploit expansive data has brought us into the realm of smart devices and artificial intelligence, but at the same time, has changed our outlook on privacy and security.

In the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Nowotny cautioned that we should be careful to avoid hubris – the over-estimation of our capacity and our over-reliance on a single

Society 5.0: We and I

solution – be it a technological or economic fix that does not take into consideration the complexity of societal systems.

The humble view acknowledges that technology, science and culture must evolve together, and that life will continue to change in unpredictable ways that we cannot entirely control. We have the privilege of being the only species on Earth that is able to see evolution from the inside. That obliges us to reflect on what we are doing with evolution, as it is our own choices that will guide our evolutionary destiny. (Chan & Seet, 2019)

Naomi Klein (2019) also has a plan to solve the crisis. It has some overlap with the progressive capitalism proposed by Stiglitz: a “Green New Deal”. Greenhouse gas has been known to be a problem for over 30 years. According to Klein, the solution is straightforward: Transform the infrastructure of society according to the recommendations of the scientists. This is a once in a century opportunity to repair the economy in such a way as to save the majority of humanity. The same factors that threaten the planet, threaten the quality of life: stagnating wages, inequality, deteriorating levels of service, eroding social cohesion. The Green New Deal might look like a wish list of not directly related issues, but the fact is that we are facing several overlapping crises. Implementing the Green New Deal will create millions of new jobs, for example in (health-)care; jobs with a small ecological footprint. According to Klein, we need to stop wasteful consumption right

Society 5.0: We and I

away. We must stop consuming fossil fuel and invest massively in green energy and clean industries. Also, like Stiglitz, Klein believes in free healthcare, childcare, and higher education. To finance these we must reduce tax evasion and come up with more humane migration policies.

It is all about the swift and bold implementation of the Green New Deal. The market will still play a role but not the main one. The main actor is the people who will benefit from the deal in the form of clean air, non-expensive sustainable housing, and free public transportation. We must refuse fossil fuel and leave the reserves in the ground. Politicians must stand up to the oil and gas corporations. We must elect these politicians, although we must further develop a democracy with more decentralized leadership. We must not forget that the fossil-fuel era started with aggressive kleptocracy. We must shorten the workday to improve the quality of life. We should lower our standard of living by traveling less and consume less meat and consume less energy. It is about restoration and care, not only of nature but also people who have been exploited to create this late stage of capitalism (Klein, 2019).

The Green New Deal is sometimes summarized as involving taxation of the rich and the corporations and investing in reversing climate change. Supporters argue that the Green New Deal will pay for itself (Pettifor, 2019).

Society 5.0: We and I

Klein is not the only one suggesting this direction. Mariana Mazucato claims that innovation can also be incentivized by government investment. She suggests that the government strategically select a few areas and invest in these sectors. She calls this the moonshot approach, referring to the space program started by President Kennedy in the 1960s (Medeiros, 2019).

Others too are calling for big lifestyle changes: Diet, home heating, transportation, aviation (Rowlatt, 2019).

It seems that Green New Deals are crystalizing. The European Union has a \$13 trillion climate plan that might be about to get serious. Some say it might be the Greta Thunberg effect (Wishart & Krukowska, 2019). On 11 December 2019, the Euro Commissioner and E.C. chair (Frans Timmermans and Ursula von der Leyen) submitted an agreement on the climate, the “European Green Deal”. Some call it “the European shot to the moon”. It must all lead to law, making the objectives binding for all member states. The overall objective is to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent in the world by 2050. The net emission of greenhouse gases must be zero. The emitted gases must be paid for. By 2030 emissions must be reduced by 50%. The propositions state that subsidies of fossil fuel (39 billion annually) will be terminated. A fund to finance the transition will be created. A CO₂ tax will be introduced at the borders. The energy sector will be transformed because this sector is accountable for 75% of emissions. Wind and sea energy will be boosted. The transport sector will be trans-

Society 5.0: We and I

formed. By 2050 emissions from must be reduced by 90%. New standards will be introduced for food. Biodiversity and forests will be restored. Pollution of air, water, and soil must be reduced to zero. The Industry will be transformed into a circular industry. Research and innovation in technology must support this Green Deal (“Dit staat er in de “Green Deal”,” 2019).

Not everybody is so optimistic. In December 2019 the COP25 (the 25th Conference of the Parties) was held in Madrid. The U.N. conference was attended by 197 countries. The feeling is that the conference failed. There is no sense of urgency and that the people will have to exert greater pressure on their politicians, governments, and leaders. Some see it as contra-productive that the fossil-fuel industry also participates. And there is a critique of the emission market. It is argued that this market enables rich countries to pay green countries for their emissions and to continue to pollute. The people are ahead of government and the establishment and must take the lead (Kuys, 2019). The people should also lead to roll-back the influence of corporations, which has become surveillance capitalism, spying on people and appropriating their data. This can be done by creating alternative services that respect the people and put their interests first (Yan & Kuys, 2019).

These are all still big ideas and do not answer the question: How do we get to Society 5.0? In Finland, they believe that we should focus on letting children play together more, instead of sitting in a classroom or inside the house connected to their electronic devices. Not only do

Society 5.0: We and I

they develop better motor skills, but they also learn “We” (Broom, 2019). One of the first announcements the youngest prime minister made was that Finland should have a six-hour workday and a four day work week. This would not just increase productivity but also improve well-being. Actually, she made this announcement months before she became prime minister (in August 2019), during a panel debate and is not considering implementing this in the short term (Spicer, 2020).

We need to embark on a journey towards good governance. Without good governance, sustainable development is an illusion (SDG 16 is the key to the 2030 Agenda, 2019). “At the end of the day, corruption affects all five pillars of sustainable development – people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships. If we’re serious about 2030, and delivering a sustainable future for all, we have to be serious about ending corruption” (Ferreira Rubio & Andvig, 2019).

Anne-Marie Bonneau states that impact comes from small changes made on a large scale. “We don’t need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly. We need millions of people doing it imperfectly,” she said.

List of figures

<u>Figure 1: Drawing by Steve Cutts. To me, it illustrates the imbalance between “We” and “I”.</u>	10
<u>Figure 2: The Three Domains</u>	35
<u>Figure 3: The Five Industrial Revolutions (Gauri & Eerden, 2019).</u>	51
<u>Figure 4: The Fourth Industrial Revolution (Moore, 2019)</u>	51
<u>Figure 5: The rich world, developed world, First World or Western world by another name: the walled world. Image: TD Architects (Jacobs, 2019a)</u>	89
<u>Figure 6: 6 + 1 paradoxes (6 + 1 Paradoxes, 2019)</u>	116
<u>Figure 7: Society 5.0 will liberate us (Nakanishi, 2019)</u>	124
<u>Figure 8: Happiness Index 2019 (“Finland ranked happiest,” 2019)</u>	133
<u>Figure 9: The OECD well-being framework (Button, 2019; Dupuis, 2019; Stiglitz, 2018)</u>	134
<u>Figure 10: The shift from capitalism to commonism (Klomp & Maarhuis, 2018, p. 47)</u>	142
<u>Figure 11: The shift in society (Klomp & Maarhuis, 2018, p. 185)</u>	142
<u>Figure 12: Sustainable development goals (Steiner, 2019)</u>	143
<u>Figure 13: The 10 Rs (Stanislaus, 2019)</u>	149
<u>Figure 14: From homo sapiens to Homo Deus (McRae, n.d.)</u>	163

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