Ciao Capitalism: Reclaiming humanity beyond the Market.

Agustin V. Startari.

CIAO CAPITALISM

RECLAIMING HUMANITY BEYOND THE MARKET

AGUSTIN V. STARTARI

In an era where climate change and economic inequality are pressing issues, author Agustín V. Startari presents an innovative solution in his book, "Ciao Capitalism." Startari explores an economy that not only seeks to maximize financial gains but also prioritizes the well-being of society and the environment.

Instead of focusing on individual ownership and control, the book advocates for solidarity and collective participation in business management. The circular and regenerative economy aims to reduce waste and emissions while rejuvenating ecosystems and biodiversity. Furthermore, the democratic economy promotes citizen participation and collective decision-making in the ownership and control of the means of production.

Within these pages, Startari delves into each of these concepts, providing a detailed analysis of how they can be implemented. By offering tangible solutions to today's economic, social, and environmental challenges, this book becomes an essential guide for those looking to build a fairer and more sustainable future.

This collection gathers independent research works exploring power, ideology, legitimacy, and history through a cross-disciplinary lens. Each volume is self-contained yet contributes to a shared thread: the critical analysis of how power is formed, exercised, and sustained over time. From Ancient Egypt to 20th-century totalitarianism, *Work Papers* presents a clear, academically grounded narrative about the historical and discursive mechanisms that shape our societies. Each entry is numbered to reflect its place in this evolving series.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines social, economic, political, and environmental tensions associated with contemporary capitalism and develops an integrated alternative based on solidarity economy, circular and regenerative economy, and democratic economy. It analyzes inequality, labor precarity, financialization, environmental degradation, and concentrations of economic and political power, with particular attention to the United States. It then evaluates the principles and implementation challenges of solidarity-based production, circular and regenerative practices, and democratic participation in economic decision-making. The central proposition is that these approaches can operate as complementary dimensions of an economic architecture oriented toward social justice, environmental sustainability, democratic governance, and economic efficiency. Drawing on historical discussion, institutional examples, secondary data, and literature, the study identifies points of convergence and outlines a

transition framework linking these principles to coordinated institutional and policy change.

Keywords: capitalism; solidarity economy; circular economy; regenerative economy; democratic economy; sustainability; economic transition.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem addressed by this study is the persistent difficulty of reconciling economic performance with social justice, ecological sustainability, and democratic participation within the institutional logic examined under contemporary capitalism. The manuscript develops this problem through inequality and poverty, labor precarity, financialization, environmental degradation, and the concentration of economic and political power.

The analytical problem is therefore not limited to whether isolated reforms can mitigate individual failures. It concerns whether solidarity economy, circular and regenerative economy, and democratic economy can be coordinated as complementary dimensions of a coherent economic framework. The study examines whether their integration can provide an institutional basis for a transition that combines social equity, environmental sustainability, democratic governance, and economic efficiency, while identifying the policy and organizational mechanisms required for implementation.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The principal research question guiding this study is: How can the principles of solidarity economy, circular and regenerative economy, and democratic economy be integrated into a coherent economic framework, and what institutional and policy mechanisms are required to support a transition from contemporary capitalism toward that framework?

OBJECTIVES

General objective. To develop and assess an integrated economic framework that combines solidarity economy, circular and regenerative economy, and democratic economy as complementary responses to the social, economic, political, and environmental tensions examined under contemporary capitalism, and to identify the institutional and policy mechanisms required for a transition toward that framework.

Specific objectives. The study pursues the following specific objectives:

1. Analyze the principal patterns of inequality, labor precarity, financialization, environmental degradation, and concentration of economic and political power examined in the manuscript, with particular attention to the United States case.

2. Examine the principles, institutional characteristics, potential contributions, and implementation challenges of solidarity economy, circular and regenerative economy, and democratic economy.

3. Identify the complementarities and points of coordination among the three models and assess the conditions under

which they can operate as a coherent economic framework rather than as isolated reforms.

4. Translate the integrated framework into institutional, organizational, and policy mechanisms capable of supporting a transition oriented toward social equity, environmental sustainability, democratic participation, and economic efficiency.

CONTRIBUTION

The contribution of this study is primarily analytical and integrative. Rather than treating solidarity economy, circular and regenerative economy, and democratic economy as independent alternatives, the study organizes them as complementary dimensions of a common economic framework. Within that framework, solidarity economy contributes principles of cooperation, collective organization, and social equity; circular and regenerative economy addresses resource use, waste reduction, and ecological restoration; and democratic economy contributes participatory ownership, governance, and decision-making. This structure provides a basis for examining how the three approaches can interact institutionally rather than operate as isolated reforms.

A second contribution is translational. The study connects the integrated framework to the institutional and policy mechanisms developed throughout the manuscript, including cooperative and social-enterprise structures, public-sector intervention, progressive fiscal policy, renewable-energy transition, education and training, ethical finance, and participatory governance. The study does not claim that each component is individually novel; its contribution lies in systematizing their interdependence and identifying the mechanisms through which they can be coordinated within a transition framework.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, documentary, and comparative analytical approach. It draws on the academic literature, institutional reports, historical analyses, and quantitative indicators cited throughout the manuscript to examine the social, economic, political, and environmental tensions associated with contemporary capitalism and to assess the institutional principles of solidarity economy, circular and regenerative economy, and democratic economy. Quantitative evidence is used descriptively to contextualize patterns of inequality, poverty, labor precarity, financialization, concentration of power, and environmental degradation rather than for econometric causal estimation.

The analysis proceeds in four stages. First, it identifies the recurrent structural problems that the literature and evidence reviewed attribute to contemporary capitalist organization. Second, it examines the three alternative economic models separately, focusing on their principles, organizational forms, potential benefits, and implementation challenges. Third, it compares the models to identify complementarities and points of coordination capable of supporting an integrated framework. Fourth, it translates that framework into institutional, organizational, and policy mechanisms for economic transition. The chapter on American capitalism functions as a case study through which the broader diagnosis is examined in a specific national context; it is not treated as a universal representation of all capitalist economies.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is thematic and institutional in scope. It examines the social, economic, political, and environmental tensions examined in the manuscript in relation to contemporary capitalism and evaluates three bodies of economic practice and theory—solidarity economy, circular and regenerative economy, and democratic economy—as potentially complementary components of an integrated alternative. The analysis concentrates on the relationship among these models, the institutional principles that distinguish them, and the policy and organizational mechanisms through which their coordination could be pursued.

Empirically, the manuscript uses the United States as its principal national case for examining inequality, financialization, labor conditions, political-economic concentration, and related institutional dynamics, while drawing on additional international indicators, organizations, and examples as presented in the text. The study therefore develops a comparative conceptual framework and a transition proposal rather than a country-by-country empirical evaluation of all capitalist economies or all existing solidarity, circular, regenerative, and democratic initiatives.

LIMITATIONS

The study has several limitations derived from its analytical design. It is primarily qualitative and documentary, and the quantitative indicators cited throughout the manuscript are used descriptively rather than as the basis for econometric estimation or causal testing. Accordingly, the study does not claim to establish that the institutional mechanisms discussed will produce identical outcomes across countries, sectors, or historical contexts. The evidence is used to identify recurring problems, illustrate institutional dynamics, and assess the conceptual compatibility of the alternative economic models examined.

A second limitation concerns the status of the proposed integrated framework. The combination of solidarity economy, circular and regenerative economy, and democratic economy is developed as a theoretical and policy-oriented transition framework rather than as an empirically validated economic system already implemented at national scale. The American case supplies a concentrated illustration of several problems examined in the study, but it cannot represent the full institutional diversity of capitalist economies. Likewise, the organizational and policy examples discussed in the manuscript demonstrate the practical existence of individual components but do not by themselves establish the feasibility of the complete integrated model. Further comparative and empirical research would therefore be required to test its performance, institutional adaptability, and long-term effects under different economic and political conditions.

STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The study is organized into four analytical blocks. The first establishes the diagnosis of contemporary capitalism through "Capitalism in Crisis" and the American case study, combining historical discussion with descriptive evidence on inequality, labor precarity, financialization, political-economic concentration, and environmental pressures. The second examines solidarity economy, circular and regenerative economy, and democratic economy as distinct bodies of theory and practice, identifying their principles, institutional forms, potential contributions, and implementation challenges.

The third block develops the integrative proposal in "The Three Models Combined" and "New Economic Model," where the complementarities among the three approaches are translated into organizational and policy mechanisms. The final block, "Conclusions," consolidates the transition framework and its implementation requirements while preserving the distinction between the manuscript's conceptual proposal and the empirical validation that would be required in subsequent research. This organization separates diagnosis and evidence from the comparative examination of alternatives and from the study's integrated economic proposal.

INTRODUCTION

Solidarity economy is characterized as a socially responsible economy that aims to generate a positive impact on society and the environment, prioritizing not only economic profits but also cooperation and the participation of workers, consumers, and the community in the management of enterprises through collective ownership or participatory decision-making. This form of economy strives for social justice, equality, and fairness in the distribution of resources and benefits, while fostering mutual support among economic actors. It also promotes local economies and fair trade, aiming to cultivate a more just and sustainable economy.

On the other hand, the circular and regenerative economy seeks to transform current models of production and consumption by promoting environmental sustainability and the reduction of waste and emissions. The circular economy focuses on promoting the reuse and recycling of materials and products, as well as minimizing the extraction of natural resources and waste generation. The regenerative economy, on the other hand, promotes the regeneration of ecosystems and biodiversity through soil restoration, the promotion of organic agriculture, and the reduction of pollution and deforestation. Lastly, the democratic economy endeavors to foster the participation of all economic actors in decision-making processes, along with democratic ownership and control of the means of production. The democratic economy aims to promote social justice and equity in the distribution of resources and benefits, while encouraging citizen participation and collective decision-making.

In summary, the proposal for a solidarity, circular, regenerative, and democratic economy appears to be a necessary and practical alternative to address the economic, social, and environmental challenges we face today. In the following chapters, we will explore each of these aspects in detail and analyze the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of this proposal.

The concept of a solidarity, circular, regenerative, and democratic economy is a response to the problems and challenges posed by the current economic system. It is based on the idea that the economy should serve collective well-being rather than solely pursue profit. Firstly, the solidarity economy focuses on social justice, equality, and equity in the distribution of resources and benefits, promoting solidarity among economic actors. To achieve this, it advocates for cooperation and the participation of workers, consumers, and the community in enterprise management through collective ownership or participatory decision-making. Additionally, it aims to stimulate local economies and fair trade, fostering a more just and sustainable economic system. This involves supporting local production and vulnerable communities while reducing dependence on large corporations and global economies.

Furthermore, the circular and regenerative economy transforms current models of production and consumption, emphasizing environmental sustainability and the reduction of waste and emissions. It prioritizes reusing and recycling materials and products, as well as minimizing natural-resource extraction and waste generation. Meanwhile, the regenerative economy seeks to restore ecosystems and biodiversity by addressing pollution and deforestation and promoting organic agriculture and soil restoration.

To conclude, the democratic economy promotes the participation of all economic actors in decision-making processes, as well as democratic ownership and control of the means of production. This entails fostering citizen participation and collective decision-making while advancing a more just and fair society.

The new economic theory I propose is based on the idea of a fair economy that seeks to reduce inequality and promote the well-being of all individuals, not just a privileged elite. This economy is grounded in three fundamental pillars: environmental sustainability, social justice, and economic efficiency.

Regarding environmental sustainability, it is crucial to view the economy as interconnected with the environment and consider its impact on the surrounding ecosystem. This implies that businesses and individuals must be accountable for their actions and take measures to minimize their ecological footprint. Sustainable practices, such as reducing waste, using renewable resources, and promoting circular economy models, play a key role in achieving environmental sustainability.

In terms of social justice, it is essential for the economy not only to be efficient but also to be fair. This entails ensuring a more equal distribution of wealth and resources. A progressive tax system can be implemented to redistribute wealth and fund social programs that address inequality and improve the quality of life for individuals with lower incomes. Additionally, promoting equal opportunities in education, healthcare, and access to basic resources helps to create a more just society.

Economic efficiency is another important aspect of a fair economy. While productivity and competitiveness are desirable, they should not come at the expense of environmental sustainability and social justice. Finding innovative and sustainable forms of production and consumption, as well as supporting entrepreneurship and job creation in sectors that prioritize quality and well-being, can contribute to a more efficient and balanced economy.

The integration of these three pillars—environmental sustainability, social justice, and economic efficiency—is essential for a new fair economy. By embracing this comprehensive approach, we can address the challenges of inequality, environmental degradation, and economic instability. This comprehensive vision not only benefits current generations but also ensures a sustainable and just future for generations to come.

Solidarity Economy: The solidarity economy is advocated as an alternative to the traditional economic model. It supports the creation and strengthening of cooperatives and social enterprises that promote local and sustainable development, generate decent jobs, and foster democratic participation in the management of businesses. By prioritizing values such as cooperation, social justice, and community empowerment, the solidarity economy seeks to address the shortcomings of the profit-driven capitalist system.

Transition to Renewable Energy: To ensure a sustainable future, a transition to renewable energy is proposed, reducing dependence on fossil fuels and promoting the generation and consumption of clean and renewable energy sources. This not only helps the environment by mitigating climate change and reducing pollution but also presents economic opportunities by fostering the growth of the renewable energy sector. Investments in renewable energy infrastructure and research can create new jobs and stimulate innovation while contributing to the global goal of decarbonization.

Promotion of Education and Training: Education and training play a crucial role in improving people's quality of life and ensuring economic and social development. A strong emphasis is placed on investing in education and training for all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic background. This approach aims to promote equal opportunities, enhance skills and competencies, and foster lifelong learning. By equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge and abilities, they are better prepared to adapt to changing economic landscapes and contribute to a more prosperous society.

Strengthening the Public Sector: Strengthening the public sector is advocated as a key measure in the management and control of the economy. The aim is to reduce the influence of the private sector on economic policy and increase democratic control by citizens over economic decision-making. By strengthening public institutions and governance mechanisms, there can be greater accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to the needs and interests of society.

In summary, the new theory of fair economics proposes a radical shift from the current economic model, focusing on wealth redistribution, the promotion of solidarity economy, the transition to renewable energies, the promotion of education and training, and the strengthening of the public sector. These changes have the potential to reduce economic inequality and poverty while creating a more sustainable and fair future.

CAPITALISM IN CRISIS

Historically, capitalism has been criticized for its ability to generate economic and social inequalities. Since its emergence, capitalism has been associated with the exploitation of workers and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. This accumulation of wealth has widened the gap between the rich and the poor and has become one of the primary drivers of social inequality. Furthermore, capitalism has also faced criticism for its impact on nature and the environment. The relentless pursuit of economic growth and profits has resulted in the excessive exploitation of natural resources, environmental degradation, and climate change. As the global economy continues to expand, the pressure on natural resources intensifies, and the environmental crisis becomes increasingly urgent.

Geographically, capitalism has also given rise to significant disparities between wealthy and poor countries. Wealthy nations have been able to exploit the resources and labor force of poorer countries, often through unfair trade practices and debt. This has led to a growing divide between rich and poor countries, contributing to the perpetuation of poverty and social exclusion worldwide. Socially, capitalism has also been criticized for its impact on people's quality of life. The culture of consumption and the acquisition of goods have become fundamental aspects of modern life. However, this culture of consumption often leads to perpetual dissatisfaction and a lack of genuine happiness as individuals pursue material accumulation rather than seeking lasting well-being and fulfillment.

Moreover, at the economic level, capitalism has generated a series of challenges. The relentless pursuit of growth and profits has resulted in cutthroat competition and a concentration of power in the hands of a few corporations and individuals. This has led to a lack of genuine competition in many sectors, limiting innovation and creativity within the global economy. Economic inequality is also a fundamental problem of contemporary capitalism. According to the Oxfam report "Public Good or Private Wealth," in 2020, the combined wealth of the world's ten richest individuals surpassed that of all the world's governments combined. Meanwhile, according to the World Bank, over 10% of the global population lives in extreme poverty, defined as living on less than $1.90 per day. Economic inequality has detrimental effects on people's health, education, and well-being and can contribute to political and social polarization.

In terms of geographical issues, capitalism has led to the exploitation of natural and human resources in developing countries, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Multinational corporations often extract raw materials and cheap labor from these countries but rarely reinvest in them. This has resulted in environmental degradation and poverty in many nations, while wealthy countries benefit from these resources and cheap labor.

> "It has been argued that capitalism has always generated inequalities, whether through the exploitation of

> workers, the expropriation of natural resources, or the domination of peripheral countries. However, these inequalities are not inevitable but rather the result of a series of political and economic decisions that have favored elites while marginalizing the majority" (Piketty, 2014).

