

Quick recap

A presentation on modern techno-industrial cultures by Ruben Nelson, who traced their development over 86 years and highlighted their fundamental characteristics. The presentation concluded with discussions about the limitations of modernity, the need for a new framework in foresight, and the importance of understanding personal stories and historical contexts to address current societal challenges.

Next steps

- [David Harries: thank Ruben at the end of the presentation](#)
- [Dougherty: have the end slide ready to put up at the appropriate time](#)
- [Dave : record on the cloud](#)
- [Art: record on the computer](#)
- [Ted: thank Ruben at the end](#)
- [Bill Rees: share personal stories about loneliness and challenges faced while learning about ecological economics at a future CACOR meeting](#)

Summary

Evolution of Modern Techno-Industrial Cultures

Ruben Nelson delivered a presentation on modern techno-industrial (MTI) cultures, tracing their development over 86 years and highlighting their fundamental characteristics. He explained how MTI cultures separate public and private selves, prioritize individualism and wealth accumulation, and focus on economic growth above all else. Ruben contrasted the current state of MTI with the more integrated society of 1939, noting that while MTI already dominated the world in 1939, it has become increasingly fragmented and hierarchical since then.

Globalization's Impact on Indigenous Cultures

Ruben discussed globalization as an MTI project, emphasizing its role in spreading modernity and economic systems worldwide, often at the expense of local cultures. He highlighted the contrast between MTI (modern techno industrial) societies and Indigenous cultures, noting the hierarchical structures, gender roles, and community dynamics of the former. Ruben also touched on the shift from a community-focused lifestyle to a more individualistic one, as well as the changing role of religion and the decline of traditional values in modern society.

Evolution of Modern Techno-Industrial Cultures

Ruben discussed the evolution of modern techno-industrial (MTI) cultures, highlighting how the post-World War II period saw unprecedented economic growth and the rise of a "golden generation" who benefited from stable jobs and rising wages. He noted that despite the cultural

turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s, which primarily affected university students and draft-age men in France and the US, the fundamental structures of MTI cultures remained intact. Ruben argued that modernity's core approach of dominating and controlling reality has led to financialization, job loss, and a loss of buffers that once protected society from its harsher aspects, while also observing that good intentions alone are insufficient without a deep understanding of reality.

Elites' Disconnect Fuels Global Tensions

Ruben discussed the increasing complexity of modern culture and the inability of current elites to understand or address the global situation. He highlighted how the gap between elites and the general population has grown, leading to resentment and political upheaval. Ruben also explained how modern thinking, or MTI, cannot adequately handle the complexities of the current world, particularly in terms of ecological and civilizational challenges. He emphasized that the next election will likely focus on individual benefits, as political parties continue to use this language to gain support.

Flaws in Modern Civilization

Ruben discussed the inherent flaws in modern civilization, particularly how it is unsustainable and leads to chaos due to its distorted view of reality, which is largely influenced by upper-class, white males. He emphasized that the current path will likely end badly, as the logic of modern living leads to extreme wealth concentration and political influence among the elite, which is unlikely to change. Ruben suggested that education needs to shift focus to help people understand reality better and outgrow modernity's flawed institutions.

Energy's Role in Modern Culture

Ruben discussed the evolving role of energy in modern culture, suggesting it may become as important as money but won't replace it entirely. He highlighted the increasing complexity of the world and the need for alternative energy sources, while noting that Alberta's Premier Danielle Smith is pursuing petroleum in the Middle East. Ruben also shared his personal journey away from public intellectual life in Alberta, explaining his current focus on a small United Church community in Canmore as a testing ground for his ideas. He expressed optimism about Alberta's potential to grow beyond its perceived victimhood and emphasized the importance of understanding the broader implications of modernity's foundations.

Foresight 2.0 for Inclusive Understanding

Ruben discussed the importance of understanding personal stories and historical contexts to better grasp current societal issues, emphasizing the need for a new framework in foresight, which he called "Foresight 2.0," to address the limitations of modern techno-industrial culture. He highlighted the need for diverse perspectives, including those of Indigenous people and women, to challenge existing systems and develop a more inclusive understanding of human nature and civilization. Peter inquired about the role of foresight in resolving MTI culture's problems, to which Ruben responded that current foresight practices are insufficient and

suggested a shift towards a more comprehensive approach that recognizes the uniqueness of different civilizations and cultural understandings of reality.

Beyond GDP: Post-Modernity Hope

The meeting focused on the challenges of modernity and the need for a post-despair hope. Ruben shared insights from his experiences and suggested that modernity may need to be "hospiced" or allowed to die in order for a new way of living to emerge. The group discussed the importance of measuring things beyond GDP, the role of technology in creating problems, and the need for a strategy that can be implemented without drawing too much attention from those in power. The conversation ended with expressions of gratitude for the opportunity to engage in this important discussion.