

Welcome to this week's presentation and conversation
hosted by the
Canadian Association for the Club of Rome,
a Club dedicated to intelligent debate and action on global issues.

Intergenerational Alliances to Counter Silo Mindset on Economic Growth vs Humanity, Nature, and Reason.

Our speaker today is Hector E. Garcia, CEO of Mex-US Global, consultants in intercultural communications & international strategic business alliances. Hector has presented views on international relations and his Cultural Complementarity theory in North America, Brazil, & Switzerland. His book *Clash or Complement of Cultures?* addresses globalization's inconsistencies & the need for greater cooperation within & among nations via cultural teamwork. Humanity is experiencing great trauma & crises. We keep focusing on solutions where we have invested the most & are doing relatively, but selectively, well—the economy, technology, & natural sciences—while disregarding root causes & new sources of possible solutions. We can choose to: continue learning cooperatively & responsibly in our struggles; recover constructive & honest communication; evolve towards greater maturity, putting cultural & natural interdependence on par with techno-economic interdependence.

The presentation will be followed by a conversation, questions, and observations from the participants.

CACOR acknowledges that we all benefit from sharing the traditional territories of local Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada) and their descendants.



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CULTURAL COMPLEMENTARITY

“INTERGENERATIONAL ALLIANCES TO COUNTER SILO MINDSET ON ECONOMIC GROWTH VS HUMANITY, NATURE & REASON”

PRESENTATION TO CANADIAN ASSN. CLUB OF ROME 3/22/23

BY HECTOR E. GARCIA

TODAY'S ENVIRONMENTAL, FINANCIAL, POLITICAL, SOCIAL CRISES

- Global warming effects
- Pandemics
- Wars, impersonal mass shootings
- Massive migration
- Autocracy competing with Democracy
- Uncertainty in the financial system
- Despair... especially among young and old
- Incremental addiction and suicide
- Division, enmity and hate

CULTURAL COMPLEMENTARITY: A DEEPER, BROADER VISION

ARE THESE CRISES NEW?

- “The Great Leveler” Are mass violence and catastrophes the only forces that can seriously decrease economic inequality? To judge by thousands of years of history, the answer is yes. Tracing the global history of inequality from the Stone Age to today, Walter Scheidel shows that it never dies peacefully. *The Great Leveler* is the first book to chart the crucial role of violent shocks in reducing inequality over the full sweep of human history around the world. The “Four Horsemen” of leveling—mass-mobilization warfare, transformative revolutions, state collapse, and catastrophic plagues—have repeatedly destroyed the fortunes of the rich.

CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

- Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE 2019), “Globalization is... the growing interdependence of the world’s economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information.” The human factor is included significantly in the PIIE definition—*cultures, populations and flows of people*. Yet, the human factor has been the least considered in current and early stages of globalization. That factor causes the most resistance and fear.

SILO MINDSET

- “I think one of the mistakes that a lot of the economists have made is looking for a single answer...” Nobel Prize economist Joseph Stiglitz
- “Every man gets a narrower and narrower field of knowledge in which he must be an expert in order to compete with other people. The specialist knows more and more about less and less and finally knows everything about nothing.” Nobel Prize scientist Konrad Lorenz
- “Our second objective is to promote reforms that will reduce China’s reliance on export led growth and encourages a shift to **domestic consumption**...” US Treasury Secretary Geithner’s Remarks on “The Path Ahead for the U.S.-China Economic Relationship” 1/12/2011
- Now, billions are “keeping up with the Joneses”

REDUCTIONISM & POSITIVISM

- On the basis of the natural sciences, R & P have claimed that it is the measurable, materialistic reality that truly exists. Thus, STEM, wealth and power during one's lifetime increasingly are becoming the primary values... although science is now questioned because of its findings on climate change.
- R & P have relegated religions, the arts and then the social sciences to what are condescendingly considered "soft values," not to be taken as seriously if at all. The Age of Reflection and the humanities have increasingly been disregarded.
- "Shame on those scientists who are unwilling to embrace the importance of philosophers." Albert Einstein

RATIONALIZATION OF INEQUALITY, HUBRIS & GREED

- Nobel-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz says main problem is that money talks, gets to make all rules... Oil companies and other corporations get "gifts" in the hundreds of billions of dollars a year in corporate welfare, through special benefits hidden in the tax code. "... we need comprehensive policies," Ultimately, he said, we will need new political approaches. "We haven't given sufficient attention to future generations, and we need oversight to make sure that we do."
- Mahatma Gandhi There is enough for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed
- "We have been quick to seek explanations of our problems and failures in what we are instead of what we do. We seem wedded to the belief that our situation is a consequence of our nature rather than of our historical acts." Kenneth Bock "Human Nature Mythology"