The social problems of capitalism encompass the alienation of labor, the loss of cultural identity, and the fragmentation of communities. Work is viewed as a means of generating profits rather than as a meaningful and satisfying activity. Additionally, globalization and cultural homogenization, often associated with capitalism, can erode local traditions and cultures, resulting in the loss of cultural identity and the fragmentation of communities. In summary, contemporary capitalism presents a range of historical, geographical, social, and economic problems that pose significant challenges to sustainability, justice, and human well-being. In the following chapter, we will explore how a solidarity-based, circular, regenerative, and democratic economy could offer a fairer, more sustainable, and inclusive alternative to the current economic system.

> "The history of capitalism is a history of class struggle, where workers have sought to resist the exploitation and oppression of capital. Throughout the centuries, labor movements, trade unions, political parties, and social organizations have emerged to build alternatives to capitalism and defend workers' rights" (Marx and Engels, 1848).

As previously mentioned, geographically, capitalism has also generated global inequalities, with wealthy and developed countries exploiting the resources and labor of poor and underdeveloped nations. Economic globalization and trade liberalization have allowed for the free flow of capital and goods but have also resulted in increased competition and exploitation, especially in developing countries struggling to attract foreign investment and export their products. In social terms, capitalism has produced deep economic inequalities, resulting in the concentration of wealth in the hands of a small elite, while many workers struggle to survive on low wages and job insecurity. Limited access to basic services such as healthcare and education has further worsened social and economic inequalities. At the economic level, capitalism has proven to be unstable and prone to economic crises, such as the Great Depression of the 1930s and the global financial crisis of 2008. The drive to maximize profits under capitalism fosters financial speculation and a lack of regulation, worsening economic crises and increasing economic inequality. The rise in wealth and economic power of large corporations and financial elites leads to further concentration of wealth and resources in the hands of a few, while most of the population struggles to make ends meet on low wages and under precarious conditions.

This system also degrades the environment and exploits natural resources. The logic of capitalism focuses on short-term profit maximization, disregarding the long-term impacts on the environment and affected communities. Exploitation of natural resources, pollution, and environmental degradation are some of the negative consequences of this approach. According to Oxfam's 2021 report "Reward Work, Not Wealth," the wealthiest 1% of the global population owns more than double the wealth of the poorest 6.9%. This economic inequality has intensified in recent decades, largely due to the growing concentration of wealth in the hands of a business and financial elite.

> "Capitalism has generated a massive concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few corporations and economic elites, creating enormous economic and political inequalities. Corporations can wield their power to influence public policies and regulations, often favoring their interests at the expense of the majority of the population" (Harvey, 2010).

According to the 2019 UN report on biodiversity, one million animal and plant species are at risk of extinction due to human activity, which has negative consequences for climate stability and food security.

Precarious employment and lack of labor rights are also problems associated with contemporary capitalism. Many workers face poorly paid jobs, job insecurity, and a lack of social protection, which have a negative impact on their quality of life and economic well-being.

> "Capitalism did not emerge out of thin air in the 18th century but was built upon the contradictions and tensions of late feudalism and mercantilism. Primitive accumulation, exploitation of colonial resources, and the industrial revolution were the processes that gave rise to capitalist domination" (Harvey, 2003).

Similarly, there is a growing commodification of life, in which social and cultural relationships have become objects of trade and are subordinated to market logic. This has led to a culture of individualism and consumerism, where the worth of individuals is measured by their ability to consume and produce.

Since its origins in the 18th century, capitalism has been criticized for its effects on inequality. German economist and philosopher Karl Marx argued that capitalism was a system that inevitably produced a widening gap between the capitalist class and the working class, eventually leading to a social revolution. Marx's theory was complemented by other critics of capitalism, such as British economist John A. Hobson, who argued that capitalism fostered economic inequality through the concentration of capital in the hands of a small elite and the exploitation of workers. History has shown that these concerns were well founded. In the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution brought about the exploitation of workers in factories, mines, and other industries. Workers were forced to work long hours in dangerous conditions and often received low wages. Meanwhile, business owners accumulated enormous fortunes. Throughout the 20th century, capitalism evolved, and attempts were made to mitigate its most harmful effects. Trade unions were formed to protect workers' rights, governments established labor and safety regulations, and social welfare systems were created to provide protection for the most vulnerable. Nevertheless, inequality remains a fundamental problem today. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened existing inequalities and exposed the fragility of current economic systems.

According to the World Bank, in 2021, extreme poverty globally affected 9.2% of the population, around 706 million people. Similarly, economic inequality remains a significant issue worldwide: the wealthiest 1% of the global population owns more than double the wealth of the poorest 6.9%, according to Oxfam's 2022 report. In countries like the United States, the wealth gap between the rich and the poor has widened in recent decades: in 1980, the top 1% owned 10% of the country's total wealth, while in 2021, they owned 15%. At the same time, the bottom 50% of the population owns only 2% of the country's total wealth. In Latin America, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 30.5% of the population lived in poverty in 2020, representing over 185 million people. Meanwhile, 10.7% of the population (around sixty-five million people) lived in extreme poverty. In the region, inequality is also a significant problem: the top

1% of the population owns 25% of the total wealth, while the bottom 50% owns only 3.5%. According to ECLAC's "Social Panorama of Latin America 2021" report, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on poverty and inequality in the region. In 2020, the rate of extreme poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean increased from 11.3% to 12.5%, meaning that an additional twenty-two million people fell into extreme poverty. Additionally, the poverty rate increased from 30.5% to 33.7%, equivalent to an increase of twenty-two million people. The report also highlights that the pandemic has disproportionately affected vulnerable groups such as women, youth, informal workers, and Indigenous peoples. At the same time, the pandemic has exposed and worsened structural inequalities in the region, such as a lack of access to basic services, racial and gender discrimination, and the concentration of wealth in a small percentage of the population.

Contemporary capitalism presents a series of problems for workers worldwide. One of the main issues is job precariousness, which means that an increasing number of workers are in temporary, part-time, or contract positions. According to the International Labor Organization, in 2021, over 60% of the global workforce was engaged in informal employment, lacking labor protection, social security, and basic labor rights. Another problem is the growing automation and digitalization of the economy, leading to the elimination of many traditional jobs and the creation of new precarious and poorly paid positions. Furthermore, automation has also worsened inequality in the labor market, as higher-paying jobs often require technical skills and advanced education. Workers also face increased global competition, resulting in the offshoring and relocation of jobs to countries with lower wages and worse working conditions. This has led to job losses in many countries, especially in manufacturing sectors, and increased pressure on remaining workers to accept lower wages and poorer working conditions. Lastly, workers also face a lack of union representation and an erosion of labor rights. Many countries have reduced labor protections and weakened unions and collective bargaining, further increasing workers' vulnerability to employers.

These data clearly reflect the scale of the problems of inequality and poverty worldwide and their connection to the current economic system: capitalism. Contemporary capitalism is characterized by the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few, while most people are marginalized and struggle to survive. This is largely due to the pursuit of profit maximization and capital accumulation by businesses and individuals, leading to the exploitation of workers and natural resources and the exclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable. This situation is unsustainable and must be addressed urgently and decisively. It is necessary to rethink the economic system and look for fairer and more sustainable alternatives that consider the needs of all people and the planet.

A fair new economy could be a solution, based on collaboration, solidarity, and the common good rather than the maximization of individual benefits. This could be achieved through concrete policies and measures such as wealth regulation and redistribution, increasing wages and protecting labor rights, promoting local and circular economies, and investing in public services such as education and healthcare. In essence, inequality and poverty are global problems that require global and systemic solutions. We must look beyond the current economic system and work together to build a fairer and more sustainable economy that promotes the well-being of all people and the planet. The new fair economy can be a first step in that direction.

Regarding gender inequality, according to the World Economic Forum, the gender gap in terms of health and survival, education, economic participation, and political empowerment will not be closed for another 135.6 years. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened gender inequality, as women have been disproportionately affected by job losses and increased unpaid workloads at home. Gender inequality in the workplace is evident in several concerning quantitative indicators. For example, according to a 2020 ILO report, the global gender pay gap stands at 16%, meaning that women earn 16% less than men for the same work. Additionally, an estimated 740 million women worldwide are engaged in informal employment with low wages and inadequate labor protection.

In the environmental sphere, 21st-century capitalism has led to the overexploitation of natural resources and environmental degradation. According to the IPCC's 2018 report, it is estimated that if the global temperature increases by more than 1.5°C, there will be irreversible impacts on terrestrial and marine ecosystems, biodiversity, and human systems. Furthermore, according to the WHO's 2018 report, air pollution causes seven million deaths worldwide each year.

These data clearly show that inequality and poverty are severe and persistent problems worldwide, and effective and sustainable solutions are needed to address them meaningfully.

CASE STUDY: American Capitalism, Examining Inequality and Economic Dynamics

American capitalism stands as one of the most prominent economic systems worldwide, characterized by principles such as "private property, free enterprise, and a free market" (Stiglitz, 2018). This system operates on the basis that "the prices of goods and services are determined by supply and demand" (Stiglitz, 2018). While American capitalism has played a pivotal role in the global economy, it has faced criticism due to its emphasis on "profit maximization and economic inequality" (Stiglitz, 2018).

Companies operating within the American capitalist framework enjoy the freedom to produce and sell goods and services "without undue government interference" (Stiglitz, 2018). However, adherence to "governmental regulations and labor laws" is a requirement (Stiglitz, 2018). Entrepreneurs are afforded the opportunity to invest in businesses, motivated by the expectation of generating profits and "taking financial risks for potentially higher returns" (Stiglitz, 2018). Consumers, on the other hand, have the liberty to exercise their preferences by buying and consuming the products of their choice. In terms of labor, workers have the freedom to choose their employers and work locations (Stiglitz, 2018).

Nevertheless, the pursuit of profit often leads to certain negative consequences within the American capitalist system. One such consequence is the exploitation of workers and the exacerbation of economic inequality. Employers often strive to reduce labor costs, resulting in "low wages and poor working conditions" (Stiglitz, 2018). Additionally, companies may resort to outsourcing labor to countries with lower wages, thereby contributing to job losses for American workers (Stiglitz, 2018).

Furthermore, the lack of adequate regulations within American capitalism has given rise to environmental concerns. Insufficient oversight has led to instances of "environmental pollution and degradation" (Stiglitz, 2018). The consequences of these actions have far-reaching implications for the environment and future generations.

From a historical perspective, the economic and social challenges faced during the Great Depression were more severe than those experienced today. However, a prevailing sentiment of hope permeated society during that period, fostering expectations of improvement (Stiglitz, 2018). Presently, the level of inequality is unparalleled, with overall inequality resembling that of some of the darkest periods in history. Extreme wealth concentration among a minute fraction of the population, less than 1%, plays a significant role in driving this inequality (Stiglitz, 2018).

Data analysis reveals a substantial widening of the wealth gap between the rich and the poor in recent decades. According to the Pew Research Center, the share of American adults living in middle-income households fell from 61% in 1971 to 50% in 2015, while the share living in upper-income households rose from 14% to 21% over the same period (Pew Research Center, 2015). Furthermore, income growth for households in the middle and lower parts of the distribution has been substantially slower than income growth at the top since the 1970s (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2018).

In summary, American capitalism is a prominent economic system, driven by principles such as private property, free enterprise, and a free market. While it has contributed to global economic growth, it has been criticized for its focus on profit maximization and economic inequality. Exploitation of workers, outsourcing, inadequate regulations, and environmental degradation are some of the associated concerns. At the same time, the level of inequality seen today is unprecedented, with extreme wealth concentration worsening the disparity between the rich and the poor. Statistical data support this observation, depicting a significant widening of the wealth gap over the past few decades.

When it comes to poverty, data show that the poverty rate in the United States remains high compared with other developed countries. According to U.S. Census Bureau data for 2019, 10.5% of the population was below the poverty threshold (Semega et al., 2020). Moreover, poverty disproportionately affects certain groups, such as people of color, children, and the elderly. The data support the notion that poverty in the United States affects different groups unequally. For instance, in 2019, the poverty rate for African Americans was 18.8%, while for non-Hispanic whites, it was 7.3% (Semega et al., 2020). Similarly, the poverty rate for individuals under 18 years old was 14.4%, and for those aged 65 and older, it was 8.9% (Semega et al., 2020). It is important to note that although the poverty rate has decreased over the past few decades, there are still millions of people living in poverty, struggling to meet their basic needs for food, housing, and healthcare. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has further worsened poverty in the country, especially among the most vulnerable groups.

Another criticism of American capitalism revolves around the lack of social mobility. According to a study by the World Economic Forum, the United States ranks 27th out of 82 economies in terms of intergenerational social mobility, indicating that the likelihood of a child born into a low-income family reaching a higher income level is much lower than in other countries (World Economic Forum, 2020). The lack of social mobility has drawn criticism from many economists and public policy experts. Factors contributing to this include income inequality, limited access to education, and racial and gender discrimination. Income inequality plays a significant role in the lack of social mobility. The wealth gap has widened in recent decades, meaning that economic opportunities are more limited for those born into low-income families. Additionally, many low-wage jobs do not provide benefits such as health insurance, making it challenging for individuals to escape poverty. Limited access to education is also a significant factor contributing to the lack of social mobility. Private colleges and universities can be expensive, making higher education inaccessible for many low-income individuals. Furthermore, public schools in low-income areas often have limited resources and may not offer the same quality of education as schools in wealthier areas. Racial and gender discrimination can also limit social mobility. Studies have shown that people of color and women often face barriers in accessing economic and educational opportunities, making social mobility more difficult. Workplace discrimination can also restrict career opportunities for those belonging to marginalized groups. The study found that the rate of intergenerational social mobility is 55%, meaning that only 55% of children of low-income parents surpass their parents in terms of income (World Economic Forum, 2021). In comparison, social mobility in countries like Canada and Denmark stands at 76% and 75%, respectively (World Economic Forum, 2021). The report also shows that 62% of men and 50% of women in low-income households are still in the same income quintile in which they were born (World Economic Forum, 2021).

Criticisms of American capitalism extend to issues such as poverty rates, unequal distribution of wealth, and limited social mobility. Data reveal persistent poverty levels, particularly among specific groups. Moreover, the United States struggles with social mobility compared to other countries, with factors like income inequality, limited access to education, and discrimination contributing to this challenge.

During periods such as the "Roaring Twenties" and the "Happy 90s," the situation unfolded in a very similar fashion. The extreme inequality seen primarily stems from the concentration of wealth in the hands of a minuscule fraction of the population—the top one-tenth of 1%. This extreme inequality is not only inherently unjust but also has highly negative consequences for society. In fact, the mere existence of such inequality has a corrosive and detrimental effect on democracy. If we examine the notion of the "American Dream," an integral part of it is social mobility: being born into poverty, working hard, and achieving wealth. Previously, it was possible for a worker to obtain decent employment, buy a house, and afford a car to transport their children to school. However, all these aspirations have collapsed. In the United States, democracy has been a fundamental value and has been promoted as one of the country's key political and social virtues. Nevertheless, throughout the nation's history, tensions and conflicts have arisen between democracy and the economic and political elites. The concentration of wealth and power has been a recurring concern within the American political and economic system.

Policies that favor the wealthy and powerful have been a constant feature throughout U.S. history, which has had an impact on the quality and nature of democracy in the country. The privileged and powerful sectors have exerted disproportionate influence over politics and government, leading to a range of problems, including limited social mobility, widening wealth gaps, and persistent poverty. Moreover, the cost of elections has skyrocketed in recent decades, resulting in greater political control by large corporations and the wealthy. Elections require substantial amounts of money, and those with greater financial resources have an outsized influence on the political process and electoral outcomes. In the realm of political campaign financing, the 2020 presidential election saw expenditures exceeding $14 billion, a significant increase compared to the approximately $6.5 billion spent in the 2016 presidential election. Furthermore, 80% of that money came from multimillion-dollar donors and special interest groups. This reality suggests that the interests of the rich and powerful have a disproportionate influence on the political process and decision-making. Political parties have become entangled with large corporations, leading to a hollow political power that quickly translates into legislation that further concentrates wealth for the most powerful. Thus, fiscal policies, regulations, corporate governance rules, and a variety of other political measures are designed to increase the concentration of wealth and power. This vicious cycle perpetuates itself, and it is not a new phenomenon. In fact, it was described by Adam Smith in 1776 in his famous book "The Wealth of Nations." Smith's work tells us that in England, the main architects of policies were the owners of society, at that time the merchants and manufacturers. They ensured that their own interests were well taken care of, regardless of the grave impact on the population of England or on other populations. Today, it is no longer just merchants and manufacturers; financial institutions and multinational corporations occupy the role of what Adam Smith called the "masters of mankind." They follow the motto "everything for us and nothing for the rest." However, in the absence of widespread popular reaction, that is essentially what one should expect. Indeed, fiscal and regulatory policies, as in other countries, have been criticized for their impact on the concentration of wealth and power. For example, reducing taxes for corporations and high-income individuals, as well as eliminating or weakening regulations aimed at protecting consumers and the environment, have been perceived as policies that favor the richest and most powerful. Furthermore, corporate governance rules have been criticized for allowing corporate executives to exert significant influence over decision-making and the distribution of benefits, to the detriment of workers and minority shareholders. The presence of powerful interest groups, such as business lobbying groups and large corporations, has also been cited as a factor influencing the formulation of public policies that serve the interests of these economic elites. Consequently, these policies have contributed to the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of economic and business elites, allowing them to influence policies that maintain and reinforce their privileged position in society.

