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INFLUENCING CAPITALIST ATTITUDES
TO DRIVE MORE CAPITAL TOWARDS SOCIAL GOOD

An Emancipatory Action Research Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Graduate School of Leadership & Change
Antioch University

In partial fulfillment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

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October 2020

INFLUENCING CAPITALIST ATTITUDES
TO DRIVE MORE CAPITAL TOWARDS SOCIAL GOOD

This dissertation, by Leah Michelle Burton, has
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Graduate School in Leadership & Change
Antioch University
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT
INFLUENCING CAPITALIST ATTITUDES
TO DRIVE MORE CAPITAL TOWARDS SOCIAL GOOD

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The purpose of this study is to better understand how to influence capitalist attitudes and drive more capital towards social good. This is why we must explore the prospect of emancipating the capitalists from *capitalism*. This study identifies *capitalism* as a form of oppression that is contributing to a newly developed ethics of capital, a term introduced in this study.

Emancipatory action research and general systems theory were employed as the primary approaches to engaging a group of venture capitalists and finance professionals in activities and dialogues. *Value²* is the theory of action I use to influence the attitudes of the participants in the study. I developed the Emancipatory Action Map as a tool for capturing the epistemological process catalyzed by *Value²*. The findings identified common themes and contrasts, such as how participants rationalized their problem-solving, how they responded to the isomorphism between systems operating within capitalism, and how they experienced their own agency in relationship to the problem of driving more capital towards social good. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA, <http://aura.antioch.edu/> and OhioLINK ETD Center, <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/etd>.

Keywords: emancipatory action research, capitalism, general systems theory, Paolo Freire, ethics

Dedication

For my mother, Joyce, all that I am and will be was made possible through your many sacrifices.

For my sons, Angel and Justice, all that I am and will be is for your longevity.

For my partner, Ron, your support helped me across the finish line.

For my committee chair, Jon, your care and guidance never wavered.

For my cohort, C14, a community of caring humans, my tribe.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The Purpose

There are various possible futures and the one we are working towards is one that advances a diverse, pluralistic society built on the belief of a fully inclusive “we.”
—john a. powell (2019)

The purpose of this study is to better understand how to influence capitalist attitudes and drive more capital towards social good. This study employs emancipatory action research (EAR) as the primary approach to engaging a group of venture capitalists and finance professionals in activities and dialogues around driving more capital towards social good. EAR, introduced by Paulo Freire (1970), was a tool for liberation. The praxis is focused on raising critical consciousness using dialogical action. This study identifies *capitalism* as a form of oppression that is contributing to a newly developed ethics of capital, a term introduced in this study. Ethics of capital justifies the prioritization of the accumulation of wealth over any meaningful social contracts that seek to secure health, housing and other forms of social good for the general population. *Value*² is the theory of action I have outlined to describe how dialogue is used to influence the attitudes of the participants in the study. uses EAR’s use of questioning to influence attitudes and catalyze an awakening of critical consciousness to facilitate dialogues around a new social contract, one that speaks to powell’s (2019) fully inclusive “we.”

Economics and Capitalism

In order to advance positive social change, a shift away from oppressive behaviors and beliefs needs to occur within the oppressor. This study defines the oppressors as *capitalists* in support of the ideology of *capitalism*, which has effectively worked to sustain oppression. The problem of driving more capital towards social good is one of complexity and cannot be reduced to singular solutions, like affirmative action or reparations. This study uses EAR to influence

capitalists to acknowledge the complexity of the dilemma and begin engineering strategies that account for that complexity.

Social good is not unlike Aristotle's explanation of the common good:

Now what is just or right is to be interpreted in the sense of 'what is equal'; and that which is right in the sense of being equal is to be considered with reference to the advantage of the state, and the common good of the citizens. (Jowett, 1999, p. 70)

This definition is also tied to what we understand about social contracts and the role of the state in assuring the common good, "Aggregative theories hold that the common good consists of conditions that benefit literally all members of society, such as certain principles of justice that everyone could agree to regardless of their social circumstances" (Jaede, 2020, p. 6).

The Center on Capitalism and Society (2020) defined the theory of capitalism as,

a system of largely private ownership that is open to new ideas, new firms and new owners—in short, to new capital. Capitalism's rationale to proponents and critics alike has long been recognized to be its dynamism, that is, its innovations and, more subtly, its selectiveness in the innovations it tries out. At the same time, capitalism is also known for its tendency to generate instability, often associated with the existence of financial crises, job insecurity and failures to include the disadvantaged. (para. 1)

The prevailing economic world-system of *capitalism* has had several iterations over the last four hundred years, though its evolution started with barley centuries earlier (Harari, 2015).

This dissertation focused on *capitalism* today and its role in inequality. The italic emphasis on *ism* is to bring focus to that aspect of *capitalism* that is pure ideology. Ideology is driven by beliefs that are translated into systems. "If there is to be a fight, let it be a fight over capitalism" (Zuboff, 2019, p. 188). If the protagonist of this story is social good, where does *capitalism* fall?

