

The Emergence of A Planetary Citizenship:

Transforming the Politics and Geopolitics of Power: from Domination to Creative Collaboration

Traditionally, political communities have been constructed (from tribes to City-States to Empires, to Nation-States) through the pacification and the process of civilizing of an internal space in the face of an external threat – the Ancient Greeks named "Barbarians" anyone who was foreign to them.

However, the major Geopolitical question that needs to be addressed today is not to know which Nation will be the dominating Power of the 22nd century but whether there will be a 22nd century for humankind.

The Human civilization is indeed threatened by collapse but what threatens it is not coming from outer space but from its own social and ecological irresponsibility, and its own internal barbarism.

The concept and organization of Defense that traditionally take central stage in matters of Governance, are therefore entirely transformed. Defense now becomes the capacity for humankind to organize ways of living together on a Planet that remains inhabitable.

The ecological question and the human question – which is to say the capacity for humankind to face its own internal demons and to grow in humanity – becomes the core of the new approach of Geopolitics. This total paradigmatic shift is well symbolized by the transformation of former fighter pilots, when they become astronauts and experience the unique perspective of seeing the whole Planet from Space. This transforms their vision, their posture and attitude towards life, as they shift towards a more compassionate and more constructive perspective, that leads them almost unanimously to call for world peace, and for the preservation of our fragile Earth. While in Space, humans naturally become citizens of the Earth – of the Universe even. In space, humans take the measure of both their smallness and their responsibility, experiencing humility and solidarity with other fellow humans, precisely because of the realization of the fragility of the human family.

Therefore, there is an absolute necessity to shift from a Classical Geopolitics based on the Power of Domination to a New Geopolitics based on the Power of Creation. This shift leads to a transformation of the notion of Governance and to a qualitative mutation of Democracy. Rather than a competitive form of democracy based on delegation of power and political strife, emerge participative and cooperative forms of Democracy involving all citizens. This shift also translates into a transition from Politics based on enmity to “Politics of friendship” as Aristotle and Jacques Derrida both called this form of Politics based on the fact that *frater* (humankind in latin) can only survive if it successfully overcomes its violent impulses. This does not mean the end of conflicts nor the end of disagreements but it means that humankind has mastered the capacity to deal with these conflicts in a constructive and fruitful manner.

This also translates into a change in the legal conception of the sovereignty of Nation-States: “from solitary to solidary” as expressed by international law expert Mireille Delmas Marty. She

emphasizes the emergence in international law of new legal concepts that allow to take into account the global commons – both ecological and societal. For instance, the notion of ecocide or crime against the environment which endangers the survival of humankind, is part of these new legal approaches. If a connection between an ecocide and a crime against humanity can be proven, then the International Criminal Court is recognized competent to deal with this legal case, which is a first step towards the construction on this new body of global law.

Likewise, proposals have emerged from intellectuals, activists and civil society leaders from many countries of the world, for the creation of a real « Security Council for Humanity » which would be very different from the current Security Council of the United Nations, and would truly represent the voices of the billions of citizens of the Earth. This Security Council for Humanity would be composed of citizens from all walk of like, young and old, recognized for their contribution to the betterment of their communities and societies, and this “Council of the sages” would be able to enter into a demanding and challenging while constructive dialogue with the Security Council of the United Nations.

Such new concepts and initiatives are embodying the process of transcending a purely “international” approach in order to build a truly global one – and to conceive as One the globalized civil society which binds all human beings together. The concept of “Globality” proposed by French Caribbean Philosopher Edouard Glissant, is in opposition to the process of globalization which has been so far an entirely financial affair which has not taken into account any of the ecological and social issues at the global level. In order to deal with these issues, it is necessary to adopt an approach of subsidiarity so that the concept of Globality is not in contradiction with the different “root-identities” identified by Glissant, and so that Globality also allows for the construction of what Glissant called “relational-identities”. Therefore, the recognition that a Planetary citizenship could open for every single human being on Earth a certain number of rights and duties, inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and by a Charter of Ecological Responsibility, would not be in contradiction with other forms of citizenship, at the local, national or continental levels. Relational-identities would actually form the bonds that give shape to the co-responsibility of human beings and planetary citizens with all the different scales of life, and allow for the survival of the whole people of the Earth.