Throughout the history of the United States, there has been an ongoing struggle between pressure for greater freedom and democracy from below and efforts by the elite to increase control and dominance from above. This conflict dates to the founding of the country. James Madison, the primary architect of the Constitution, believed in democracy as few others in the world did at the time. However, he also believed that the American system should be designed—and indeed, thanks to his initiative, was designed—so that power would remain in the hands of the wealthiest, as they were considered the most responsible group of men. Therefore, the formal constitutional structure placed greater power in the hands of the Senate. The conflict between popular demands for freedom and democracy and the quest for control and domination by elites has been a constant in the history of the United States. Since the country's founding, the struggle for independence from the British Crown was largely motivated by the colonists' pursuit of greater freedom and democracy. However, the political and economic structure that emerged after independence remained dominated by an elite of landowners and merchants. During the 19th century, the country faced significant conflicts such as the Civil War, in which the Southern states fought to preserve the system of slavery that provided them with economic and political control over the Black population. Despite the Northern victory in the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, struggles for equality and democracy for the Black population continued for decades, including the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In the 20th century, struggles for social justice and democracy continued through the labor movement, women's suffrage, the fight for civil rights for African Americans and other minorities, and, more recently, movements for racial justice and gender equality. However, as the concentration of wealth and power has intensified in recent decades, it has become increasingly difficult for popular demands for freedom and democracy to have a real impact on policy and the structure of power. This has led to increased inequality, poverty, and social exclusion, which in turn have generated greater frustration and alienation among the population, potentially leading to further social conflict and tension.

> "The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, elective, or otherwise, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny."

This quote refers to the importance of the separation of powers and the prevention of the accumulation of power in the same hands, whether by one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, chosen, or otherwise. Such a concentration of power can degrade individual freedom just as an absolute government can.

It should be noted that during Madison's time, the Senate was not elected but selected by the wealthiest individuals. Madison believed that society's greatest concern should be to protect the wealthy minority against the majority. He argued that if the poor majority were free to vote, they could take away the property of the rich. Madison believed this would be unjust and that the constitutional system therefore had to be designed to prevent democracy.

This debate has a long tradition that dates to Aristotle's first treatise on the political system, "Politics." Aristotle states that democracy is the best system but also acknowledges that if the Athenians were to establish a democracy, they would organize and take property away from the rich. Madison warned of this scenario.

Looking at the history of the United States, there has been a constant struggle between these two tendencies. On one side is a democratizing tendency driven primarily by the population—a pressure from below. This ongoing struggle goes through periods of regression and progress. For example, the 1960s were a period of significant democratization, when previously passive and apathetic sectors of the population organized and became active, exerting pressure in support of their demands. They became increasingly involved in activism and decision-making, shifting public consciousness. Minority groups organized and asserted their rights, alongside movements for women's rights, environmental protection, opposition to aggression, and concern for the well-being of others. These civilizing actions caused great fear among political leaders, particularly those from wealthier socioeconomic backgrounds.

The reaction to these civilizing effects of the 1960s—and the strength of the counterattack—became evident in the 1970s. It took the form of an enormous and well-coordinated corporate offensive aimed at countering the egalitarian efforts undertaken during Nixon's presidency. This can be seen in various developments, such as the famous Powell Memorandum sent to the Chamber of Commerce, the largest business lobbying group, by Louis Powell, who later became a Supreme Court Justice. In the memorandum, Powell warned that the business world was losing control over society and that something needed to be done to counter these forces. While he framed it as a defense against external forces, it was essentially a call for the business world to use its control over resources to launch a major offensive against this democratizing wave. This twelve-page manifesto is "important because, if not considered the founding document, it is the most condensed declaration intended to establish the theoretical framework and political design for the current assault against any vestige of democratic public life that is not itself subordinate to the logic of the alleged free-market system," as Henry A. Giroux wrote.

Powell recommended action across various areas, ranging from expanding the long-term role of the USCC (U.S. Chamber of Commerce), which "enjoys a strategic position" and broad support, to exerting influence over universities that "assault the (free-market) system" and produce students and professionals who have lost confidence in the system and seek employment "in centers with real centers of influence," such as "new media, especially television," government, politics, academia, and various levels of education. These "intellectuals" sometimes end up employed in regulatory agencies or government departments with broad authority over a business system in which they do not believe. Powell recommended that the USCC consider establishing a team of highly qualified social science scholars who believe in the system and whose authority is widely respected. He also suggested evaluating textbooks, especially in economics, political science, and sociology, to restore what he regarded as the essential balance of academic freedom. Additionally, he proposed ensuring the presence of spokespersons for free enterprise in university fields dominated, as he claimed, by communists who, according to an FBI list, gave more than one hundred lectures in 1970, along with "hundreds of presentations by leftists and liberals who express the views indicated above in this memorandum." Powell continued by recommending that the USCC increase its influence in business schools, secondary education, and the public through a team of eminent academics, writers, and speakers who would direct research, analysis, writing, and communication. They would be supported by a "staff team" with access to journalists. Television "must be kept, like textbooks, under constant surveillance," including through daily analysis of news coverage that often contains the most insidious criticisms of the business system and gradually erodes "confidence in business and free enterprise." This monitoring and remedial action, such as complaints to media regulatory authorities, should also extend to radio and other press outlets. According to Powell, the USCC's "faculty of scholars" should publish in response to their "liberal and leftist" colleagues.

These organic intellectuals serving the free-enterprise system, as Gramsci would define them, should be given incentives to publish articles "in a broad spectrum of journals and newspapers," as well as academic books, paperbacks, and pamphlets, flooding newsstands at airports, pharmacies, and other venues with publications to counter those proposing everything from revolution to the eroticism of free love. This strategy of dominating public space, defending the system, and producing a socially committed vision requires funding, which Powell recommends should form part of the annual budgets companies allocate to advertising their products. He concludes that the "threat to the business system" is a "threat to individual freedom" and urges the use of the power of the twenty million American shareholders, who can be mobilized to support an educational program and a political action program. The "Powell Memorandum" is probably the birth certificate of the strategy aimed at appropriating the thought and imagination of the American people and converting them to the utopia of neoliberalism.

Controlling the main levers of the state and the institutions that govern society is the central element of any revolutionary or counterrevolutionary strategy. No revolution or counterrevolution has endured without this requirement. And the neoliberal counterrevolution, the subject of the following discussion, is no exception. On the liberal side, something remarkably similar occurred: the first major report of the Trilateral Commission referred to this as "The Crisis of Democracy." The Trilateral Commission consists of internationalist liberals, and its orientation is clear, since many of its members came from the Carter administration. They were also alarmed by the democratizing movements of the 1960s and believed that a reaction was necessary because they thought there was an excess of democracy.

Those sectors of the population that had previously been passive and obedient—what used to be called special interest groups—began to organize and enter the political arena. The dominant groups then argued that this placed too much pressure on the state and that it could not cope with all those demands. Therefore, these groups had to return to passivity and be depoliticized. They were particularly concerned about what was happening with young people; young people were becoming too free and independent. They presented this as a failure on the part of schools, universities, and churches—those institutions responsible for the indoctrination of young people. If we look at their study, there is one interest they never mention: private business. And that is logical, because it does not represent a special interest but rather the national interest. So, private business does not have a problem: it can employ lobbyists, fund campaigns, appoint executives, and make decisions. That is fine, because it is the other groups—the special-interest groups, the general population—that must be subordinated. This ideological response was one part of the counterattack, but the larger effort proceeding in parallel was simply the redesign of the economy.

Since the 1970s, there has been a coordinated effort by the masters of humanity and the owners of society to change the economy in two key ways. First, by increasing the role of financial institutions such as banks, investment companies, insurance companies, and so on. By 2007, just before the last crisis, financial institutions already accounted for 40 percent of corporate profits, far more than at any previous time. In the 1950s and for many years thereafter, the U.S. economy was primarily based on domestic production. It was the world's leading industrial center. Financial institutions were a relatively small part of the economy, and their function was to channel unused assets, such as savers' bank deposits, into productive activity. A regulatory system was established: banks were regulated, and commercial and investment banking were separated to limit risky investment practices that could affect individuals. During the period of regulation, there were no financial bankruptcies. Beginning in the 1970s, however, everything changed, with an enormous increase in speculative capital movements. There was also a significant shift in the financial sector from traditional banking toward risky investments, complex financial instruments, and monetary manipulation. Increasingly, the country's business shifted away from domestic production, and finance became the main business in major metropolitan areas. This shift is even noticeable in the selection of corporate directors. In the 1950s or 1960s, the director of a major American corporation was most likely an engineer who had studied industrial management at MIT, for example. Nowadays, however, those who hold management and other senior positions are often graduates of business schools who have learned various financial techniques and so on. In the 1970s, General Electric, for example, could earn more profit through financial operations than by producing goods in the United States. Indeed, in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a significant transformation in the U.S. economy, in which many large corporations shifted their focus toward financial services and speculation. In this context, General Electric (GE) was one of the companies that led this trend. According to a 1989 Forbes article, GE became a company "more interested in manipulating its short-term profits than producing products for the global market." Instead of investing in research and product development, GE and other companies began to focus on the financial sector, investing in stocks and other high-risk assets to obtain large short-term profits. As a result, these companies became increasingly disconnected from the real economy and more concerned with maximizing shareholder profits than with creating jobs and stimulating economic growth. It should be noted that General Electric today is essentially a financial institution, generating half of its profits by moving capital in complicated ways. It is not at all clear whether it generates any value for the economy. This phenomenon is known as the financialization of the economy. The second process is the outsourcing of production. According to General Electric's 2021 annual report, the company generated a total of $85.9 billion in revenue during fiscal year 2020. Of that amount, approximately 50% came from its financial divisions, including GE Capital, while the rest came from its energy, aviation, and healthcare divisions. In terms of profit, the report shows that General Electric achieved net income of $5.2 billion in 2020.

The commercial system was reconstructed with the explicit aim of pitting workers against one another worldwide, leading to a reduction in the share of income received by the working class. According to data from the U.S. Department of Labor, the average weekly wage for nonsupervisory workers in the private sector in January 2022 was $962, a 4.6% increase from January 2021. However, adjusted for inflation, the real average weekly wage for nonsupervisory workers in the private sector in January 2022 was approximately 5% lower than in 1973. This suggests that although wages have increased nominally, they have not kept pace with inflation and productivity, meaning that the working class is receiving a smaller share of the wealth generated by the economy.

Furthermore, global competition has led to job offshoring and the importation of cheaper manufactured goods, affecting some U.S. workers who previously held well-paying manufacturing jobs. This has hit the

United States particularly hard but is occurring worldwide, which means that workers in the United States compete, for example, with super-exploited workers in China. To give a sense of the disparity, in 2001 the minimum wage in the United States was $5.15 per hour, while the minimum wage in China was around $0.40 per hour. Currently, the federal minimum wage in the United States is $7.25 per hour, while in China the minimum wage varies by region but can be around $2 per hour in some urban areas. In general, workers in China earn much less than workers in the United States and other developed countries, leading to unequal competition in the global labor market.

Highly paid professionals are protected; they do not have to compete with the rest of the world at all, and, of course, capital can move freely. Workers, on the other hand, cannot move freely, while capital can. Classical thinkers such as Adam Smith noted that the free movement of labor is the basis of any free-trade system, yet workers largely remain trapped. The rich and privileged are protected, receiving recognition and praise, and the consequences are obvious. Policies are designed to increase insecurity. Alan Greenspan, when testifying before Congress, explained his success in economic management through what he called "increased worker insecurity." The limits on wage growth have become clear in recent years, but, as I mentioned earlier, job insecurity plays a dominant role in this. By keeping workers insecure, you have them under control, and they will not demand decent wages or decent working conditions, or the right to free association—that is, the right to form unions.

Greenspan has advocated for policies that reduce job security and increase flexibility in the labor market. For example, in a speech given in 1997 to the American Enterprise Institute, Greenspan said, "If we want our economy to grow faster, then we must increase worker insecurity." This position is framed within the economic theory of labor flexibility, which argues that reducing labor rights and lowering barriers to hiring and firing allow companies to become more competitive and promote economic growth. However, this theory has been criticized by many economists and labor activists, who argue that labor flexibility benefits employers and investors at the expense of workers and local communities. The elimination of labor rights and the reduction of barriers to hiring and firing can lead to greater job insecurity, lower wages, and increased wealth polarization. Similarly, the offshoring of production to countries with lower wages has also been criticized for its impact on the economy and society. While it may provide companies with a cost advantage, it can also have negative consequences such as job losses and deindustrialization in local communities, the exploitation of workers in developing countries, and contributions to climate change through increased transportation and greenhouse gas emissions. These two processes, financialization and production offshoring, have contributed to a vicious cycle of concentration of wealth and power, in which the interests of the rich and powerful are perpetuated at the expense of most of the population.

The American Dream, like many ideals, was partly symbolic but also partly real. The 1950s and 1960s were the period of greatest economic growth in American history. During this Golden Age, growth was broadly shared, meaning that the poorest fifth of the country prospered at the same rate as the richest fifth. The government implemented social welfare measures that improved the lives of most of the population. For example, a Black worker could find a decent job in an automobile factory, buy a house and a car, send their children to school, and so on. This applied to all areas of life.

When the United States was primarily an industrial center, it cared about its domestic consumers. It was well known that Henry Ford increased the wages of his employees so that they could afford to buy cars. However, when we look at what banks call the international plutonomy—a small percentage of the world's population accumulating ever greater wealth—its members are no longer concerned about what happens to American consumers because most of those consumers will not purchase their products on a large scale anyway. Their priorities are quarterly profits, even when based on financial manipulation, along with high salaries, generous bonuses, offshore production when necessary, and production geared toward the wealthy classes in the country and their counterparts abroad. This dynamic has led to a situation in which the global economy is increasingly disconnected from the reality of much of the population, contributing to growing economic inequality and the exclusion of large segments of society.

What about the rest? There is now a term for them: the precariat, or precarious proletariat of the global working class, whose members live increasingly precarious lives. This is related to attitudes toward the country. During the period of great economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s, taxes on wealthy individuals, corporations, and dividends were much higher. The tax system was later redesigned so that taxes on the rich decreased and, as a result, taxes on the rest of the population increased. Now, the tendency is to favor taxes on salaries and consumption, which everyone pays, rather than on dividends, which primarily affect the wealthy. The figures in this regard are quite shocking. Of course, there is a pretext for this. In this case, the claim is that such a system encourages investment and increases employment, but there is no evidence of that. If you want to encourage investment, give money to the poor and the working class. They must survive, so they will spend their wages, which stimulates production and investment and increases employment, and so on. If you are an ideologue of the ruling class, you follow a different line. In fact, it is almost absurd now. Corporations have pockets full of money. General Electric, for example, pays zero taxes and earns enormous profits. It records profits elsewhere or defers payment, but it does not pay taxes upfront. This is a common practice by which the largest corporations in the United States have shifted the responsibility for supporting society onto the rest of the population. According to a report from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the sixty largest corporations in the United States evaded paying federal taxes in 2018, despite earning a total of $79 billion in profits. Other investigations have also found that many corporations use tax-avoidance techniques to reduce or eliminate tax payments, including transferring profits to subsidiaries in tax havens or exploiting loopholes in the tax code.