“OUR FATE IS TIED TO OPEN TRADE, INNOVATION EVERYWHERE. .. I'D SAY LEARNING IS WHAT IS THE KEY THING... THE ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES BROUGHT TO THE SURFACE INADEQUACIES IN OUR SYSTEMS; THE MAIN ONE IS THAT WE HAVE ACTED WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING TODAY'S CONTEXT... WE NOW LIVE IN A CONTEXT OF GLOBAL NATIONS BUT OUR WORN-OUT PARADIGM IS STILL ONE OF A NATION STATE... THIS IS AKIN TO LOOKING AT THE SKY THROUGH A MICROSCOPE. WE WILL UNDERSTAND CONTEXT AND CONNECT THE DOTS WHEN WE ARE ABLE TO SEE THE CONTEXT.” BILL GATES 2009 INTERVIEW



BLIND SPOTS & CART BEFORE THE HORSE

- Why, as Daniel Kahnemann, the psychologist put it, are we sometimes so “blind to our own blindness”?
- **We have chosen to be blind or indifferent to the vital resources of human dignity, human agency, human history and nature as well a to not assign to them rightful precedence over “The Machine.”**
- **Peter Senge pointed out that we don’t see how we contribute to our own problems and how these evolve through a slow and gradual process because we have been trained to see in isolated near-term events and to solve urgent problems not policy questions...**
- , "If we present a man with a concept of man which is not true, we may well corrupt him. When we present man as an automaton of reflexes, as a mind-machine, as a bundle of instincts, as a pawn of drives and reactions, as a mere product of instinct, heredity and environment, we feed the nihilism to which modern man is, in any case, prone..."
Viktor Frankl
- **Speech on GDP by Robert Kennedy**

EINSTEIN'S GENIUS WILL NOT BE FOUND IN A PRESERVED DEAD BRAIN

“The world we have created is a product of our thinking; it cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”

“The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.”

“All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.”

Albert Einstein

PERPETUAL GROWTH ECONOMY?

- In “[Growth: From Microorganisms to Megacities](#),” Vaclav Smil, a Czech-Canadian environmental scientist, complains that economists haven’t grasped “the synergistic functioning of civilization and the biosphere,” yet they “maintain a monopoly on supplying their physically impossible narratives of continuing growth that guide decisions made by national governments and companies.”
- **“Oh ye seekers after perpetual motion, how many vain chimeras have you pursued? Go and take your place with the alchemists.”**
- — *Leonardo da Vinci*

WHY HAVE WE FOCUSED MAINLY ON “WEALTH OF NATIONS”?

In his [The Theory of Moral Sentiments](#), Adam Smith... explained that self-deceit is the “fatal weakness of mankind” and “the source of half the disorders of human life.”

“The competition between human beings destroys with cold and diabolic brutality... Under the pressure of this competitive fury we have not only forgotten what is useful to humanity as a whole, but even that which is good and advantageous to the individual. [...] One asks, which is more damaging to modern humanity: the thirst for money or consuming haste... in either case, fear plays a very important role: the fear of being overtaken by one’s competitors, the fear of becoming poor, the fear of making wrong decisions or the fear of not being up to snuff...” Nobel Prize scientist Konrad Lorenz

CIVILIZATION AND TRUTH?

- There are famous economists, as was pointed out at a recent CACOR talk, who claim that we should not be concerned about natural resources because they can be recreated by human imagination. Suggest you look up the project BIOSPHERE 2!
- As far as human resources, historian Yuval Noah Harari, whose books have sold more than 20 million copies, was invited to speak to the world's leadership at The World Economic Forum's 2023 meeting in Davos, Switzerland also advises us not to worry about human resources:
- ...the outcome of humans learning to engineer bodies, brains and minds. "This will be the main product of the economy of the 21st century... Over the past century humankind has managed to do the impossible... famine, plague and war have been transformed from incomprehensible and uncontrollable forces of nature into manageable challenges... humankind will turn itself into God..." Harari assumes, "There are no gods in the universe, no nations, no money, no human rights, no laws, and no justice outside the common imagination of human beings."

“Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.”

Voltaire

“I think it says something about human nature that the only form of life we have created so far is purely destructive. We've created life in our own image.”

Stephen Hawking

“Our conscious motivations, ideas, and beliefs are a blend of false information, biases, irrational passions, rationalizations, prejudices, in which morsels of truth swim around and give the reassurance albeit false, that the whole mixture is real and true. The thinking processes attempt to organize this whole cesspool of illusions according to the laws of plausibility. This level of consciousness is supposed to reflect reality; it is the map we use for organizing our life.”

Erich Fromm

HARNESSING GLOBALIZATION

“From the barriers of a single point of view to an explosion of multiple perspectives” through the lens of...

Cultural Complementarity

“If I see further, it is because I stood on the shoulders of giants” **Isaac Newton**

“Great men are they who see that spiritual is stronger than any material force, that thoughts rule the world.”