The way economics is conceived and dealt with would be of course entirely changed. A fully Ecological Economics would respect the fact that the management of all of our own little houses (original meaning of *oikos logos* in Greek) is closely related to and dependent from Oikos Logos, which is the Ecology of our Great Planetary House. This calls for new indicators of wealth and new forms of accounting which give back its true and original meaning to the term “benefit” which means the kind of activities which are beneficial to humankind - qualitative in essence and not quantitative, in improving the quality of life. But numerous activities which are supposed to add to the Gross Domestic Product are in fact destructive pour people, their health, and the health of the Planet, such as human exploitation, wars, car accidents, the worsening of natural catastrophes, and addictions to tobacco, drugs, alcohol and other substances.

This transition would also translate into a change in the relationship with Spirituality. Whereas organized religions have often historically followed the paradigm of Power of Domination, keeping their believers under the fear of punishment, and demanding their submission and sacrifices, a new form of open spirituality would overcome them. This new spirituality would be based on the relationship to beauty and to the mystery of the inner life in relationship with one another and with nature and the cosmos. It would allow for overcoming the dominating drive of religions which have deeply corrupted human souls and have led to the worse wars, waged in the name of God. This open and creative, non-dominating Spirituality could therefore be completely coherent with and non-antagonistic to an open approach of secularity.

The process in the making is a deep change between microcosm and macrocosm that follows a fractal construction and vision of the inner universe as much as of the external universe, and opens to metamorphosis at all levels, from personal transformation to societal transformation. This begs for the opening to a global intelligence which is as much open to the heart and the body as it is open to the mind.

The notion of civilization is itself deeply transformed. The perspective of a world citizenry allows to offer an alternative to the notion of a colonizing civilization but also to the notion of a clash of civilizations as theorized by Huntington and other American neo-conservatives.

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This implies the necessity of an open but demanding dialogue between Modernity and Tradition, able to keep the best from the first (liberty of consciousness, recognition of the singularity of each human being, and respect of human rights) without its worst part (the commodification and marketization of nature, of life, and of humans themselves). It would imply too that the second - Tradition - is carefully checked so we can sort out between its part of light, which is the part that connects to nature, to one another, and which provides a meaning to life, and its part of darkness (which should be rejected), the part that enforces dependency on individuals submitted to social control and to identity-based fundamentalism, or even to some kind of misanthropic intolerant ecological school of thought (deep ecology for instance).

This dialogue between Modernity and Tradition is urgently needed at all levels of society, from the neighborhoods of Global-Cities metropolises to the Global community as a whole.

It is the whole humanist project which is therefore transformed. This redefinition of humanism calls for a humanism that is no longer based on the domination of nature and on the imposition of a western vision of the world, but on the co-construction of a humanism which serves life and the protection of the planet, its legal manifestation being the construction of a planetary citizenship. C'est toute la perspective de l'humanisme qui se trouve ainsi transformée . Coconstruction d'un

### **Towards a society of « buen vivir »**

In 2009, at the World Social Forum organized in Belem, Brazil, a proposal drafted by the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America strongly emphasized the necessity of a transition towards

societies of « Buen Vivir » (*Sumak Kawsay* in quechua language), which could be translated in English as the «well living and being», which takes its full meaning today and provides the spiritual turning point which our world desperately needs.

But the Buen Vivir can only take its full force as a global project of society if it is embodied into a citizen movement that takes this concept seriously enough to organize accordingly around this axis and lead significant actions towards this goal. This notion cannot remain at the level of Hope but needs to incarnate itself through Experimentation.

The Indigenous Peoples of the Andes have proposed to illustrate *Sumak Kawsay* through 13 principles that are limpid and easy to grasp, and can serve as an inspiration for all those who are willing to undertake their own personal transformation in order to contribute to the global societal transition. This transformation starts in our daily actions and ends changing everything, because it is deeply and fundamentally a complete change of the meaning of life that is expressed in the search of “being well and living well.” It means being well with ourselves, with all those who live around us, and with Her that nourishes us, Mother Nature.