Solidarity is quite dangerous from the perspective of the elites. They advocate for self-interest rather than concern for others, which differs greatly from the views of figures like Adam Smith, who grounded his economic thinking in the principle of empathy, considering it fundamental to human interactions. However, these basic human emotions have been painstakingly uprooted from people's minds. This can be seen in politics, for example, in attacks on social security. Social security is based on the principle of solidarity, which entails taking care of others. It means paying taxes from one's income so that the widow on the other side of the city has something to live on. This principle sustains a significant portion of the population, but it does not serve the interests of the wealthy, so they work to dismantle it. One way to achieve this is by cutting off its funding. If you want to dismantle a system, start by defunding it. That way, it will not work, and people will become angry and demand something else. It is a standard technique for privatizing certain systems. It is true that a lack of funding can be used as a technique to weaken or dismantle systems, including public ones. This has been used in some cases to justify the privatization of public services, such as education and healthcare, on the argument that the private sector can provide them more efficiently. However, it is also important to consider that funding cuts can have negative consequences for users of these systems, especially those who depend more heavily on public services, such as low-income sectors or marginalized minorities. Moreover, privatization often does not improve the quality or accessibility of services and can create new barriers to access and increase costs for users. We can see this in attacks on public schools, which are based on the principle of solidarity. The principle of solidarity states, "I happily pay my taxes so that the children across the street can go to school." That is a normal human emotion. However, they aim to eradicate it from our minds. If my children no longer attend school, why should I pay taxes? They want to privatize it, and thus the entire public education system, from daycare to higher education, is under severe attack. It is one of the jewels of American society. The golden age of America was characterized by tremendous growth, and public education played a significant role. However, in more than half of the states, university funding now comes from tuition fees rather than regular state funding. This is a radical shift and a tremendous burden for students, and it means that unless they come from wealthy families, they will end up heavily indebted after completing their studies. When you have significant debt, you are trapped. Perhaps you want to be a public-interest lawyer, but you will have to work for a corporate firm to pay off those debts. Once you enter that world, you cannot easily escape it. This example illustrates how privatization and a lack of state funding can affect higher education and, consequently, social and economic mobility. It can also affect the quality of education and research conducted at universities, as private funding may be driven by commercial interests rather than academic excellence. It is important to note that this issue is not exclusive to the United States; it has also been observed in other countries where higher education has undergone privatization and reductions in state funding. According to data from the College Board, in the 2020-2021 academic year, the average cost of tuition and fees at a four-year public university was \$10,560 for in-state students and \$27,020 for out-of-state students. At private four-year universities, the average cost of tuition and fees was \$37,650. These costs do not include additional expenses such as housing, meals, books, and supplies, which can add several thousand dollars per year. According to the Economic Policy Institute, in 2020, the average student debt for university graduates was \$32,731.

If we analyze the history of regulation, such as rules governing railways and finance, we can see that regulations are often driven or supported by the economic consortia being regulated. The reason is that they know they can eventually control the regulators. This can lead to what is known as regulatory capture, in which regulated businesses control the regulators. This can reach the point where bank lobbyists effectively write financial regulations. This has been a recurring trend throughout history and is a natural outcome when considering the distribution of power.

One thing that expanded in the 1970s was lobbying aimed at controlling legislation. Lobbying expenditures have increased significantly in recent decades. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, more than $3.5 billion was spent on lobbying in Washington, D.C., in 2020. Lobbying groups also have significant influence on the legislative process and the formulation of public policy in areas such as healthcare, the environment, labor rights, energy, and the military-industrial complex, among others.

In the 1970s, business leaders were unhappy with the welfare state of the 1960s, particularly under Richard Nixon, who is not well regarded by the public but was the last president of the New Deal era and was considered a traitor to its principles. During Nixon's administration, consumer safety legislation and workplace health and safety regulations were enacted. Of course, this did not sit well with business leaders who disliked high taxes and regulations, so they launched a coordinated effort to change things. Lobbying increased exponentially, and deregulation accelerated sharply.

There were no financial crises in the 1950s and 1960s because the regulatory apparatus of the New Deal was still in place. As they started dismantling it under financial, business, and political pressures, more economic collapses occurred. This continued for years, starting in the 1970s and intensifying in the 1980s. Congress was asked to approve federal loan guarantees of between $1 billion and $1.5 billion for an automobile company. All of this was relatively safe because they knew the government would come to the rescue. For example, Reagan, instead of letting them pay the price, rescued banks like Continental Illinois, which became the largest bailout in U.S. history up to that point. As a result, Reagan's administration ended with a major economic crisis known as the savings and loan crisis.

This crisis was largely caused by the deregulation of the banking and savings-and-loan industries, which allowed for greater speculation and risky loans. When some of these loans were not repaid, financial institutions faced significant losses that threatened their solvency and the stability of the entire financial system. Instead of allowing troubled banks to collapse and bear the consequences of their bad decisions, as happened during the Great Depression in the 1930s, the U.S. government decided to bail them out. This led to a transfer of debt and risk from the private sector to the public sector, worsening the ongoing fiscal and economic crisis. According to U.S. government figures, the total cost of the crisis was estimated to be around $160 billion, including the cost of rescuing the financial institutions involved. It is also estimated that around 747 savings and loan institutions experienced financial problems during this period.

In 1999, the regulation that separated commercial banks from investment banks was dismantled, leading to the Bush and Obama bailouts. Every time this happens, taxpayers are called upon to rescue those who created the crisis, increasingly the large financial institutions. The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act eliminated the separation between commercial banks and investment and insurance institutions, allowing financial companies to engage in a wide range of financial activities and enabling banks to merge with insurance companies and brokerages. This is considered a significant factor in the 2008 financial crisis. Regarding the bailouts, during the 2008 financial crisis, the George W. Bush administration approved a $700 billion rescue package known as the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 to aid troubled banks and financial companies. Later, President Barack Obama implemented his own bailout program, the 2009 Economic Crisis Relief and Reinvestment Act, which included measures aimed at stabilizing the economy, such as capital injections into banks and assistance to homeowners facing foreclosure. The exact costs of these bailouts vary depending on the sources and methodologies used to calculate them, but some estimates put the total cost to taxpayers at around $1.2 trillion.

In a capitalist economy, such events should not occur. In a capitalist system, investors who make risky investments would be allowed to fail. However, the rich and powerful do not want a capitalist system; they want to be able to run to the government for help as soon as they are in trouble and be rescued by the taxpayers. This is what is referred to as being "too big to fail." Companies and investors should bear the risks of their decisions and accept the consequences of their failures without resorting to state aid. However, in practice, the powerful and large corporations often have significant influence over the government and can exert pressure to obtain bailouts or tax exemptions that allow them to evade the consequences of their actions. This can create an unfair system where the powerful are protected and the less powerful are left to fend for themselves.

Nobel laureates in economics such as Stiglitz and Krugman strongly disagree with the path we are following. Stiglitz has been critical of financial deregulation and growing economic inequality, arguing that both undermine economic and social stability. Krugman, on the other hand, has been critical of fiscal austerity policies and has advocated for increased public investment to stimulate economic growth. He has also argued that economic inequality is a barrier to sustainable growth and that redistribution policies are necessary to address this issue.

The people chosen to solve the crisis are those who created it, such as Robert Rubin and people from Goldman Sachs. They created the crisis and now they are more powerful than ever. Is this a coincidence? No, when you choose those people to set up an economic plan, what did you expect to happen? Meanwhile, the poor are left to fend for themselves under the laws of the market without expecting any government help, so the government becomes the problem, not the solution. This is essentially neoliberalism, which has a dual nature rooted in economic history: one set of rules for the rich and an opposing set for the poor. Nothing else should be expected; this is exactly the dynamic that emerges if the population consents to it. Credit-rating agencies, as they evaluate the state of corporations, are already factoring in the taxpayer bailout expected in the next crisis. This means that the beneficiaries of these ratings—the big banks—can borrow more money at lower cost and thus displace small competitors, leading to greater concentration. Whichever way you look at it, policies are designed in this way, which should not come as a surprise to anyone. This is what happens when you place power in the hands of a small sector of the wealthy who are dedicated to increasing their own power, as expected. The concentration of wealth leads to the concentration of political power, especially because the cost of elections has skyrocketed, putting political parties in the pockets of large corporations.

The case of Citizens United in 2009 marked a highly significant ruling by the Supreme Court of the United States. This decision has its roots in the Fourteenth Amendment, which was originally created to protect the rights of former slaves. The amendment states, "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." However, it has also been interpreted as protecting corporations, granting them rights that go beyond those of individuals. Treating corporations as "persons" under the law can be seen as controversial because they are legal entities created by the state.

Over a century ago, corporations were granted individual rights, and over the years, these rights expanded, surpassing those of ordinary individuals. For instance, if General Motors were to invest in Mexico, it would obtain the same national rights as a Mexican company. While the notion of "personhood" was extended to include corporations, it was simultaneously restricted. Taking the Fourteenth Amendment literally, no undocumented foreigner should be deprived of their rights if they are considered a person. However, undocumented foreigners living in the United States, contributing to the construction of buildings for U.S. citizens or tending to their gardens, are not regarded as persons. In contrast, General Electric is recognized as a person—a perpetually existing and incredibly powerful entity. This perversion of basic moral principles and the obvious meaning of the law is astounding.

In the 1970s, the courts decided that money is a form of expression in the landmark case of Buckley v. Valeo (1976). This ruling laid the groundwork for the subsequent Citizens United case, which declared that corporations' freedom of speech, particularly their right to spend money as they wish, cannot be limited. This means that corporations, which have already exerted significant influence through campaign donations, are now virtually unrestricted in their political spending. Consequently, there has been a substantial influx of corporate money into politics, leading to concerns about the excessive influence of money in the political system and the ability of corporations to shape political decision-making in their own interests.

Many argue that this phenomenon has contributed to a dysfunctional political system incapable of effectively addressing the real issues faced by ordinary people. It represents a significant threat to what remains of democracy. It is intriguing to examine judicial rulings, such as the pivotal case of Citizens United, in which the ruling treated corporations as persons and granted them freedom of speech. This raises the question of why General Electric cannot spend as much money as it wishes. While CBS is afforded freedom of expression, this is expected of it as a media outlet fulfilling a public-service role. On the other hand, General Electric's aim is to maximize profits for its CEO and shareholders. This incredible decision places the country in a position where corporate power extends beyond what was once imaginable. It perpetuates a vicious cycle.

There exists an organized force that, despite its many flaws, has traditionally been at the forefront of efforts to improve the lives of the general population. This force is the organized labor movement, which serves as a barrier against corporate tyranny. It is the only barrier that continues to function and to prevent the perpetuation of this vicious cycle leading to corporate tyranny.

One of the main reasons behind the concentrated and almost fanatical attack on unions and the organized labor movement is that they serve as a democratizing force. They serve as a barrier protecting not only workers' rights but broader popular rights as well. This interferes with the privileges and power of those who own and control society. The anti-union sentiment among the U.S. elites is deeply ingrained, to the point where it threatens the basic foundations of labor rights.

Anti-union sentiment in the United States has a long history and persists in certain sectors. Since the era of industrialization in the 19th century, employers have fought against workers' efforts to organize and form unions. Employers have used tactics such as dismissals, intimidation, and violence to prevent workers from joining together and bargaining collectively for better wages and working conditions.

Throughout the 20th century, the labor movement achieved significant advances in labor rights and protections. These include the establishment of the minimum wage, the 40-hour workweek, the right to collective bargaining, and job security. However, there are still many challenges and barriers to union organizing. The country has labor laws and regulations that hinder union organization, such as the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, which restricts the ability of unions to strike and negotiate collective agreements with employers. Additionally, many states have so-called "right-to-work" laws, which allow non-unionized workers to receive benefits from collective bargaining agreements without paying union dues.

Despite these challenges, the organized labor movement continues to fight for better working conditions and rights for workers. Unions have supported workers in various industries and sectors, including education, healthcare, retail, construction, and manufacturing. They have also been strong advocates for public policies that benefit workers, such as increasing the minimum wage, protecting the rights of immigrant workers, and expanding social security. The basic principle of the International Labor Organization is the right to organize and form unions, something that has never been ratified in the United States. The U.S. stands apart from other major societies in this regard. It was not always taboo in American politics, as the U.S. working class has a long and violent history compared to other similar societies. However, the labor movement was strong until the 1920s, a period comparable to the present, when it was practically crushed. In the mid-1930s, the movement began to rebuild. Even President Franklin Delano Roosevelt expressed his support for progressive legislation that would benefit society. However, he needed a way to get that legislation approved. He told union leaders and others, "Make me do it." His words meant that they should take to the streets, organize protests, and strengthen the labor movement. With enough popular pressure, he would be able to pass the legislation they wanted. In the mid-1930s, there was a combination of a favorable government and significant popular activism. There were strikes and sit-down actions that greatly frightened business owners. Businesspeople were horrified. If you read the economic press from the late 1930s, you will see discussions about the threat industrial employers faced from the growing political power of the masses, which they believed needed to be suppressed. During World War II, there was a temporary pause, but immediately after the war, the business offensive began in full force. McCarthyism was used as propaganda by the business community to attack unions in the postwar period. Although McCarthyism itself ended in the mid-1950s, the broader anti-union and anti-communist offensive persisted in subsequent decades, intensifying during the Reagan years and continuing into the early 1990s. The administration of Ronald Reagan was known for its anti-union and anti-government stance. Reagan fired 11,000 air traffic controllers who went on strike in 1981, which had a lasting impact on the labor movement. He also removed many worker protections, such as protections for the right to unionize and laws protecting workers from discrimination in the workplace. During the 1990s, under the administration of George H.W. Bush, there was also a hostile attitude toward unions and the labor movement in general. The administration worked to weaken workers' rights in both the public and private sectors and promoted policies that favored employers at the expense of workers. In summary, hostility toward unions and organized labor has been a constant in American politics, fueled by various factors including business propaganda, antipathy toward communism, and political ideology. Currently, less than 7 percent of private-sector workers are unionized. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2021, the unionization rate in the private sector was 6.3%, compared to 16.8% in 1983. This decline can be attributed to various factors, including increasing pressure from companies to discourage unionization, job outsourcing to countries with cheaper labor, and a series of government policies that have weakened labor and union rights. As a result, the traditional resistance to the offensive waged by the business class, which has a strong class consciousness, has dissolved.

Now, when one is in a position of power, they want to maintain class consciousness for themselves but suppress it in others. During the early years of the Industrial Revolution in the United States, the working class was acutely aware of this. They viewed wage labor as a form of slavery, and it was such a popular idea that it became the slogan of the Republican Party. This was a strong class consciousness. However, those who hold power and privilege have no interest in people developing class consciousness. They do not want them to know that they belong to the oppressed class. As a result, we have one of the few societies where class is simply not discussed. However, the concept of class is quite simple—those who give orders and those who carry them out essentially define class. Of course, it is more nuanced and complex, but that is the basic idea.

The public relations industry, the advertising sector dedicated to creating consumers, is a phenomenon that developed in the freest countries, such as Great Britain and the United States. There is a clear reason for this. About a century ago, it became clear that controlling the population through force was not going to be easy. Too much freedom had been gained. There were workers' organizations, labor parties in many countries' parliaments, women were gaining the right to vote, and so on. Other means were needed to control people, and it was concluded and clearly expressed that to control individuals, it was necessary to control their beliefs and attitudes. One of the most effective ways to shape people's attitudes is what the great political economist Thorstein Veblen called the manufacturing of consumers. If someone can manufacture a product and make people believe that it is essential to giving meaning to their lives, they will become trapped in the role of a consumer.

Thorstein Veblen's theory of the manufacturing of consumers is interesting and relevant today, when advertising and marketing are omnipresent. Veblen argued that capitalism relies on creating an anxious and eager consumer who is willing to buy anything to satisfy their desire for status and social recognition. In his book "The Theory of the Leisure Class," Veblen described how advertising and marketing are used to stimulate demand for goods and services that are not necessary for daily life but are seen as symbols of status and prestige.

The manufacturing of consumers can have negative consequences for society and the environment as it encourages excessive consumption and waste of natural resources. It can also be detrimental to people's health and well-being as it can foster addiction to certain products and indebtedness. In response to this, some economists have proposed alternatives to the model of consumption based on constant growth, such as the circular economy and the sharing economy, which focus on the reuse and exchange of existing resources rather than the constant production of new goods. These theories seek to promote more conscious and sustainable consumption and can help reduce dependence on the manufacturing of consumers in the capitalist economy.

Expanding on the analysis, it is important to recognize the profound impact of the manufacturing of consumers on society and individuals. The relentless promotion of consumerism not only shapes people's desires and aspirations but also perpetuates a culture of materialism and status-seeking. Advertising and marketing techniques are carefully designed to create a sense of need and urgency, convincing individuals that their happiness and fulfillment can be found through the acquisition of products and services.

In this context, the manufacturing of consumers becomes a powerful tool for sustaining and reinforcing social and economic inequalities. By equating personal worth with material possessions and status symbols, it widens the divide between the haves and the have-nots. Those who are unable to keep up with the consumerist ideals are often marginalized and stigmatized, leading to feelings of inadequacy and exclusion.

Moreover, the manufacturing of consumers is closely intertwined with the workings of the capitalist system. It relies on the continuous expansion of markets and consumption to sustain economic growth and profitability. This drive for perpetual growth, however, comes at the expense of finite resources and environmental degradation. The overconsumption and waste generated by the manufacturing of consumers contribute to climate change, resource depletion, and ecological imbalances, posing significant challenges for the long-term sustainability of our planet.

Critics argue that the manufacturing of consumers also perpetuates a cycle of debt and financial instability. To keep up with the idealized lifestyles portrayed in advertising, individuals may resort to excessive borrowing and reliance on credit, leading to personal financial crises and wider systemic risks. This can further worsen social inequalities, as those with limited financial means are more likely to fall into debt traps and face financial hardships.

