

The threat of nuclear war and common security

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1 Evolutionary Systems Theory

Social systems evolve like **all other systems** on trajectories that do not alter the steady state of the system and maintain some sort of equilibrium. This is called **level-evolution** where no qualitative change appears. When crossing bifurcations that allow for choosing other trajectories of the space of possible trajectories, qualitative changes are possible. If they raise the complexity of the system, this has been called **mega-evolution**, signifying a breakthrough to a better path. However, also a decline of complexity can happen. Then this trajectory is a path of **devolution** and it can lead to the breakdown of the system.

Mega-evolutions, that is, qualitative changes for the good, are mastered by so-called **metasystem-transitions**. In an effort to **raise the complexity of interacting systems** up to a level that allows them to **counteract the complexity they are confronted with**, these systems expand, strengthen and perpetuate their relations. In doing so, they produce new organisational relations on a meta-level: a **metasystem** emerges, which is a new quality. The *raison d'être* of the suprasystem is that it **increases the synergy** – that is, the former interacting systems that are now **newly intra-acting elements of the suprasystem** are able to achieve goals they could not have been able to achieve before. They are beneficiaries of the path they have taken.

2 Critical Social Systems Theory

According to a Critical Social Systems view, we have to admit, mankind has got **stuck on the edge of forming such a suprasystem** from the interacting interdependent and differentiated social systems: as philosopher Edgar Morin puts it, mankind has so far only become an **objective community of destiny**, but not yet **a common humanity as a subject *sui generis***. Global challenges that intermingle with each other have brought about a **poly-crisis** that threatens the further existence of human beings on Earth. These challenges, being manmade, can only be met by working together of a common humanity. Thus, the bifurcation mankind is facing can be coined with systems theorist Ervin László **the Great Bifurcation** as the tipping point is near after which you can't go back – the choice is either a trajectory of **disintegration** of the current social systems by the catastrophe of barbarism, collapse and extinction or a trajectory of **integration into a suprasystem of a common humanity**. This situation can be characterised as a **developmental crisis** of *homo sapiens* without precedent.

The Great Bifurcation can be answered by kind of a **Great Transformation** – a transformation of the relationships that human actors enter into with each other, the relationships that societies maintain with nature and the relationships societies exercise through their technology. All together it is a **techno-eco-social transformation**.

By implementing the techno-eco-social transformation, the time of the Great Bifurcation could become the time of **mastering the poly-crisis**. At the same time the social evolution of humanity would show the **decisive qualitative leap onto the level of a real common humanity**. Humanity would successfully overcome its development crisis and “come of age”.

3 Objective and subjective preconditions

A sufficient number of social actors – a quorum – must not only **understand** but also **accept the status of common-destiny humanity**, it must **devise appropriate actions** and **must come into action**. This is the role of the subjective factor for choosing the right path, given the Great Bifurcation. The subjective factor depends on the **generation of information that anticipates the complexity** required to overhaul the anachronistic social relations and enact new ones.

This generation of social information is, however, a twofold issue: on the one hand, it is information **about the objects**, it is knowledge about the relations with technological, ecological and social realities that should undergo changes in the techno-eco-social transformation, which is searched for; this is an objective that can be assessed objectively; on the other hand, it is **about the generation of information itself**, it is knowledge about the working of human co-operative, communicative and cognitive capacities to gain a quorum for the transformation, which is reflected; this affects subjectivity.

Regarding the first, objective part of the issue, the information about the objects can be promoted by the formulation of **three planetary imperatives*** according to the realm of relations: an **Imperative of Pan-Humanism**, an **Imperative of Anthropo-relational Humanism** and an **Imperative of Digital Humanism**.

They require to act in such a way that the effects **actualise the objective potential to build or maintain a meta- or suprasystem**. The logics of **self-centredness** in the social, of **self-exaltation** in the eco-social, and of **self-overestimation** in the techno-eco-social realm shall be replaced by a **logic of self-limitation** of the actors. By doing so, **unity through diversity for all of humanity**, an **alliance with the agents of natural self-organising systems** and an **appropriate use of artificial, hetero-organised artefacts** shall be ensured.

The second, subjective part of the issue, the information about the generation of information itself can be supported by the articulation of **three convivial imperatives**** according to the human capacities: an **Imperative of a Planetary Ethos for Global Governance**, an **Imperative of Planetary Conciliatoriness for a Global Dialogue** and an **Imperative of Planetary Mindsets for Global Citizenship**.

They require to **expand the subjective capacity for co-operation**, **extend the subjective communication skills** and **enlarge the subjective cognitive abilities**, features all of which have been already achieved in evolution. Now to be adjusted to the challenges of today, they shall realise, mutually understand and gain insight into the **objective requirements of a next step of social evolution**.