The 13 principles for a well-balanced living and being are:

- 1) to know how to feed ourselves with healthy food ;**
- 2) to know how to drink while enhancing the flow of Life;**
- 3) to know how to dance in the rhythm of the Universe,**
- 4) to know how to rest, and sleep from one day to the next;**
- 5) to be able to work with joy;**
- 6) to know how to stay silent and seek meditative silence;**
- 7) to think through the connection between the heart and the mind ;**
- 8) to know how to love and be loved,**
- 9) to know how to listen to oneself, to the others, and to Mother Earth;**
- 10) to know how to speak in a constructive manner ;**
- 11) to know how to dream of a better world,**
- 12) to know how to walk, accompanied by the good energies; and**
- 13) to know how to give and how to receive.**

In order to amplify significantly the transition towards societies of the well-living and being, which has already started at the grassroot level all over the world, it is necessary to demonstrate that this transition is highly desirable.

The new type of social and citizen movement anticipating new forms of political, economical, educational organizations, can only attract many more forces around such a societal project when it is able to create this desire and to demonstrate that this project is feasible and realizable at a large scale.

The ambition of such radical projects to redesign civilization would not be conceivable without the connection between a creative resistance and the experimentation of anticipative initiatives. The Strategy proposed by the French citizen networks gathered around the “Estates General” of the social and solidarity-based economy was coined with the acronym REVER (“to Dream” in French) which stands for:

R – the Resistance, in the sense of a Creative Resistance, to prevent it from turning into a desperate rebellion.

E – the Experimentation, which gives its creative characteristic to the movement of Resistance

V – the Vision, which releases and frees the Imagination from any block and launches the transformative visions of tomorrow

E – the Evaluation, done through a democratic process built on the organization of citizen deliberations, which gives birth to shared values – the term value taking back its original meaning *valor* which is the force of life.

R – the Resilience, completes this acronym with a final R, as the re-foundation of civilization will require Resilience to face the likely collapses that our societies will experience in the future, caused by decades of ecological, social and financial irresponsibility in the hands of an hyper-capitalistic economy.

REVER – To DREAM – is an appropriate acronym for a project that is born in times that might turn into nightmares. And we will need to DREAM BIG in order to mobilize the enthusiasm of the millions and billions of citizens worldwide, embarked in a journey filled with dangers and obstacles!

Therefore we must build a true « Alliance of the Forces of Life » which is capable, not only to resist against the logics of death and destruction, but also to promote this Great Transition towards the societies of Buen Vivir, in the perspective called for by a large amount of actors from the French philosopher Edgar Morin, to the film “Tomorrow” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUN0QxRB7e0>), to the countless initiatives around the world such as the Transition Town Movement, the Global Ecovillage Network, Gaia Education, the New Economy Coalition (USA), the Convivialist Manifesto (France), the Leap Manifesto (launched by Naomi Klein in Canada), and many others which testify of a formidable creativity of citizens around the world at the cultural, ecological, economical, societal levels.

At the heart of this Project of Transition toward a society of the well-living and being, there is however a blind spot which, if not understood fully, can lead many transformative experiences to failure or to a limited extent of their creative power. This blind spot is the lack of internal creative energy, which has been the cause of the ultimate failure of countless transformative movements throughout history. These movements have not succumbed because of the overpowering of their adversaries (capitalism, despotism, for instance) but because of their internal weaknesses.