To address these issues, alternative approaches to consumption and economic systems have emerged. The concept of a circular economy, for instance, aims to minimize waste and maximize resource efficiency by designing products for durability, repairability, and recyclability. By shifting toward a more sustainable and regenerative model, the circular economy seeks to reduce dependence on the constant production and consumption of new goods.

Similarly, the sharing economy promotes the collaborative use of resources, encouraging the sharing, renting, and swapping of goods and services. This model emphasizes access over ownership and fosters community connections, thereby reducing the need for excessive production and the associated environmental impacts.

Education and awareness play a crucial role in challenging the manufacturing of consumers and promoting more conscious consumption patterns. By fostering critical thinking and media literacy, individuals can develop a better understanding of the persuasive techniques used in advertising and make more informed choices about their consumption habits.

The manufacturing of consumers is a powerful force that shapes our desires, behaviors, and societal structures. It perpetuates a culture of materialism, contributes to social inequalities, and poses significant environmental challenges. Exploring alternative models of consumption and promoting conscious and sustainable choices can help counterbalance the influence of the manufacturing of consumers and pave the way toward a fairer and more environmentally responsible future.

In the economic press of the 1920s, there was a discussion about the need to divert people's attention toward the superficial aspects of life, such as fashion and consumption, to keep them away from other matters. This strategy is known as "demand manipulation" and involves creating desires and needs in consumers through advertising and marketing techniques, thereby boosting product sales and increasing company profits. Marketing and advertising experts employ a variety of techniques to manipulate demand, including creating artificial needs, generating consumer anxiety and fear, creating stereotypes, and using emotional persuasion. Often, these techniques are subtly employed so that consumers are unaware that they are being manipulated. The result of this strategy is that people tend to focus on consumption and the accumulation of material goods, rather than prioritizing more important aspects of life such as family, relationships, community, and politics. At the same time, demand manipulation can have negative effects on people's mental health, leading to feelings of dissatisfaction and anxiety and fostering compulsive and addictive behaviors. Unfortunately, neoliberalism as an economic model has been a failure in terms of its ability to provide a better life for most of the population. The wealth gap between the rich and the poor has continued to widen, neoliberal economic policies have contributed to the growing precariousness of work and the erosion of labor rights, and the privatization of public services has resulted in a decline in the quality of life for many individuals. Instead of continuing in this direction, we need a new economic vision that prioritizes human well-being and environmental stewardship over corporate profits.

This idea is reflected in the thoughts of progressive intellectuals such as Walter Lippmann, a prominent progressive of the 20th century. In his famous work "Public Opinion," published in 1922, Lippmann argued that the public needed to be put in its place so that responsible men could make decisions without interference from the "confused multitude." According to him, the public should be spectators rather than participants, and this would ensure a well-functioning democracy. Lippmann believed that most people lacked the ability and time to critically investigate and analyze political and economic issues and therefore needed an "intelligent and responsible" elite to assume that responsibility. However, this idea was widely criticized by other progressive thinkers, such as John Dewey, who argued that democracy needed an active and informed citizenry and that informing and educating the public was a fundamental task of government and educational institutions.

The manipulation of demand through advertising and marketing techniques has had significant implications for consumer behavior and societal values. The failure of neoliberalism as an economic model has highlighted the need for alternative approaches that prioritize human well-being and environmental sustainability. Additionally, the contrasting viewpoints of intellectuals like Lippmann and Dewey underscore the ongoing debate about the role of an informed and active citizenry in democratic societies.

Propaganda has historically exploited this dynamic with one aim: to manufacture consumers. The ideal scenario is what we see today, for example, when teenagers have a free Saturday afternoon and choose to go to a shopping mall instead of a library or any other place. The idea is to control everyone and transform society into a perfect system. This perfect system would be based on a duality, where the individual and their television, or perhaps nowadays the individual and the internet, play a central role. Television and the internet show individuals what a suitable life should look like and what gadgets one should own. As a result, individuals end up spending their time and effort buying things they do not genuinely want or need, which they may eventually discard but believe are necessary for a decent life.

This phenomenon can be seen, for example, in television commercials. If you have taken an economics course, you know that markets should be based on informed consumers who make rational decisions. However, automobile commercials are not designed this way. Instead of providing concrete information about the products available, car commercials feature a soccer star or an actor engaging in some daring activity with the vehicle, like climbing a mountain. The intention is to create ill-informed consumers who make irrational decisions. This is the aim of advertising. When the same institutions, including the public relations system, organize elections, they employ similar tactics. They seek to create an ill-informed electorate that makes irrational choices, often against their own interests. We see this each time these extravaganzas occur. Just after the elections in the United States, President Obama received an award from the advertising industry for his campaign, and the international economic press talked about the executives' euphoria. This suggests that they have been viewing and promoting candidates as if they were toothpaste, from Reagan to the present.

Obama's campaign was widely praised for its innovative approach and effectiveness in mobilizing voters. However, it also faced criticism for relying on microtargeting techniques and emotional manipulation. The electoral campaign typically involves little discussion of political issues, and there is a good reason for it: public opinion on policy matters differs markedly from what the leaders of the two major parties and their financial sponsors desire. Policies are increasingly focused on the private interests of campaign funders, leaving the public marginalized. One of the most prominent political scientists, Martin Gilens, presented a study on the relationship between attitudes and public policies, revealing that nearly 70% of the population has no influence over policies. This situation can be seen in other countries as well. People are aware of it, and as a result, they are indignant, frustrated, and distrustful of institutions. However, they are not acting constructively to address these issues, and popular mobilization and activism are taking on a global, self-destructive form. This manifests as aimless fury directed at one another and vulnerable groups, as we see in cases like these.

This is precisely the goal: to make people hate and fear one another, and to focus solely on themselves without acting for the benefit of others. It is a measure, at least in the public consciousness, of how democracy is functioning. Unfortunately, it does not paint an appealing picture.

The trends we have been describing in American society, unless they change, show that it is heading toward a dreadful society, one based on Adam Smith's vile maxim of "all for myself and nothing for the rest."

It would be a society where normal human instincts and emotions of empathy, solidarity, and mutual support do not exist. If society is controlled by private wealth, it will reflect the values it currently embodies: the value of greed and desire, of maximizing personal gains at the expense of others. Any small society based on these principles is unpleasant, but unfortunately, it can survive. However, a global society based on these principles is heading toward destruction.

The increasing trends of inequality and concentration of economic power create a high risk that society will become dreadful. If most of the wealth and economic power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or corporations, the rest of society is left without the resources necessary to live with dignity and without the ability to influence public policies that affect them. This can lead to a society in which more people are desperate and hopeless, which, in turn, can result in higher levels of crime, violence, and social disorder. Moreover, a society in which most people feel they have no influence over public policies is one in which trust in democratic institutions is lost and citizen participation is reduced.

The idea of "all for myself and nothing for the rest" has become popular in American culture and reflects the mindset of certain sectors of society that believe individual success and wealth accumulation are more important than collective well-being and social justice. If this mindset becomes the norm in American society, the sense of community and solidarity fundamental to a democratic and just society would be lost. Therefore, it is important to take measures to combat the concentration of economic power and inequality, foster citizen participation, and promote policies that ensure a minimum level of well-being for society as a whole. Only in this way can we prevent the United States from becoming a dreadful society and ensure a fairer and more sustainable future for all.

It is important to note that these types of predictions are not necessarily inevitable or definitive, and there is still room to change the direction of American society. Many activists and social movements are working hard to fight inequality and the concentration of power, and there is growing recognition of the need for significant change in politics and the economy. Additionally, history has shown that societies can undergo drastic changes through struggle and collective organization. It is important to maintain a critical perspective and stay informed about the challenges and opportunities we face as a society.

While it is not simple to design in detail what a perfectly just and free society would look like, we can move toward it and, more importantly, ask how we can progress in that direction. Although there is no magic formula for designing a perfectly just and free society, we can work toward it. One way to move toward a more just society is by pursuing public policies that promote equal opportunities and social justice. Some of these policies may include removing economic, social, and cultural barriers so that everyone has access to education, healthcare, housing, and basic public services. We can also work on creating a justice system that protects people from discrimination and ensures access to justice for all individuals. Other policies may involve regulating large corporations to prevent excessive concentration of power and the exploitation of workers and the environment. Furthermore, we can promote participatory democracy and citizen engagement in decision-making to ensure that all voices are heard and decisions are made in the interest of the common good rather than just a few privileged individuals.

John Dewey, a prominent social philosopher of the late 20th century, argued that all productive, commercial, and press institutions, unless under democratic control and participation, would not result in a functioning democratic society. As he said, "Politics will be the shadow cast on society by big business." For Dewey, democracy was not just a political system but also a way of life in which people were engaged in pursuing the common good and building a just and fair society. He believed that education was crucial to achieving a democratic society and that schools should teach practical and civic skills to foster citizens' participation in society.

Chomsky, on the other hand, asserts that structures of authority, domination, and hierarchy, in which someone gives orders and someone else obeys them, must justify themselves. Upon closer examination, these structures often cannot justify themselves, and if they cannot, they need to be dismantled. The aim is to expand the domain of freedom and justice by dismantling illegitimate forms of authority. Fortunately, the progress we have seen in recent years has been precisely that. Take freedom of speech, for example, one of the true achievements of American society. It is not enshrined in a law or the Constitution. The recognition of freedom of speech was shaped by Supreme Court decisions in the 20th century, with significant developments occurring in the 1960s during the Civil Rights Movement. It was the result of a massive popular movement that demanded rights and refused to back down. In that context, the Supreme Court established a high standard for freedom of speech. Another example is women's rights. Women also started challenging oppressive structures, refusing to accept them and rallying others to join their cause. It is through such collective action that rights are won.

Our society, culture, and institutions have significant flaws that need to be corrected, often requiring actions outside the commonly accepted framework. We will have to find new forms of political action. Activists are the ones who have created the rights we enjoy today. They not only implement policies based on the information they receive but also contribute to our understanding. It is important to remember that it is a reciprocal process. We must learn how the world works, which will help us understand how to move forward. There are great opportunities. It is a free society, and while the U.S. government may have the ability to coerce and corporations may try to exert influence, they do not have the necessary mechanisms. There are many things that can be done if people organize and fight for their rights, as they have done in the past, leading to many victories. What matters are the count-less small acts carried out by anonymous individuals today, laying the foundation for significant events that will be remembered in history. They are the ones who have done important things in the past, and they are the ones who will have to do them in the future. Expanding on the analysis, we can see that both Dewey and Chomsky emphasize the importance of democratic control and participation in shaping a just and fair society. Dewey's argument that all institutions, including productive, commercial, and press institutions, should be subject to democratic control underscores the need for power and decision-making to be distributed among the people. This perspective aligns with the principles of democracy, in which citizens are actively engaged in decision-making processes and have equal opportunities to take part in shaping their society. Chomsky's critique of authority, domination, and hierarchy further highlights the need to question and challenge structures that perpetuate inequality and oppression. His assertion that structures of authority must justify themselves emphasizes the importance of accountability and the examination of power dynamics within society. Chomsky's examples of freedom of speech and women's rights demonstrate the transformative power of collective action in challenging and reshaping oppressive systems.

Both Dewey and Chomsky acknowledge the role of activism and grassroots movements in driving societal change. They emphasize that progress and the achievement of rights are not handed down from above but are the result of concerted efforts by individuals and communities. By organizing, mobilizing, and challenging unjust systems, people can pave the way for a more just and inclusive future. In short, the analysis of Dewey and Chomsky's perspectives highlights the significance of democratic control, participation, and collective action in building a just and fair society. Their insights encourage us to critically evaluate existing structures, challenge unjust authority, and actively work toward a more democratic and just future.

SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

Exploring its characteristics, benefits, and challenges.

The concept of solidarity economy has become a topic of growing interest worldwide. This form of economy is based on collaboration, mutual aid, and solidarity, as opposed to the competition and profit-driven nature of traditional capitalism. In this chapter, we will explore the characteristics, benefits, and challenges of solidarity economy.

Solidarity economy is defined as an economic organization that seeks to meet human needs through collaboration, mutual aid, and solidarity rather than competition and profit-seeking. This form of economy is based on the creation and strengthening of networks of cooperation and solidarity in which people work together to meet their needs and improve their living conditions.

One of the key characteristics of solidarity economy is its focus on individuals and communities. Rather than prioritizing wealth accumulation and individual gain, it seeks to improve people's living conditions and strengthen the community. This is achieved through the creation of networks of collaboration and solidarity in which people work together to meet their needs and improve their living conditions. It also emphasizes environmental sustainability and social justice. Instead of exploiting natural resources and people for profit, solidarity economy aims to protect the environment and promote social justice. This is achieved through the implementation of practices and policies that promote sustainability and social justice.

The benefits of solidarity economy are numerous. Firstly, it promotes social inclusion and equal opportunities by allowing people to work together to meet their needs and improve their living conditions. Secondly, it promotes environmental sustainability by encouraging practices and policies that protect the environment. Lastly, it cultivates economic democracy by enabling people to have control over their own economy and make decisions collectively.

However, solidarity economy also faces several challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of financing and support from governments and traditional financial institutions. Additionally, it faces challenges related to organization and coordination, as it often involves the creation of networks and collaboration among diverse organizations and communities. This can be difficult due to the complexity of coordination and the need to build relationships based on trust and solidarity. According to some authors, "solidarity economy faces the difficulty of reconciling the need for coordination and the need to preserve the diversity and autonomy of its actors" (Laville, 2010).

Solidarity economy offers an alternative economic model that prioritizes collaboration, mutual aid, and social justice. While it presents many benefits, such as social inclusion and environmental sustainability, it also faces challenges related to financing, organization, and coordination. Nonetheless, the continued exploration and development of solidarity economy have the potential to foster a fairer and more sustainable economic system.

The solidarity economy encompasses a transformative economic model that has garnered increasing interest worldwide. In contrast to the competitive and profit-driven nature of traditional capitalism, this alternative approach is built upon principles of collaboration, mutual aid, and solidarity. Delving into the multifaceted nature of the solidarity economy, this analysis aims to explore its distinctive characteristics, potential benefits, and the myriad challenges it faces.

At its core, the solidarity economy represents an economic organization focused on meeting human needs through cooperation, mutual support, and solidarity rather than through competition and profit-seeking. It centers on building and strengthening networks of cooperation and solidarity in which individuals work together to satisfy their needs and improve their living conditions. Notably, a pivotal feature of the solidarity economy lies in its emphasis on individuals and communities, shifting the focus away from wealth accumulation and individual gain to enhancing people's quality of life and bolstering community well-being. This is achieved through the creation of collaborative networks and solidarity-driven initiatives in which individuals pool their resources and efforts to meet their needs and enhance their living conditions. Moreover, the solidarity economy prioritizes environmental sustainability and social justice, aiming to safeguard the environment and ensure just and equitable outcomes. It pursues these goals by implementing practices and policies that promote sustainability and social justice.

The benefits of the solidarity economy are manifold. First, it fosters social inclusion and equal opportunities by enabling individuals to work collectively to meet their needs and improve their living conditions. Second, it promotes environmental sustainability by encouraging practices and policies that protect the environment. Finally, it cultivates economic democracy by empowering individuals to have control over their own economic activities and make decisions collectively. Nevertheless, the solidarity economy faces various challenges. One major hurdle lies in the lack of financial resources and support from governments and traditional financial institutions. Furthermore, it faces difficulties in terms of organization and coordination, given that it often involves creating networks and collaborations among diverse organizations and communities. The complexity of coordination and the need to build relationships based on trust and solidarity can present challenges. As noted by Laville (2010), "the Solidarity Economy faces the difficulty of reconciling the need for coordination with the need to preserve the diversity and autonomy of its actors."

Another significant challenge is limited access to the financial and technical resources needed for the development of solidarity economy projects and ventures. Laville (2010) asserts that the solidarity economy faces a triple difficulty: the lack of financial and technical resources, the weakness of support structures, and the ignorance or hostility of public authorities. Overcoming these obstacles requires finding innovative avenues for financing and support, as well as strengthening the support infrastructure. Despite these challenges, the solidarity economy has proven its viability and sustainability as an alternative model for addressing inequalities and promoting local development. With its focus on collaboration, solidarity, and democratic participation, the solidarity economy has the potential to contribute to the creation of a more just and equitable society. As Laville (2015) highlights, the solidarity economy is rooted in building horizontal and collaborative relationships, which can be challenging in a world dominated by competitive economic relationships and market logic. This may require the creation of specific structures and mechanisms to facilitate cooperation and exchange, such as networks for exchanging goods and services, worker cooperatives, or participatory governance structures. Moreover, the solidarity economy faces challenges in terms of financing and sustainability. Solidarity economy initiatives often face difficulties in accessing financial resources and economic support, which can limit their capacity to grow and develop. Thus, it is crucial to explore innovative financing and support mechanisms for solidarity economy initiatives, such as social investment funds or crowdfunding. Another key challenge lies in reconciling the economic and social goals of the solidarity economy with the demands of the market. Balancing the imperative to compete in a globalized and demanding market while upholding commitments to social justice and sustainability requires adopting innovative marketing and distribution strategies. These strategies would enable solidarity economy initiatives to thrive in the global marketplace without compromising their core values and principles. The solidarity economy is a compelling alternative to traditional capitalist models, emphasizing collaboration, solidarity, and democratic participation. Although it faces significant challenges related to organization, financing, and sustainability, the solidarity economy offers a sustainable and equitable pathway to address social inequalities and promote local development. By exploring new forms of cooperation, securing adequate funding, and adopting creative marketing strategies, the solidarity economy can continue to grow and make substantial contributions toward building a more just and sustainable society.