The first imperative concerning the ethos addresses a **collective entity of actors: universal wisdom** shall be achieved to morally **anticipate** the value of a **unity-through-diversity**

organisation of humanity, including pan-humanism in social relations, anthropo-relational humanism in eco-social relations and digital humanism in techno-eco-social relations.

The second imperative on planetary conciliatoriness reaches out to **diverse actors**: **knowledge** shall be created and shared on a planetary scale to **anticipate in conciliatory discourses the transformation** of all humanity into the proper common system.

The third imperative regarding planetary mindsets appeals to **single actors**: **facts and figures** shall be collected and interpreted to **anticipate the meaning** of operations **according to the actor's own positioning** in the overall planetary context **as well as to the positioning of other actors and to the positioning of parts that are not actors** at all.

These imperatives include the **containment of the threat of nuclear warfare**:

- (1) the first imperative of living together peacefully calls for action according to the **responsibility to protect all of humanity from annihilation**, the explicit justification or trivialisation of brinkmanship that risks annihilation, its preparation or execution, or the implicit sleepwalking into annihilation;
- (2) the second imperative of conciliatoriness necessitates the **abandonment of any confrontation and use of violence** of nuclear powers in conflicts and the **search for agreements and reconciliation** instead;
- (3) the third imperative of mindfulness demands **peaceful coexistence**, if not **friendship between nations** whether they are nuclear powers or not.

4 (Non-)Compliance with such imperatives

To start with the **planetary imperatives**, in the **West**, they seem to have been well received by academics and activists, while politicians tend to pay lip service to them and business tends to take a wait-and-see approach. The new US Presidency will be a backlash for techno-eco-social transformation imperatives. Germany and, in its wake, Austria (where I belong) are also experiencing a major backlash because the green parties have been punished in elections and have to give up government positions, while the parties of social democrats or conservatives will not be a guarantee for saving the planet.

Countries in the **Global South** cannot afford to do much because they lack the money and the rich countries do not give them as much as they need, although these amounts are not yet as large as they will become in the future. Many post-colonial countries find themselves forced into so-called extractivism in order to share in the wealth of their former colonies. But this might neither help their development nor prevent the overexploitation of their resources.

The **People's Republic of China** is an exceptional case: it is even catching up with the transformation goals announced.

This holds for the **convivial imperatives** too, to follow on from here. For China appears to be the only country with a **governmental programme for a common future of humanity**. It supports the BRICS+ who represent a much larger part of the world population than G 7 and G 20 and whose economic power is on the way to topping that of the other groups. And China supports the Global South that is aiming for a **multipolar, polycentric, multi-nodal**

world order, now that the hegemony of the USA is likely to be in decline. It is important to emphasise that these countries – just like those in the history of the non-aligned movement – do not want to join the West or any other bloc, but want to be open to all sides. The new world order shall not be dominated by multiple blocs that each strive for supremacy, which is an outdated approach to international politics. It shall rather become something new in which all of the countries can find their place. Justice is the value that is in the foreground. What is striking is that what they try is exactly in line with the convivial imperatives.

However, the Western countries present obstacles. Due to the omnipresence of capitalism, in particular, in its phases of neoliberalism and financialisation, countries outside the “Golden Billion” are considered economic competitors, political autocracies, military enemies, and cultural rivals. Thus, **interference in internal affairs**, the imposition of **unilateral coercive measures** and other economic warfare operations, **regime changes** by launching colour revolutions, the **exclusion from common security architectures** that promise security not at the expense of other partners, the prioritisation of **war logic** over peace logic – e.g. the termination of arms control agreements, military buildup and the abandonment of diplomacy – all this has been shaping Western foreign policy. Furthermore, **fake narratives** are manufactured for one’s own population and readily adopted by Western media. This is how the Western masses are prepared now for the new cold and, ultimately, a hot war.

5 Common security and the convivial imperatives

Experts warn that the **probability of a nuclear exchange is higher now** than at the Cuba missile crisis in the 1960s. The USA has been keeping test-launching ICBMs – the last test took place with a dummy hydrogen bomb in the recent election night. Shortly before, the Russian Federation had probed a nuclear counterstrike against a first strike.

Apart from accidental starts of nuclear missiles, the **Ukraine crisis** has the potential to escalate into nuclear warfare. Why? What was intended by the Russian Federation as military operation after the West had denied diplomacy to solve the threat of the forward deployment of double use missiles close to its border, escalated into a proxy war, because the USA announced that the aim of Western aid to Ukraine was to weaken Russia. The Russian defence doctrine, however, stipulates the use of nuclear weaponry not only in the case of an aggression with nuclear weapons, but also in the case of an **existential threat to the statehood of the Russian Federation** regardless of whether the weapons used are nuclear or not. What can be defined as an existential threat, is up to the Russian government. In this context, Russian experts like Sergej Karaganov, Dmitri Trenin and Sergej Awakjants are prompting politics to modify the doctrine and **lower the nuclear threshold**. By that they expect to increase the deterrence of Western aggression. Conversely, however, it is then up to the Western politicians to be deterred or not. Hence, there is no guarantee that escalation can be controlled. There is no guarantee that nuclear first use will not end up in an all-out war and annihilation. The concept of limited nuclear wars was and still is a failed concept. Despite all efforts of the USA to gain a first strike capability by undermining the retaliatory strike capability of its opponents, mutual assured destruction will not become obsolete. Nuclear wars cannot be won. For the sake of humanity, nuclear wars must not be fought.