Communism for instance, born out of a tremendous energy of societal transformation, destroyed itself from the inside and produced deadly caricatures of totalitarian regimes which ended up making capitalism desirable by the populations which were under their terrible domination. In the analyses of the causes of such tragic failures, we always find that at the heart of all these movements was the strong presence of forms of ill-living, ill-being, abuse and violence. Any collective or individual ill-living translates into a deficit of inner energy which leads to seek externally the lacking energy. This turns into three forms of dysfunctional behaviors: rivalry with others, predatory relationship to nature, and depression towards oneself. It is not anecdotic to realize how “personal issues” have played a decisive role in the negative bifurcations taken by the course of history: the rivalries of Robespierre and Danton during the French Revolution, between Mark and Proudhon as intellectual founders of socialism, between Lenine and Trotsky in the beginnings of the Communist experiment in Russia, between Castro and Mao Zedong, etc... There is an endless list of the negative influences of a lack of wisdom and a lack of internal well-being and well-living, which have manifested into regressive and brutal forms of organization and leadership. It is painful to observe till this day countless NGOs, organizations

and movements with very worthwhile social and ecological missions, aiming at the betterment of the world, which nevertheless collapse and perish because of the same internal weaknesses.

There is an obvious need to change this dynamics in order to give more space to movements that renew the energy of their participants while pursuing the transformation of the world. Movements based on self-management and shared leadership that valorize the contributions of each and every one, confirm that this need is being expressed more and more consciously. Various collectives are becoming stronger and more appealing, through their advocacy that ties of friendship -both in their tolerance and their demanding expectations – are a political force and don't only belong to the personal sphere. These collectives of citizens are creating the necessary conditions that make trust and friendship into a force for action towards the realization of their objectives, and they make an effort in their modes of functioning to be internally coherent with the transformations of the world which they aspire to – following Gandhi's prescriptions to "be the change you want to see in the world".

Many examples have sprouted here and there for decades, as the seeds of a renewal which already is bearing fruits. However despite their number, most of these experimentations remain in the blind spot of our knowledge and consciousness, except the emblematic political examples of Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Gandhi and Martin Luther King. However, numerous citizen experimentations which are more recent, everywhere in the world, from Africa to Asia to the Americas, show that such a change is possible, including at a large scale, impacting millions of families. In the Philippines, the NGO *Gawad Kalinga*, based on a the crazy dream and the shared values of eradicating poverty through education, equitable sharing, the regeneration of soils, and social entrepreneurship has changed the lives of millions of poor. In the terms of its founder, Tony Meloto, "Quality of life at the bottom of the pyramid cannot be measured with quantitative indicators such as GDP, but through extra-financial criteria relating to values such as tenacity and commitment, resilience, generosity, the quest for meaning, well-being, care, kindness, and sharing. (...) The objective is to reach prosperity and a sustainable peace without abandoning the weakest. The challenge is in our capacity to provide the models that show that it is possible. (...) Social entrepreneurship can be the leverage of a positive economy which constitutes the hope of the poor while providing the products that correspond to the new trends of the market consumption." (Tony Meloto, July 2017, Aix-en-Provence, France).

In that perspective, had been proposed at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, by the founders of the collective Dialogues en humanité (including French philosopher Patrick Viveret) the axis of "PTST" Personal Transformation/Social Transformation, which emphasizes the necessity to move forward simultaneously on the field of personal transformation AND the field of societal transformation. The deficit in inner energy triggered by the lack of internal joy leads towards compensating with all kinds of "sad passions" as Spinoza named them.

In ecological terms, ill-being is at the origin of forms of bulimia such as productivism and extractivism. Only a "happy frugality" ("la sobriété heureuse" according to French activist and pioneer in agroecology, Pierre Rabhi) is able to fight this deadly process of consumptive bulimia, on the condition that we insist on the adjective "happy" more than on the noun "frugality". But

this is only possible if the quality of consciousness and of Life presence allows us to progress to that point.

The Joy of Living – La Joie de Vivre – at the heart of the well-living and being, constitutes the individual and societal alternative to the economies of ill-being and abuse. Indeed, according to the United Nations, the annual spending on drugs and addictive substances represents ten times the amounts that would allow to cover for all the basic needs of humankind – and military spending on weapons represents twenty times this amount! The industry of Advertising, which takes fully part into the economy of ill-being, by selling promises that are supposed to relate to BEING (handsome, happy, fulfilled,...) in order to better drive the race to HAVING (always more stuff) also weighs ten times the amount of money that could eradicate hunger, would allow universal access to safe freshwater and to basic health care.