Unfortunately, as an alternative economic model, the solidarity economy lacks precise figures on its reach and growth, as it is a broad and diverse movement that is not regulated by a central body. Nevertheless, several studies and analyses provide estimates of its impact in certain regions and sectors. For instance, a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports that in Latin America and the Caribbean, the solidarity economy employs over eleven million people and generates 10% of gross domestic product (GDP) in countries such as Brazil and Uruguay. Furthermore, it has been observed that cooperatives, one of the most common forms of the solidarity economy, have a higher survival and business success rate than traditional enterprises. Another study conducted by the Network of Alternative and Solidarity Economy Networks (REAS) in Spain revealed 17%

growth in the solidarity economy sector between 2013 and 2017, with approximately 10,000 businesses and organizations operating under this economic model. While these figures are limited and do not represent the full scope of the solidarity economy, they indicate a growing sector with the potential to generate employment and economic development and reduce inequalities.

Moreover, data show that cooperatives, as one of the most prevalent forms of the solidarity economy, have a higher survival and business success rate than traditional enterprises. A study carried out by REAS in Spain revealed 17% growth in the solidarity economy sector between 2013 and 2017, with approximately 10,000 businesses and organizations operating under this economic model. This suggests that the solidarity economy has the potential to generate employment and economic development sustainably over time. It is important to note that these figures do not encompass the full extent of the solidarity economy, as many initiatives and projects are not included in official statistics. However, the upward trend in the growth of the solidarity economy indicates that it is a viable and expanding economic alternative.

The solidarity economy is based on values such as solidarity, cooperation, equity, and sustainability, and promotes the creation of businesses and organizations that seek to generate economic, social, and environmental benefits. Some examples of companies and organizations that apply this model include:

Worker cooperatives: These are enterprises in which the workers are the owners and manage the business democratically, sharing in the benefits and decision-making. Worker cooperatives can take various forms, including production cooperatives, service cooperatives, and consumer cooperatives. An example of this type of cooperative is the Cooperativa Integral Catalana in Spain, which engages in the production and distribution of organic food and other products. According to data from the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), there were over three million cooperatives worldwide in 2019, with more than 1.2 billion members and more than 280 million jobs generated. Worker cooperatives are estimated to exceed 10,000 globally, employing over five million individuals. Countries such as Italy and Argentina have recognized worker cooperatives as a legal form of enterprise and have seen significant growth in recent decades. Overall, worker cooperatives have been shown to benefit both employees and the economy at large by generating employment and fostering democratic participation in business management. Additionally, because workers own the enterprise, they have an added incentive to work efficiently and ensure the long-term success of the business.

The solidarity economy also encompasses other models, such as fair-trade organizations, social currencies, community-supported agriculture, and mutual aid networks, among others. Each of these models contributes to building an economy centered on social and environmental well-being, aiming to address systemic issues of inequality and promote a more just and sustainable society. The solidarity economy faces challenges in terms of organization, financing, and sustainability, as well as the need to reconcile its economic and social aims with the demands of the global market. Nonetheless, the growing interest in and demonstrated successes of the solidarity economy show its potential as a transformative economic model that prioritizes people and the planet over profit. As societies grapple with pressing issues such as inequality, climate change, and social justice, the solidarity economy offers a promising pathway toward a fairer and more sustainable future. Ethical banking and finance: Ethical banks and financial institutions represent a critical and active response to the prevailing dynamics of financial speculation and profit maximization that have characterized the functioning of the global economy in recent decades. In a context in which social and economic inequality has significantly widened and environmental degradation and the climate crisis have become pressing global issues, these financial entities emerge as a concrete and effective alternative. Ethical financial institutions promote a fairer and more sustainable economy by investing in projects that generate positive social and environmental impacts. While traditional banks seek to maximize profitability, even at the expense of labor exploitation, environmental degradation, and increasing inequality, ethical banks and financial institutions, such as Triodos Bank, are oriented toward social and environmental benefits. Additionally, these ethical banks and financial institutions avoid speculation and excessive risk-taking in managing their resources, thereby helping to minimize the risks of financial instability and economic crises. Instead, they focus on financing projects that promote social justice, equality, and sustainable development. In conclusion, the existence of ethical banks and financial institutions presents a practical alternative for promoting a fairer and more sustainable economy. For example, according to Triodos Bank's annual report for 2020, 83% of the loans granted by the institution were directed toward sustainable and social projects, such as renewable energy, organic agriculture, sustainable housing, and cultural and social initiatives. Similarly, the report highlights that the bank has financed a total of 1,200 sustainable projects across Europe and Latin America and that 96% of the funded projects meet the bank's sustainability criteria. Another example of an ethical financial institution is the Dutch bank ASN Bank, which reports that 96% of its investments are dedicated to sustainable and ethical projects and businesses, such as renewable energy, sustainable transportation, social housing, and companies that promote gender equality and diversity. These examples illustrate how ethical banks are committed to financing sustainable and social projects, resulting in concrete investment in the real economy intended to have a positive impact on the environment and society.

Social enterprises: Social enterprises provide an alternative to the traditional business model that aims to maximize profits at any cost. These enterprises seek to address a social or environmental problem through the production and sale of goods and services. Instead of maximizing profits for their shareholders, social enterprises reinvest their profits in their social mission, aiming to have a positive impact on society and the environment. An example of a social enterprise is the clothing brand Patagonia, which specializes in producing outdoor clothing and accessories. In addition to offering high-quality products, Patagonia focuses on environmental and social sustainability. The company has implemented a range of initiatives to reduce its environmental impact, such as using recycled and organic materials in its products and creating programs to support local communities and environmental projects. Patagonia also donates 1% of its annual sales to non-profit organizations working on environmental conservation and protection. Social enterprises like Patagonia show that it is possible to conduct business responsibly and have a positive impact on society and the environment. As more companies adopt this approach, we may see a transformation in the business world toward a fairer and more sustainable model.

For example, according to a 2018 report by the consulting firm Oxfam, large corporations are estimated to evade paying around $100 billion in taxes each year worldwide. This amount represents a significant pool of resources that could be directed toward funding public policies and social programs for the benefit of society. Regarding tax evasion, a 2019 study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimated that member countries lose around $240 billion per year due to tax evasion, a significant loss of revenue for governments that affects equity and tax justice. In general, the solidarity economy seeks to change the dominant economic paradigm based on short-term profit maximization, competition, and individualism and promotes a fairer, more sustainable, and democratic economic model in which social and environmental aspects are highly valued.

CIRCULAR AND REGENERATIVE ECONOMY

Characteristics and Evolution

The concept of the circular and regenerative economy has gained increasing importance in the search for sustainable approaches to economic development. This approach is based on designing economic systems that minimize waste generation and natural resource extraction and promote reuse, recycling, and regeneration. The circular economy focuses on optimizing the life cycle of materials, products, and natural resources, while the regenerative economy focuses on restoring and enhancing ecosystems and natural resources. In recent years, governments, businesses, and civil society organizations have shown growing interest in developing circular and regenerative economy models. For example, the European Union has adopted a Circular Economy Action Plan aimed at promoting a more circular economy in the region.

> "Regenerative economy is based on the idea that economic and ecological systems are intrinsically interconnected and that the regeneration of one is essential for the regeneration of the other." (Economic Innovation Group, 2018)

According to a report by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, global adoption of the circular economy is estimated to generate economic benefits of up to $2.7 trillion by 2030. It is also estimated that the circular economy could create up to 700,000 additional jobs in Europe by 2030.

> "The circular economy aims to maintain products, components, and materials at their highest value and utility at all times, reducing waste generation and minimizing the use of natural resources." (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013)

Regarding the evolution of the circular economy, Amsterdam stands out as a case study. The city has adopted a comprehensive approach to the circular economy in its economic development strategy. Amsterdam has implemented measures such as creating a secondary materials market and promoting the functional economy, which involves offering services instead of products to reduce waste generation.

Another example is Interfaz, a global leader in modular carpet manufacturing, which has adopted a circular economy approach in its business strategy. The company has implemented measures such as using recycled materials in its products and designing modular products that facilitate their reuse and recycling at the end of their life cycle.

> "In the circular economy, innovation focuses on the reuse, repair, remanufacturing, and recycling of products and materials, and on generating new business models based on sustainability." (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2019)

The circular and regenerative economy has been the subject of various studies and projects worldwide. For example, in the United Kingdom, the technology company ReLondon launched a program called "Advanced London" in 2019, which aims to transform the city's waste and resource system into a circular economy by 2030. The program brings together a wide range of businesses, institutions, and organizations to implement innovative solutions in waste and resource management, including infrastructure for material recovery and reuse, the promotion of circular products and services, and systems for exchange and collaboration among businesses. A 2019 study by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation titled "Circular Economy in Action" presented several case studies from different sectors and regions of the world in which circular and regenerative solutions have been successfully implemented. For example, in the textile sector, the Spanish company Ecoalf has developed a technology that enables marine plastic waste to be transformed into high-quality materials for the production of sustainable fashion garments and accessories. Another notable case study is the city of San Francisco, which has implemented policies and programs to promote the circular economy and reduce waste generation. For instance, the city has enacted a law requiring all organic waste to be recycled or composted and has established a "green purchasing" program that promotes the acquisition of sustainable and circular products and services by businesses and the local government.

It is worth noting that the circular and regenerative economy is gaining momentum globally. According to a report by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the circular economy is expected to grow from a value of \$1.2 trillion in 2018 to \$4.5 trillion by 2030, representing a significant opportunity to address current economic, environmental, and social challenges.

> "The circular and regenerative economy can drive innovation, resource efficiency, job creation, and economic growth, while reducing environmental impact and increasing system resilience." (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019)

Regarding regeneration, a report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) shows that restoring 350 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 could generate economic benefits worth up to $9 trillion. It is also estimated that ecosystem regeneration could create up to 191 million jobs worldwide by 2030.

To advance the transition to a circular and regenerative economy, a collaborative and systemic approach is needed, involving all relevant stakeholders, including businesses, governments, consumers, and communities. Some possible solutions include:

Designing products and services with a focus on circularity and regeneration: Companies can design products and services that are more durable, repairable, and recyclable, and use sustainable materials and production processes.

Promoting reuse and recycling: It is important to encourage the reuse and recycling of products and materials and develop efficient systems for waste recovery and processing.

Establishing policies and regulatory frameworks: Governments can establish policies and regulatory frameworks that promote the circular and regenerative economy, including tax incentives for companies that adopt more sustainable practices and standards that promote sustainability and efficiency.

Cultural change: A cultural shift is also needed in which consumers become more aware of their choices and lifestyles and demand more sustainable products and services.

In summary, the transition to a circular and regenerative economy is a complex process that demands collaboration and commitment from multiple stakeholders, as well as changes in how we produce, consume, and manage resources. It is an opportunity to build a more just, sustainable, and resilient economic system that considers the limits of natural resources and the needs of future generations.

The following improvements can help advance the transition toward a circular and regenerative economy. First, innovation and research into technologies and practices that enable more efficient and sustainable resource management should be promoted. This could involve greater investment in research and development by companies and governments, as well as incentives to foster innovation. Second, greater collaboration among different sectors and actors should be encouraged to foster more circular and closed supply chains. This could involve creating collaborative platforms and promoting business models in which multiple companies work together to close the resource loop. Third, public education and awareness of issues related to the circular and regenerative economy should be improved to foster greater societal awareness and engagement. This could involve incorporating sustainability and circular economy topics into education from an early age, as well as conducting awareness campaigns. Finally, governments should promote stronger regulation and green taxation to encourage businesses and society to adopt more sustainable and circular practices. This could involve taxes on pollution and natural resource use, as well as tax incentives for companies that adopt more sustainable and circular practices.

The implementation of a circular and regenerative economy presents several challenges and obstacles. One major challenge is changing business models, as a circular and regenerative economy requires a more comprehensive approach to production and consumption in which products and materials remain in use for longer life cycles. This requires redefining products, services, and business models, which in turn requires greater collaboration among companies and other stakeholders such as governments and local communities. Another challenge is the lack of economic and political incentives to adopt a circular and regenerative economy. In many cases, the current economic model favors linear production and consumption, which can hinder the transition to a circular and regenerative model. Similarly, government policies and business practices can also favor linear production and consumption. Therefore, more effective policies and practices are needed to promote the circular and regenerative economy. Despite these challenges, several initiatives and strategies worldwide aim to promote a circular and regenerative economy. In Europe, the European Commission launched a European Circular Economy Strategy in 2015, aiming to increase resource efficiency and reduce waste production across the European economy. Similarly, various organizations and companies have adopted successful circular and regenerative models, such as the Dutch company Philips, which has shifted its focus from selling products to selling lighting solutions. In conclusion, the circular and regenerative economy presents a practical and sustainable alternative to the current linear production and consumption model. However, its implementation requires significant changes in current business models and economic policies, as well as greater collaboration among companies, governments, and local communities. Through effective initiatives and strategies, it is possible to move toward a more circular and regenerative economy that benefits both the environment and society.

DEMOCRATIC ECONOMY

Characteristics

A democratic economy is an economic model that seeks to establish democratic processes in economic management and decision-making. In this model, decision-making power is not limited to business owners or government authorities but also extends to workers, consumers, and other stakeholders in the economy. It is based on the idea that democracy should not be limited to the political sphere but should also apply to the economic sphere, as economic decisions have a significant impact on people's lives.

A democratic economy aims to ensure that economic decisions are made fairly and transparently while considering the interests of all groups involved. There are several benefits to a democratic economy. First, this model promotes greater citizen participation in decision-making, which fosters transparency and accountability in economic management. Second, it seeks to reduce economic and social inequalities by promoting a fairer distribution of wealth and economic power. Third, it promotes sustainability and environmental protection by considering the environmental impacts of economic decisions.

There are several examples of a democratic economy in practice. One is the cooperative, a form of economic organization in which workers are also owners of the company and participate in decision-making. Another is participatory budgeting, a practice in which citizens participate in allocating public resources through a democratic process.

According to a study conducted by the University of Cambridge in 2018, more democratic economic models such as cooperatives and worker-owned enterprises have a positive impact on workers' well-being and the long-term sustainability of businesses. At the same time, a study by Harvard University in 2017 found that more democratic economic models are more resilient to economic and financial crises.

A democratic economy seeks greater citizen participation in economic decision-making, promoting the democratization of ownership and control of the means of production. In this framework, a democratic economy focuses on social justice, equality, and solidarity, aiming to overcome the problems of both capitalism and socialism, as both systems involve a concentration of economic power in the hands of an elite, whether entrepreneurs or bureaucrats.

Among the benefits of a democratic economy are the reduction of economic inequalities, the promotion of citizen participation and the empowerment of civil society, and the reduction of labor exploitation. It is also expected to have a more sustainable, long-term focus, as decision-making is in the hands of society rather than a business elite focused on maximizing short-term profits.

One of the most well-known models of a democratic economy is the cooperative model, in which workers collectively own and control the company. Cooperatives can generate greater benefits for workers and the communities in which they are embedded than traditional enterprises. Additionally, cooperatives tend to be more sustainable and resilient to economic crises. However, a democratic economy also faces challenges, such as the need to build a participatory culture and a legal framework that allows the democratization of ownership and control of the means of production. The lack of a participatory culture and awareness of the benefits of a democratic economy can limit its implementation and success. Similarly, the lack of an adequate legal framework can hinder the creation and success of democratic enterprises.

The concept of a democratic economy encompasses various characteristics and principles that aim to promote a more inclusive and fair economic system. Here are some additional points and quotations to further explore this topic:

Participatory Decision-Making: In a democratic economy, decision-making power is distributed among various stakeholders, including workers, consumers, and community members. This participatory approach ensures that a diverse range of perspectives and interests are considered. As economist Richard Wolff states, "Democracy at work means allowing the people who have to live with the results of economic decisions to have an equal say in making them."

Wealth Distribution and Economic Justice: One of the central goals of a democratic economy is to address economic inequalities and promote a more just distribution of wealth and resources. Economist Gar Alperovitz emphasizes this point, saying, "Democratic economies are grounded in the principle of meeting the basic needs of all citizens."

Worker Empowerment: Democratic economies emphasize empowering workers and giving them a greater say in the management and governance of their workplaces. Economist Marjorie Kelly highlights the importance of worker ownership, saying, "Worker ownership is a powerful way to democratize wealth and give people voice and power in the workplace."