When the Soviet Union still existed, the relationships between the nations were negotiated in the UN in terms of **peaceful coexistence** and **collective security**. The Secretary General of the Communist Party of the USSR, Michail Gorbachev initiated the New Way of Thinking. He agreed with his counterparts on US side on the begin of decisive arms control and disarmament. The Charter of Paris, undersigned by 32 European states plus USA and Canada, declared in 1990 “equal security for all our countries”. “With the ending of the division of Europe, we will strive for a new quality in our security relations while fully respecting each other's freedom of choice in that respect. Security is indivisible and the security of every participating State is inseparably linked to that of all the others.” In the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security from 1994, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe reaffirmed the Charter among other documents and fixed that the participating states “remain convinced that security is indivisible and that the security of each of them is inseparably linked to the security of all others. **They will not strengthen their security at the expense of the security of other States.**”

The NATO expansion to the East clearly violated this principle. This is the *casus belli*. The only solution of the Ukraine crisis is therefore **to establish a new architecture of common security for Europe, for Eurasia and for the whole world and to embed Russia and nations friendly to Russia on an equal footing.**

Besides the Ukraine crisis, the **support of the West for Israel's denial of a state of Palestine** and the **growing ambitions of the West that expand to the East in supporting secessionist activities within China** contain further potential for a nuclear conflict. All of them must be pacified by negotiating common security architectures. This is the only way to avoid Armageddon. Common security, understood in this way, is fully compliant with the convivial imperatives. Common security is the only way to perpetuate human life on Earth.

6 Conclusion

So, what we have is a battle between two sides promoting contrary positions: one side battles for the **continuation of the predominance** of Western countries, which are still rallying around the previous “indispensable nation”, and the other side, which is gaining momentum, battles for the **establishment of equal co-operation between all nations** for mutual benefit, which excludes no one.

The compliance with both planetary and convivial imperatives, which are the result of academic considerations, may be assumed to be implicit in the position of the second side. If evolution of human systems is to progress to a higher level, thereby uniting humanity to master **by far the greatest and most difficult task in human history** – survival and providing good life for everybody –, then the second position must win. It has the potentiality to do so.

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Planetary Imperative of Pan-Humanism:

“Act in such a way that the effects actualize the objective potential to build or maintain a social meta- or suprasystem which, by replacing any logic of self-centredness in social relations with a logic of self-limitation of the actors, ensures unity through diversity for all of humanity!”

Planetary Imperative of anthropo-relational humanism:

“Act in such a way that the effects actualize the objective potential to build or maintain an eco-social meta- or suprasystem which, by replacing any logic of self-exaltation in the social relations of nature with a logic of self-limitation of the actors, ensures an alliance with the agents of natural self-organising systems!”

Planetary Imperative of digital humanism:

“Act in such a way that the effects actualise the objective potential to build or maintain a techno-eco-social meta- or suprasystem which, by replacing any logic of self-overestimation in social technological relations with a logic of self-limitation of the actors, ensures an appropriate use of artificial, hetero-organised artefacts!”

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The convivial imperative of planetary ethos for global governance:

“As collective entity of actors, act in such a way that the overall effect of your action can expand the subjective capacity for co-operation already achieved towards a planetary practice that realises the objective requirement of a next step of social evolution so that universal wisdom can be achieved that morally anticipates the value of a unity-through-diversity organisation of humanity, in particular, of pan-humanism in societal relations, of anthropo-relational humanism in ecological societal relations and of digital humanism in technological ecological societal relations!”

The convivial imperative of planetary conciliatoriness for global dialog:

“As diverse actors, act in such a way that the effects of your many actions can extend the subjective communication skills already achieved to a mutual understanding of the objective requirements of a next step of social evolution so that knowledge can be created and shared on a planetary scale, anticipating in conciliatory discourses the tasks of a techno-eco-social transformation of all humanity into a common system!”

The convivial imperative of planetary mindsets for global citizenship:

“As single actor, act in such a way that the effect of your action can enlarge the subjective cognitive abilities already achieved by insights into the objective requirements of a next step of social evolution so that facts and figures can be collected and interpreted that mentally anticipate the meaning of operations according to your own positioning in the overall planetary context as well as the positioning of other actors and the positioning of parts that are not actors at all!”