Therefore it is imperative to continue working towards our own transformation by asking the following question: how do we succeed to fully put into action this “well-living” which we proclaim to be essential? Let us continue the construction of a social ecosystem that would allow access to fundamental goods and services to all of its members through the mutualization of all the new tools that we can use such as the new indicators of wealth, the forms of exchange (time banks, local exchange trading systems – LETS – local currencies, networks of reciprocal exchanges of knowledge, etc.), the leverage of savings groups based on solidarity, of ethical banking, and the new forms of labor!

Let us multiply the forms of political cooperatives, breaking away from the competitive and egotistic forms of politics which have led groups of extreme-right to seize power in so many countries ! Let us continue to innovate and to give citizens the desire to innovate in new educational approaches!

**Let us use our own money and resources as investments that will speed up the development of a new economy, more human and ecological! Let us educate children from the most tender age, to the consciousness that what is most precious are the goods that multiply while being shared – so the more you give them the more there is to give – such as love, joy, enthusiasm, optimism, the research of what is best in each of us, the opportunity that comes after a crisis, the rainbow after the rain, the audacity to undertake projects, the pleasure to create together, to give, to receive, to discover, to challenge oneself beyond one’s comfort zone, the intelligence of the heart, the imagination, the knowledge and respect of Nature, music and dance and all the Arts... !**

Let us experiment new forms of spirituality that are open and allow the blossoming of the quest for meaning in our exchanges, to offer a creative and fulfilling alternative to religious fundamentalisms! Let us explore the new forms of the art of love, the new relationships between men and women, between adults and children, while remembering that anticipative thinkers such as Charles Fourier, Rosa Luxembourgh or Marcel Mauss believed that there can be no social transformation without the mobilization of the loving energy!

This debate needs to be wide open and shared by all, and we need the census of all the existing experimentations, to broadly share the lessons we have learned from them, in order to fuel this capacity to live, individually and collectively, with meaning and with joy, to identify all these

innovations and experimentations of Buen Vivir, of the well-living and being, of well-communicating, of well-deciding together, based on the values of caring and empathy, as part of the global ecosystem composed by all the actors who are working towards the “Great Transition”.

We will ask how to resist to the temptation of always following the accelerating pace taken by our societies, and on the contrary how to coordinate ourselves in order to slow down this pace? We can for instance rely on each other since at any single time there are projects, initiatives and events taking place somewhere on Earth in our great global family of the well-living and we can therefore use the biodiversity and socio-diversity of all our experimentations, to learn from each other, and to build from this common knowledge while initiating more projects and events together. What is needed now is to design an ambitious global project for all of these networks, and open it to be shared by all the forces, all the energies that are currently fragmented at the local level so they can all collaborate together in real time to this effort!

A first and important step would be to identify this great family through common symbols (logos, labels, common tools of communication, etc...) in order to make it visible, obvious, unavoidable, and so that its countless members can all realize that they are part of this big family, and can exclaim : yes, we have the power to act, we are at home everywhere we go on this Earth who is our common home, we are all fellow citizens of the people of the Earth, and we can organize ourselves to insure together our collective autonomy independently of the dominating system, and to experiment new forms of life which we consider more desirable both ecologically and socially!

True, as members of the Dialogues en humanité, we only are at the origin of one of the fractal cells of this global citizen movement for the well-living. But all the great projects in history have started this way and if several actors are ready to co-construct such a project, it will be possible to move it forward quickly and to make it grow, maybe on the occasion of the next World Social Forum in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, in March 2018.

**The vision itself is immense but Action will take its time, step by step, to follow the path of that vision, with confidence, and in conscience, an action which will radiate through the quality of its results, attracting more and more creative energies for the future.**

This complex paradigm is unheard of and we are about to see it being birthed. It will bring a multitude of approaches and concrete actions, processes of trial and error, with a common vision, new spaces for creation, new relationships, new transversalities, new hierarchies of values, and a new language too, which we will invent together, with all the cultural creatives, in all the dimensions they are engaged in, political, religious, agnostic, spiritual,...!