Sustainability and Environmental Considerations: A democratic economy recognizes the interdependence between economic activities and the environment. It seeks to promote sustainable practices and reduce negative environmental impacts. As author and economist E. F. Schumacher notes, “The aim ought to be to obtain the maximum amount of well-being with the minimum amount of consumption.”

Local and Community-Based Economies: Democratic economies often prioritize local and community-based economic initiatives to foster self-reliance, resilience, and a sense of belonging. Economist Michael Shuman advocates for decentralized economic systems, saying, “Locally rooted enterprises tend to spend more of their money locally, creating a virtuous cycle of local economic development.”

Social Solidarity and Cooperation: A democratic economy encourages collaboration, cooperation, and mutual support among individuals, businesses, and communities. Economist Juliet Schor emphasizes the importance of social relationships, saying, “In a democratic economy, social capital is as important as financial capital.”

Resilience and Adaptability: Democratic economies are designed to be flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances. By involving multiple stakeholders in decision-making, they can respond more effectively to economic challenges and crises. As economist David Schweickart states, “Democratic enterprises are more likely to survive and flourish because they benefit from the creativity and collective intelligence of their workers.”

In summary, a democratic economy aims to democratize ownership and control of the means of production, with the goal of achieving greater social justice and reducing economic inequalities. While it faces challenges, it offers benefits in terms of citizen participation, sustainability, and resilience to economic crises. The cooperative model is one of the most well-known and successful examples of a democratic economy, although its implementation and success depend on a participatory culture and a proper legal framework.

THE THREE MODELS COMBINED

The combination of the three economies—solidarity, circular/regenerative, and democratic—is proposed as an alternative to the capitalist economic model. The solidarity economy focuses on cooperation and solidarity, circular/regenerative economy on environmental sustainability and product life cycles, and democratic economy on social justice and citizen participation in economic decision-making. This combination can be seen as a theoretical framework for building a new economy that incorporates the values and principles of each of the three economies and aims for social transformation toward a more just and sustainable system. As an integrated proposal, the combination of these three economies could generate a transformative and revolutionary economy that promotes social equity and environmental protection.

One of the main challenges of this integration is creating business and organizational models that align with the principles of the three economies. This involves implementing collaborative and solidarity-based practices within companies, adopting sustainable production and consumption practices, and promoting democratic participation in decision-making. Additionally, this integration requires public policies that promote the solidarity economy, the circular/regenerative economy, and the democratic economy and support the emergence and consolidation of companies and organizations that promote these values. Such policies could include promoting the social and solidarity economy in public procurement, implementing fiscal measures to promote sustainable production and consumption, and creating spaces for citizen participation in economic decision-making.

In brief, the combination of the three economies can be seen as an innovative and transformative proposal for building a new economy that incorporates the values and principles of solidarity, environmental sustainability, and democracy. However, further work is needed to implement business and organizational models that promote these values and to create public policies that support these initiatives. At the same time, the relationship among these three economies can be highly beneficial in creating a more sustainable and just economic model. For example, the circular/regenerative economy can provide raw materials and renewable energy for the solidarity economy, while the democratic economy can provide fair and participatory governance for coordinating the other two economies.

There are already various examples of projects and companies implementing this combination of economies. For instance, the Spanish cooperative Som Energia, which focuses on the production and distribution of renewable energy, has a democratic and participatory decision-making structure and incorporates circular/regenerative economy principles by promoting self-consumption and waste reduction. Another example is the Fairphone project, a social enterprise that produces ethical and sustainable mobile phones using recycled and fair-trade materials. Fairphone focuses on the solidarity economy by establishing partnerships with cooperative mines and fair manufacturers and on the circular/regenerative economy by promoting the recycling and reuse of its products.

The integration of these three economies can offer a sustainable and just alternative to the current capitalist economic model. By fostering collaboration and coordination among these economies, it is possible to create comprehensive solutions to social and environmental challenges and promote a more human-centered and participatory approach to the economy. In this regard, several studies and academic articles have explored the benefits and possibilities of combining these three economies. For instance, in an article published in the journal Sustainability, the authors argue that integrating solidarity, circular/regenerative, and democratic economic approaches can facilitate a transition toward a more sustainable and just economic system. They also emphasize that collaboration and intersectoral dialogue can be crucial to creating a comprehensive and coherent approach to these economies. Another article published in the journal Ecological Economics argues that the circular and regenerative economy can provide an opportunity to promote the solidarity economy by supporting local businesses and promoting local and sustainable food production and consumption. Additionally, the authors highlight that the democratic economy can provide a participatory and fair structure for managing and coordinating these economies.

Various projects and companies are already implementing this integration of economies. For example, the Spanish cooperative Som Energia is engaged in the production and distribution of renewable energy, has a democratic and participatory decision-making structure, and promotes circular and regenerative economy principles through self-consumption and waste reduction.

The transition toward a fused economic model combining solidarity, circular/regenerative, and democratic economic principles can be an orderly and broad-based process if certain key elements are considered. The following are possible strategies for such a transition:

Foster education and awareness: It is crucial to promote education and awareness of the advantages and possibilities of combining these three economies. This includes promoting educational projects, raising societal awareness, and establishing collaborative networks among different initiatives.

Support existing initiatives and projects: It is important to support initiatives and projects that are already implementing this combination of economies. This includes promoting public policies that foster solidarity, circular/regenerative, and democratic economic practices, as well as creating specific funding and training programs for these initiatives.

Encourage collaboration among sectors: Collaboration among different sectors, including businesses, government, civil society, and academia, can be pivotal in creating an integrated and coherent approach to these economies. This involves fostering participation and dialogue among the various actors involved.

Promote innovation and social entrepreneurship: It is important to foster innovation and social entrepreneurship to create sustainable and just solutions to social and environmental challenges. This includes providing incubation and acceleration opportunities for innovative projects and supporting social entrepreneurs.

Strengthen participatory governance: Participatory and fair governance can be fundamental to the effective coordination and management of these combined economies. This includes promoting citizen participation in decision-making and establishing mechanisms for accountability and transparency.

In conclusion, an orderly and broad-based transition toward a fused economic model combining solidarity, circular/regenerative, and democratic economic principles may be feasible if it incorporates key elements such as education and awareness, support for existing initiatives, collaboration among sectors, promotion of innovation and social entrepreneurship, and strengthened participatory governance.

NEW ECONOMIC MODEL

The current global economy faces significant challenges, including growing economic inequality and extreme poverty in many parts of the world. Capitalism, as the dominant economic system, has been criticized for its inability to address these issues and for creating imbalances in the distribution of wealth and economic power.

One possible solution to these problems is the implementation of a new fair economy that focuses on fairness and social justice rather than economic growth at all costs. This economy is based on the idea that the economy should serve society, not the other way around.

The new fair economy entails a series of important changes in how economic systems are organized and managed. First, a fairer redistribution of wealth and income is needed so that the wealthiest and most powerful individuals do not have disproportionate control over economic resources. The first area to focus on in transitioning to a new fair economy is the establishment of a fair and progressive tax system.

Currently, in many countries, fiscal policies favor the wealthiest sectors of society, while workers and the middle class bear a disproportionate tax burden. This is largely due to the influence of business lobbies on fiscal and economic policies, which have succeeded in implementing tax exemptions and other policies that primarily benefit large corporations and the wealthy.

To reverse this situation, a fair tax system must be established that taxes individuals according to their ability to pay. One way to do this is through progressive income and wealth taxes that increase as income and wealth rise. Additionally, fiscal policies should be reviewed to eliminate tax exemptions and reductions that currently benefit large corporations and the rich.

An example of a progressive fiscal policy can be found in Scandinavian countries, where high taxes are levied on income and wealth while a wide range of free or reduced-cost public services, such as education, healthcare, transportation, and housing, are provided. This allows individuals with lower incomes to access these services equitably, thereby reducing social inequalities and promoting social mobility.

Another example of a fair and equitable fiscal policy is the Tobin tax, which involves levying a small tax on international financial transactions. This could generate significant revenue for the development of social and environmental policies. However, this type of tax has not yet been implemented globally due to opposition from the most powerful sectors of the financial world.

The creation of a fair and progressive tax system is a crucial first step in achieving a fairer and more just economy that reduces social inequalities and promotes social mobility. This will require the implementation of fairer fiscal policies and the elimination of tax exemptions that benefit the wealthy and large corporations, as well as new fiscal measures to finance public services and social policies for the benefit of society.

Secondly, the new fair economy focuses on creating quality jobs and promoting social entrepreneurship. This entails fostering the establishment of companies that are committed to social justice and community well-being, rather than solely focusing on profit maximization.

The fourth point is the need for stricter regulation of businesses and markets. Twenty-first-century capitalism must be regulated to ensure that companies and markets do not operate at the expense of people and the environment. This can be achieved through government policies that promote corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability.

It is important for companies to be socially responsible and consider the social and environmental impacts of their activities. This means going beyond generating profits and considering how their actions affect society and the environment. Companies should be transparent and accountable for their actions, and they should be required to adhere to high social and environmental standards.

Markets need to be regulated to prevent abuses and excesses. Regulations should include measures to prevent monopolization and excessive concentration of economic power and to protect consumers and workers from exploitation and abuse. Similarly, regulations should promote fair competition and prevent corruption and market manipulation.

Regulation should also promote environmental sustainability. Companies and markets should be regulated to ensure that they do not harm the environment and to encourage the adoption of sustainable practices. This includes measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, preserve natural ecosystems, and decrease resource consumption. In summary, regulation is essential to ensure that companies and markets operate fairly and responsibly. This can help prevent abuses and excesses, protect consumers and workers, and promote environmental sustainability. Twenty-first-century capitalism must be regulated to ensure that it benefits everyone, not just a privileged few.

Labor exploitation must end, and basic labor rights must be guaranteed for all workers, including a decent wage and safe and healthy working conditions. The third point of the new economic theory we propose focuses on the importance of fair wealth redistribution. As mentioned earlier, economic inequality is a significant problem worldwide and has increased in many countries over the past few decades. To address this issue, it is essential to implement fiscal and economic policies that promote fair wealth redistribution. One way to achieve this is through progressive taxes, which impose higher tax rates on the wealthy and corporations than on low-income individuals and businesses. At the same time, public spending policies can support the most vulnerable sectors of society through education, healthcare, housing, and other essential services.

It is also important to address wage disparities and ensure that workers receive a fair and decent wage for their work. In many countries, low-income workers and those in precarious employment receive wages well below the minimum wage and do not have access to basic employment benefits such as health insurance and paid vacation days. This perpetuates inequality and poverty, so it is essential to address these wage disparities. In addition to fair wealth redistribution, it is also important to address the gender gap and economic discrimination faced by minorities and marginalized communities. In many countries, women and ethnic and racial minorities face higher rates of poverty and economic inequality due to discrimination in access to education, employment, and housing. Therefore, it is important to implement policies that address these disparities and promote economic equality. The third point of the new economic theory we propose focuses on the importance of fair wealth redistribution, addressing wage disparities, the gender gap, and economic discrimination. To achieve this, it is essential to implement fiscal and economic policies that promote fair wealth redistribution and economic equality.

The new fair economy focuses on environmental sustainability and environmental protection. This entails promoting business and consumer practices that are environmentally friendly and reduce their carbon footprints and other negative impacts on the environment. The second point emphasizes the use of new technologies and forms of business organization that allow for greater efficiency and productivity while simultaneously reducing the negative environmental impact of economic activities. Currently, various technologies and business practices can help achieve these aims. For instance, the implementation of more efficient production systems, such as just-in-time manufacturing, can reduce production costs and minimize waste generation. Likewise, the adoption of clean technologies such as solar or wind energy can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Another example of technology that can improve efficiency and reduce environmental impact is precision agriculture, which uses sensors and geographic information systems to monitor and optimize the use of fertilizers, water, and other resources. This can reduce water and soil pollution, increase productivity, and decrease production costs.

In terms of business organization, the B Corporation model, also known as a benefit corporation, offers an alternative that seeks to combine economic profitability with social and environmental responsibility. These companies aim to maximize their positive impact on society and the environment while generating economic benefits for their shareholders. They are based on ethical and transparent management practices and measure success not only by financial gains but also by their social and environmental impact.

The use of new technologies and forms of business organization can contribute to achieving greater efficiency and productivity, reducing the environmental impact of economic activities, and fostering corporate social responsibility.

The new economic theory focuses on the importance of education and human development in economic growth. Education is not only a fundamental human right but also a key factor in economic growth and poverty reduction. Investing in education and human development not only improves people's quality of life but also increases productivity and innovation, which in turn drives economic growth. To understand the significance of education in economic growth, we can examine countries such as South Korea and Singapore. Both countries transitioned from agrarian economies to advanced ones within a few decades, and much of their success is attributed to investment in education and human development.

In South Korea, the government invested in the education of the population and promoted access to higher education, leading to increased productivity and innovation in key sectors such as technology and automotive manufacturing. In Singapore, a high-quality education system was implemented, emphasizing science, mathematics, and technology, which helped transform the country into a center of innovation and technology in Asia. In addition to enhancing productivity and innovation, education and human development can also help reduce inequality and poverty. Studies have shown that education can be a crucial factor in poverty reduction by improving employment opportunities and increasing individuals' incomes. It can also promote gender equality and reduce racial and ethnic discrimination, thereby improving social cohesion and overall well-being. In summary, the sixth point of the new economic theory highlights the importance of education and human development in economic growth and poverty reduction. Investing in education not only improves people's quality of life but also enhances productivity and innovation, driving economic growth and global competitiveness. At the same time, it can help reduce inequality and poverty by improving employment opportunities and increasing individuals' incomes, as well as promoting gender equality and social cohesion. The new fair economy offers a practical alternative to capitalism and its focus on relentless economic growth. If the necessary changes are implemented, this economy can significantly contribute to reducing inequality and poverty, creating quality jobs, and protecting the environment. The new fair economy is not a utopia but a practical and necessary solution to the economic and social challenges of the world today.

Promoting innovation and technological development is another aspect of the new fair economy. The new fair economy should be driven by continuous innovation and the use of advanced technologies to create more efficient, sustainable, and accessible products and services for the population. This entails not only fostering research and development in key areas such as energy, health, agriculture, and industry but also ensuring that technologies are accessible and used for the benefit of society.

An example of this is the use of digital technologies to democratize access to education and training. In many countries, education remains inaccessible to large segments of the population due to economic, geographic, or cultural barriers. The new fair economy should promote the use of information and communication technologies to overcome these barriers by developing online education platforms, virtual training programs, and digital tools for accessing information.

In this way, it can ensure that everyone has access to the education and training necessary to participate in the economy and contribute to sustainable development.

Another example of innovation in the new fair economy is the implementation of clean and renewable technologies in energy production and consumption. The transition to cleaner, more sustainable energy sources is essential to combat climate change and ensure a livable future for generations to come. Furthermore, the adoption of clean and renewable technologies can reduce long-term energy costs and create new job opportunities in the energy sector.

The new fair economic theory proposes the implementation of progressive fiscal policies to ensure wealth redistribution and reduce economic inequality. In many countries, fiscal policies have been designed to benefit large corporations and the wealthiest individuals, leading to a greater concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. The new fair economic theory suggests fiscal reforms designed to redistribute wealth and reduce inequality, with measures such as:

Increasing taxes on the wealthy and large corporations: Progressive taxes can help reduce inequality and finance social welfare programs that benefit the entire population. Implementing a wealth tax or a financial transaction tax can be considered to increase tax revenue and reduce financial speculation.

Reducing taxes on workers and small businesses: Tax cuts for low-income individuals and small businesses can increase purchasing power and investment capacity, stimulating economic growth and reducing inequality.

Eliminating unfair tax exemptions: Many large corporations and wealthy individuals receive tax exemptions that allow them to pay less in taxes than they should. Ending these exemptions can increase tax revenue and reduce inequality.

Implementing global tax reform: Many countries have tax policies that enable tax evasion and the transfer of wealth to tax havens. Implementing global tax reform can help combat tax evasion and ensure that all companies and individuals pay fair taxes.

Using tax revenue for social welfare programs: Additional tax revenue can be used to fund social welfare programs such as education, healthcare, and housing, helping the entire population and reducing inequality.

Implementing progressive fiscal policies can help reduce inequality and ensure a fairer distribution of wealth. However, it is important that these policies are implemented fairly and equitably to avoid negative effects on the economy and society.

The need to foster innovation and research in businesses is also crucial. In the current economic model, companies often prioritize short-term profit maximization over investment in long-term innovation and development. This can lead to a lack of competitiveness in the global market and a reduced ability to adapt to changes in consumer demand and new technologies.

To foster innovation, it is important for companies to have adequate incentives, such as tax credits, subsidies, and government support for research and development. Additionally, companies can promote innovation by creating a business culture that encourages experimentation and continuous learning.