RALPH W. EMERSON



CONNECTING THE DOTS

- “Computers are incredibly fast, accurate and stupid. Human beings are incredibly slow, inaccurate and brilliant. Together they are powerful beyond imagination.” Albert Einstein
- “the point is that many people who are supposedly some of the brightest people in America working in Silicon Valley turned out to be unbelievably stupid when it came to looking at basic finance and banking.” Financial Times USA editor-at-large Gillian Tett on CNN GPS 3/19/23
- "If you have come to help me, you're wasting your time. But if your liberation is bound up with mine, then let's walk together." Lilla Watson, indigenous Australian visual artist, activist and academic at the 1985 United Nations Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi ...she had been part of an Aboriginal Rights group in Queensland. Together they came up with the phrase.

AN OPTION TO THE “RAT RACE” & SELF-ABASEMENT?

- “The scourges of pestilence, famine, wars and earthquakes have come to be regarded as a blessing to overcrowded nations, since they serve to prune away the luxuriant growth of the human race.” – Tertulian, 3rd Century Latin church father
- “Man (homo sapiens) is the only creature that refuses to be what he (she) is...” Albert Camus
- “We are born princes and the civilizing process makes us frogs.” Canadian psychiatrist Eric Berne
- “Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”
- Tom Piketty’s *A Brief History of Equality*: It’s a history of violence and social struggle, punctuated by regression and disaster. But through it all, Piketty shows, human societies have moved fitfully toward a more just distribution of income and assets, a reduction of racial and gender inequalities, and greater access to health care, education, and the rights of citizenship. Our rough march forward is political and ideological, an endless fight against injustice. To keep moving, Piketty argues, we need to learn and commit to what works, to institutional, legal, social, fiscal, and educational systems that can make equality a lasting reality. At the same time, we need to resist historical amnesia and the temptations of cultural separatism and intellectual compartmentalization. At stake is the quality of life for billions of people. We know we can do better, Piketty concludes. The past shows us how. The future is up to us.
- Martin Luther King, Jr., reminded us that “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”



GRANDIOSITY OR GRANDEUR?

Are common good and co-creation a
burden or a privilege?

THE HEROIC LIFE

- “I am not a genius, I am just curious. I ask many questions and when the answer is simple, then God is answering...”
- “The efforts of most human-beings are consumed in the struggle for their daily bread, but most of those who are, either through fortune or some special gift, relieved of this struggle are largely absorbed in further improving their worldly lot. Beneath the effort directed toward the accumulation of worldly goods lies all too frequently the illusion that this is the most substantial and desirable end to be achieved; but there is, fortunately, a minority composed of those who recognize early in their lives that the most beautiful and satisfying experiences open to humankind are not derived from the outside, but are bound up with the development of the individual's own feeling, thinking and acting. The genuine artists, investigators and thinkers have always been persons of this kind. However inconspicuously the life of these individuals runs its course, none the less the fruits of their endeavors are the most valuable contributions which one generation can make to its successors.”
- Albert Einstein

INTERGENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OUTSIDE OF GROUPTHINK

- **Gen-Z & Elders Alliances**

The members of Generation Z (Gen Z) and retired Elders are less subject to the bias of vested interests than the rest.. These are free to see more objectively and broadly, via heart and mind, the perils beyond the cliff's edge to which our society is rushing. Elders prioritize their legacy to the next generations and the dire consequences their own grandchildren will suffer. Gen Zs visualize with anxiety the future world to which they are being led to subsist.

These two unlikely allies are discovering that they are not helpless. Instead, they are identifying complementary resources to be harnessed in pursuit of a more auspicious future.

Gen Zs have the physical energy, emotional intensity, and skills to utilize modern technology. Elders have the — now rare — wisdom and knowledge of history along with a lifetime of experience... The combination of these resources is unique in today's society and their **complementarity** can generate the synergies required Concrete samples of this developing bi-generational alliance have been cropping up here and in other nations...

One such Elder-Gen Z team is Sir Attenborough and Greta Thunberg...

RECOMMENDED READING

- *"Paradigms"* Joel Barker
- *"From Good to Great"* Jim Collins
- *"The Theory of Profound Knowledge"* Edwards Deming
- *"Inequality by Design"* Fischer, Hout, Lucas, Sanchez-Jankowski, Swidler & Voss
- *"Escape from Reality"* Erich Fromm
- *"Clash or Complement of Cultures?: Peace and Productivity in the New Global Reality"* Hector E. Garcia
- *"The Medici Effect"* Frans Johansson
- *"The Abolition of Man"* C.S. Lewis
- *"How Universities Can Help Create a Wiser World: The Urgent Need for an Academic Revolution"* Nicholas Maxwell
- *"The Structure of Scientific Revolutions"* Thomas Kuhn
- *"The Hidden Persuaders"* Vance Packard (2007 update)
- *"The Theory of Moral Sentiments"* Adam Smith
- *"On Tyranny"* Timothy Snyder
- *"Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited"* Joseph E. Stiglitz
- *"Anthro-Vision"* & *"The Silo Effect"* Gillian Tett