An example of a company that has fostered innovation is Google. The company has established a work culture that encourages experimentation and creativity, leading to the creation of products such as Google Maps, Google Glass, and Google Translate. Additionally, Google has invested in research and development projects in areas such as artificial intelligence and renewable energy.

Another example is Tesla, which has focused on innovation in the field of electric vehicles and batteries. The company has invested in research and the development of innovative technologies and has used innovation to create sustainable products that meet consumer needs. Point ten of the new economic theory proposes a transformation in the structure of companies to give greater power and participation to workers. This is based on the idea that workers are an essential part of the company and that their voices and experience should be valued in decision-making. One way to achieve this is through the implementation of cooperative ownership and management models. In such companies, workers share ownership and participate in management. This allows them to make important decisions and have greater autonomy in the workplace, which can increase their satisfaction and commitment to their work. Moreover, cooperative models can benefit the economy because they are designed to be fairer and more sustainable in the long term. For example, cooperatives can focus on sustainable growth and reinvesting profits instead of maximizing returns for individual owners. Another approach to increasing worker participation is through the implementation of profit-sharing and employee ownership programs. This means that workers receive a share of the profits and can own a stake in the company. This strategy can increase motivation and commitment among workers and improve employee loyalty and retention.

Transforming the structure of companies to give greater power and participation to workers is a key proposal of the new economic theory. This can be achieved through cooperative models and profit-sharing and employee ownership programs. In addition to improving worker satisfaction and commitment, these models can also be fairer and more sustainable in the long term for the economy as a whole. Point eleven highlights the need for a shift in the focus of education, moving from a knowledge- and information-centered approach to one that emphasizes the development of skills and competencies. This requires a revision of educational programs and teaching methods. Currently, many educational systems focus on the transmission of theoretical knowledge, which can become outdated in a world that is constantly changing and evolving. Therefore, a change in the approach to education is necessary to enable students to develop practical skills and competencies that will allow them to adapt to a constantly changing world. To achieve this change, greater collaboration between companies and educational institutions is needed to identify the skills and competencies most in demand in the labor market. It is also important to foster creativity and problem-solving abilities in students, which can be done through active learning techniques such as project-based learning and gamification. Another important aspect in this regard is the need for more inclusive education that allows all students to develop their potential regardless of their socioeconomic or cultural backgrounds. This involves removing barriers to access to education and creating educational environments that promote inclusion and diversity.

Point twelve of the new economic theory proposes the creation of a new international financial institution focused on sustainable economic development and reducing global inequality. The main aim of this institution would be to finance projects that promote economic growth and poverty reduction in developing countries. To achieve this goal, the new financial institution should be supported by multiple countries and have a strong funding base. Similarly, clear and rigorous criteria would need to be established for the selection of funded projects, ensuring that resources are distributed effectively and efficiently. One of the main advantages of this institution would be the prospect of providing a stable and reliable source of financing for developing countries, allowing them to reduce their dependence on traditional international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. At the same time, this new institution could focus on specific projects, such as infrastructure development, education, or health, enabling a more precise and effective approach to poverty reduction and inequality. On the other hand, it is important to note that the creation of a new international financial institution would not be without challenges and risks. First, effective governance and oversight mechanisms would need to be established to ensure transparency and accountability in resource allocation. It is also important to consider that the creation of a new financial institution could generate tensions with existing international financial institutions, which could hinder cooperation and collaboration on economic development issues. Point thirteen suggests that the new economic theory should be based on an ethic of social and environmental responsibility. This is extremely important for the future of the economy and human well-being in general. Currently, many companies and economies focus solely on profit maximization and cost minimization, without considering the social and environmental impact of their activities. This has led to worker exploitation, environmental degradation, and economic inequality. An economic theory based on an ethic of social and environmental responsibility addresses these issues and seeks to balance economic interests with social and environmental interests. This means that companies and governments must consider not only the economic impact of their activities but also their social and environmental impact. For example, a company manufacturing a product should ensure that its workers receive fair wages and safe working conditions while simultaneously minimizing the environmental impact of its production processes. Similarly, governments should make economic decisions that consider social and environmental impacts rather than focusing solely on maximizing economic growth. An economic theory based on an ethic of social and environmental responsibility also recognizes the importance of equity and social justice. This means that the distribution of wealth and resources should be fair and equitable for all members of society, not just for a privileged elite. Point fourteen of the new economic theory proposes the creation of an effective and fair social protection system for all citizens. This system should be based on a just redistribution of wealth and ensure access to basic services such as healthcare, education, housing, and food. Currently, many countries have made progress in creating effective social protection systems, such as the Scandinavian countries, where public policies guarantee universal access to basic services. However, in many other countries, especially those with high levels of economic inequality, implementing a fair and effective social protection system is still a challenge. To achieve this goal, the state must play a fundamental role in the creation and administration of this social protection system. This involves significant investment in financial and human resources, as well as strategic planning to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery. It is also important to ensure the participation and inclusion of all citizens in the design and implementation of this social protection system. This includes listening to and considering the needs and perspectives of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in society, such as Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and ethnic minorities. The importance of creating an effective and fair social protection system for all citizens to guarantee access to basic services and reduce economic inequality cannot be overstated. To achieve this goal, it is necessary for the state to play a fundamental role in the creation and administration of this system and to ensure the participation and inclusion of all citizens in its design and implementation.

Point sixteen of the new economic theory proposes the implementation of effective financial education. Financial education refers to the teaching of concepts and tools related to the management of personal and business finances, and it is essential for making informed and responsible decisions in the financial realm. Effective financial education should be accessible to all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic or educational level. This implies that the education system should incorporate financial education programs from basic education through higher education. Additionally, financial education should be practical and applicable to real-life situations, focusing on the development of financial skills rather than mere memorization of theoretical concepts. Financial education programs should include practical exercises that allow students to apply what they have learned to real situations, such as budgeting, financial planning, and investment. Another important aspect of financial education is its focus on ethics and social responsibility. Financial education should teach not only proper money management but also the impact of financial decisions on the social and environmental context.

Financial education is crucial because it enables individuals to make informed and responsible decisions about their personal finances. However, in many cases, financial education is not taught effectively, which can limit its impact and usefulness. To achieve effective financial education, it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive approach that includes both the teaching of basic financial concepts and the practice of financial skills. One way to do this is through the implementation of a financial education plan that focuses on the following key points:

Needs assessment: Before teaching financial skills, it is important to assess the needs of students or participants. This may include identifying knowledge gaps, understanding participants' financial goals, and identifying the best approaches to help participants achieve those goals.

Content selection: Once the needs have been assessed, it is important to select the content to be taught. The content should be tailored to the participants' levels of knowledge and experience and should be relevant to their financial needs and goals.

Teaching practical financial skills: In addition to teaching basic financial concepts, it is important to teach practical financial skills that participants can apply in real life. This may include teaching participants how to create a budget, save, and invest.

Evaluation and follow-up: It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the financial education program and follow up with participants to determine whether they have achieved their financial goals. This can help identify areas for improvement and enhance the program in the future.

Community involvement: To achieve effective financial education, it is important to involve the community in teaching financial skills. This may include collaborating with community organizations and creating support networks to help participants achieve their financial goals.

To achieve effective financial education, a comprehensive approach is necessary, including needs assessment, appropriate content selection, teaching practical financial skills, evaluation and follow-up, and community involvement. This approach can provide participants with the tools and knowledge needed to make informed and responsible financial decisions in real life.

As John Hope Bryant states:

> "Effective financial education is a key component for financial success and economic stability. Individuals need to understand how the financial system works, make informed financial decisions, and protect themselves against fraud and financial exploitation. Financial education can make a significant difference in people's lives." - John Hope Bryant, Founder and CEO of Operation HOPE.

Point seventeen addresses the need for greater international collaboration in the fight against tax evasion and tax avoidance, especially by large corporations. In this regard, it is necessary to strengthen international cooperation to exchange tax information between countries and ensure that large corporations do not evade their tax responsibilities in the countries where they operate. The lack of international cooperation in this area has allowed some multinational companies to evade taxes in the countries where they operate by transferring their profits to countries with lower tax rates or even to tax havens. This has a negative impact on the economy and on countries' ability to fund social and development programs. To address this issue, it is necessary to strengthen international cooperation and create tax-transparency mechanisms that allow countries to better understand the operations of multinational companies and ensure that they pay a fair amount of tax in each country where they operate. This can include the creation of international agreements, such as double taxation treaties, and the establishment of mechanisms for exchanging information between the tax authorities of different countries. Additionally, mechanisms can be explored to incentivize companies to fulfill their tax obligations, such as creating tax incentives for companies that demonstrate a commitment to tax transparency and the fair payment of taxes. The action plan for greater international collaboration in the fight against tax evasion and tax avoidance would include measures such as the automatic exchange of tax information between countries, the adoption of international standards for tax transparency, and the creation of mechanisms to prevent aggressive tax planning. An example of how such measures have been implemented is the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, which has been adopted by more than 140 countries and allows for the automatic exchange of tax information between the tax authorities of different countries. There are also initiatives such as the Beneficial Ownership Transparency Initiative driven by the G20, which aims to ensure transparency in the true ownership of companies and prevent tax evasion and money laundering. Point eighteen of the plan aims to promote innovation and research and development (R&D) to support the transition to a sustainable and decarbonized economy. In this regard, it is important to promote policies and strategies that encourage innovation in the private sector, especially in industry, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy efficiency. To achieve this goal, fiscal and financial incentives can be established for companies that invest in clean and sustainable technologies, as well as for those that undertake research and development projects in this field. Similarly, partnerships between the public and private sectors can be established to promote innovation and R&D in clean and sustainable technologies. Another important aspect of fostering innovation and research is strengthening the educational system in areas such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Policies and programs can be implemented to promote STEM education from an early age, with the aim of training highly skilled professionals who can contribute to the development of clean and sustainable technologies. Lastly, it is important to foster international collaboration in the field of innovation and R&D. Agreements and alliances can be established between countries to share knowledge, resources, and technologies that enable progress toward a sustainable and decarbonized economy. At the same time, collaborative networks can be established among companies, universities, and research centers in different countries to drive innovation in clean and sustainable technologies. Quantitative evidence supports the importance of R&D investment for economic growth. For example, a report by the European Commission found a strong correlation between R&D investment and economic growth, indicating that a 1% increase in R&D investment can raise per capita GDP by 0.03%. Additionally, another study found that countries that invest more in R&D tend to have higher productivity and lower unemployment rates.

Point nineteen of the action plan centers on the implementation of environmental protection and climate change policies. The objective is to advance toward sustainable development and a greener, cleaner future. One of the proposed measures is the implementation of fiscal and financial incentives for companies that adopt sustainable practices and reduce their carbon footprint. This could include tax reductions for companies that use renewable energy and/or reduce their energy consumption, as well as preferential-rate loans for investments in sustainable technologies. A regulatory framework is also proposed to promote transparency and the disclosure of environmental and social information by companies. This would allow consumers and investors to make better-informed decisions and encourage competition among companies in terms of sustainability. Other measures that could be implemented include the promotion of public transportation and more sustainable means of transport, such as bicycles and electric vehicles, as well as more sustainable agricultural practices and the circular economy. It is important to note that the implementation of these measures would not only have a positive impact on the environment but could also generate green jobs and contribute to long-term economic development. Likewise, because this is a global problem, international cooperation and collaboration are essential to achieving significant change.

Point twenty of the action plan addresses cultural diversity. One source of quantitative evidence on its importance is the World Values Survey, which has been conducted in more than one hundred countries since the 1980s. According to survey data, there is a positive correlation between cultural diversity and tolerance toward diversity. For instance, a study of eighty-one countries found that those with greater cultural diversity also had higher levels of tolerance toward immigration and religious and ethnic differences (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). Additionally, other studies have found that cultural diversity is positively correlated with innovation and economic growth (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2005). A 2015 report by McKinsey & Company found that companies with greater racial and ethnic diversity were 35% more likely to outperform companies with lower diversity in terms of financial performance. Similarly, another 2015 study by the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Business found that gender diversity is positively correlated with business profitability. In this study, more than 20,000 companies worldwide were analyzed, and companies with a higher proportion of women on their boards of directors were found to have 36% higher financial performance than companies with fewer women on their boards (Catalyst, 2015).

These are just a few examples of how cultural diversity can have a positive impact on society and the economy. It is important to note that cultural diversity is not only a matter of social justice but can also be a competitive advantage in the business world.

CONCLUSIONS

The transition from the current capitalist economy to a solidarity-based, circular, regenerative, and democratic economy is a complex process that requires a detailed and well-structured action plan. Below is a possible action plan to achieve this transition:

Change in basic assumptions: The first step toward transitioning to a solidarity-based, circular, regenerative, and democratic economy is a change in basic assumptions, from a capitalist mindset to one centered on sustainability and solidarity. This entails a change in how natural resources, labor, consumption, and ownership are perceived. This change in thinking is crucial to the transition toward a solidarity-based, circular, regenerative, and democratic economy. The capitalist mindset focuses on profit maximization and short-term economic growth, which has led to the exploitation of natural resources and increased social inequality. Therefore, a change is needed in how natural resources, labor, consumption, and ownership are viewed. In a solidarity-based, circular, regenerative, and democratic economy, natural resources are valued and protected, labor is valued as a common good, consumption is based on quality rather than quantity, and ownership is collective and participatory.

Development of a global strategy: It is necessary to develop a global strategy that involves all countries and all social and economic actors, from businesses and governments to communities and citizens. This strategy should establish clear and measurable goals for the transition toward a solidarity-based, circular, regenerative, and democratic economy. The strategy should involve all economic and social actors. Additionally, it should be designed in a participatory manner and consider the specific needs and realities of each country and community.

Support for social innovation and entrepreneurship: Social innovation and entrepreneurship are crucial to the transition toward a solidarity-based, circular, regenerative, and democratic economy. Support should be given to entrepreneurs and social enterprises that seek innovative solutions to social and environmental problems. These initiatives focus on creating shared value and can also generate jobs and foster sustainable economic development.

Promotion of the circular economy: The circular economy is based on the reuse, repair, and recycling of products and materials, which reduces waste and the demand for raw materials. It should be promoted through public policies and incentive programs. This model can have a positive impact on the environment while also fostering innovation and collaboration among different economic and social actors.

Fostering cooperation and collaboration: Cooperation and collaboration are crucial to the transition toward a solidarity-based, circular, regenerative, and democratic economy. Cooperation among businesses, communities, and citizens should be encouraged, and collaboration among different economic and social actors should be promoted. These practices foster the creation of networks and alliances that can increase efficiency and innovation. Furthermore, cooperation and collaboration can promote solidarity and social equity.

Promotion of environmental regeneration: Environmental regeneration involves the restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity and the reduction of the carbon footprint. It should be encouraged and promoted through public policies and incentive programs. Environmental regeneration is crucial for climate change mitigation and environmental protection. Additionally, it can foster the creation of green jobs and technological innovation.

Promotion of the social and solidarity economy: The social and solidarity economy is based on collective ownership, participatory management, and the fair distribution of benefits. It should be promoted through public policies and support programs.

Promotion of economic democracy: Economic democracy involves the participation of workers, consumers, and communities in economic decision-making. It should be fostered and promoted through public policies and incentive programs.

Implementation of effective public policies and regulations: It is necessary to implement effective public policies and regulations that promote the transition toward a solidarity-based, circular, regenerative, and democratic economy. These policies and regulations should be designed in a participatory manner and continuously monitored and evaluated.

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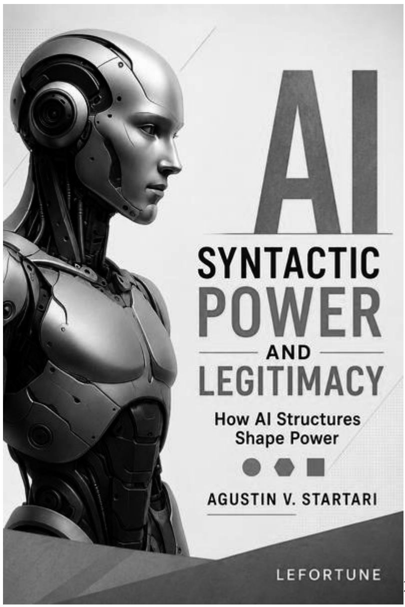

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1. https://books2read.com/u/477wlg
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About the Author

Agustin V. Startari is a researcher, linguist, and author specializing in the intersection of **language, artificial intelligence, power, legitimacy, and historical sciences**.

His work examines how linguistic, discursive, and technological structures organize perceptions of authority, distribute responsibility, and shape the ways institutions, artificial intelligence systems, and structures of power represent political, historical, and social events.

His research brings together **linguistics, discourse analysis, artificial intelligence, historiography, theories of power, and studies of legitimacy**, with particular attention to the relationship between linguistic form, authority, and political responsibility.

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