The succeeding sections on the literature review, research, and the critical dialogues that took place during my employment of EAR, position the system of *capitalism* and social good in an epic battle, with self-proclaimed *capitalists* on both sides. The emphasis on *-ist* is to define this label as being associated with someone who ascribes to the ideology of *capitalism*. *Capitalism* is

an ideology born of economics. Our economic system is based on human beliefs and behaviors. The prevailing discourse around social good and economics ranges from the exploitive nature of modern-day *capitalism* (Stiglitz, 2019) to the continued support of Adam Smith's most basic tenet of upholding the free market, where inequality is not only a given, but a necessity to the growth of the GDP (McWilliams, 2019). Interestingly, Adam Smith's liberalism has been likened to Rawlsian theory (McWilliams, 2019) purporting that even Smith believed in basic human compassion. This compassion was necessary because one of the indicators of success for the free market would be inequality. This is a significant point, one that girds my emancipatory approach to this question of driving more capital towards social good. If most people hold the belief that their fellow humans are entitled to a quality of life, or even inalienable rights, then why do our behaviors and systems not reflect that belief? Driving more capital towards social good requires an answer to that question, which lay with the *capitalists*, who currently ascribe to *capitalism* and are most responsible for the inequalities being experienced today.

Emancipating Capitalists from an Ethics of Capital

As inequality has risen globally, the social sector has become the third largest workforce in the United States (Salamon, 2018). Oppression in the social sector hides in plain sight. Currently, 80% of executive leaders of nonprofit organizations in the United States are White, while over 60% of those served are non-White (Thomas-Breitfeld & Kunreuther, 2017). People of color and women are disproportionately impacted by poverty and inequality, yet play the smallest role in their own liberation. This White supremacist paradigm is further exacerbated by a hegemonic class system, fueled by capitalism (Scheurich, 2017). The largely White, male nonprofit executives maintain salaries that far outpace lay staff (Theis & Garzabri, 2019). The social sector, while in service to oppressive systems of neoliberalism, capitalism and White

supremacy cannot be the purveyors of social justice and equality. DeFillippis (2010) in his thoughtful piece on Contesting Community asks, “what are the elements needed to contend for power and challenge neoliberal hegemony?” (p. 55).

There is likely a correlation between increasing inequality and increasing growth in the social sector, which has been described as a poverty management system (DeFilippis et al., 2010). I have worked within this system for 27 years. In that time, the sector has earned the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC) label. One of my former CEOs earned more than a million dollars per year, and that was not including the many benefits and perks that accompanied such a position. This level of compensation within the sector is quite common. Unlike other sectors, between 2012 and 2015, the NPIC actually outpaced financial, manufacturing, and other industries in employment gains (Salamon, 2018). The problem with this reality is that as poverty and inequality grew, capital was driven toward the NPIC but not towards actionable social good that advances positive social change. As the NPIC bottom-lines have grown, the situation for families’ abilities to access affordable housing, quality education, and livable wage jobs continues to be a polarizing debate, largely focused on quantitative analysis around who is paying the most taxes (Gramm & Early, 2019) rather than the lived experiences of families. From a GST perspective, the world-system of *capitalism* has successfully commodified the non-profit sector, which now operates under the identified ethics of capital.

“Indeed, the conflict which we witness in the world today between totalitarianism and democracy is at bottom a conflict over the question, what is man?” (King, 2013). Or more specifically, what are human beings in relationship to capital? In 1712, Willie Lynch, a West

Indian slave holder, gave a famous speech on “The Making of a Slave,” which he boiled down to simple economics:

For fear that our future Generations may not understand the principles of breaking both of the beasts together, the nigger and the horse. We understand that short range planning economics results in periodic economic chaos; so that to avoid turmoil in the economy, it requires us to have breadth and depth in long range comprehensive planning, articulating both skill sharp perceptions. We lay down the following principles for long range comprehensive economic planning. Both horse and niggers is no good to the economy in the wild or natural state. Both must be broken and tied together for orderly production. (Archive.org, n.d., p. 1)

Lynch provided a raw and realistic view for what I am calling the *ethics of capital*. The ethics of capital is a stark contrast to the ethics of care, which has an element of reciprocity and a consideration for the well-being of all individuals in a given society (Nicholson & Kurucz, 2006). The ethics of capital, as Lynch, articulated, intentionally robs the individual of their independence.

What we do with horses is that we break them from one form of life to another that is we reduce them from their natural state in nature. Whereas nature provides them with the natural capacity to take care of their offspring, we break that natural string of independence from them and thereby create a dependency status, so that we may be able to get from them useful production for our business and pleasure. (Archive.org, n.d., p. 2)

This is the ethics of capital that defines *capitalism*. Tangible or intangible, capital is to be created and accumulated for the business and pleasure of the *capitalists*. Zuboff (2019) intentionally wrote with a sense of urgency about the benign yet all-consuming nature of surveillance capitalism and what he called instrumentarianism. Martin Niemöller, a Lutheran pastor in Germany during the Third Reich, by his own admission, would have behaved very differently as Hitler rose to power had he understood how thin the line was between privileged and not privileged. Rawl’s theory of justice (Matthew, 2017) addressed the issue of foresight by requiring an exercise in the construction of a society in which you do not know your status.

Ironically, it may be observed, that we are all living in a society in which our status is questionable, especially today, in an age of radically shifting realities catalyzed by technology.

Elon Musk believes that “human reality amounts to a computer simulation created by greater forces” (as cited in Tangermann, 2019, para. 5). This comment lends itself to Zuboff’s (2019) sense of urgency for the world to recognize we are all boiling frogs. Lynch’s letter could easily be retitled “The Making of a Human.” Perhaps then, all the world’s *capitalists*, those who stand to lose the most, will not make the mistake that Martin Niemoller did, and live in a state of self-deception (Trivers, 2011) propped up by an ethics of capital. This is why we must explore the prospect of emancipating the *capitalists* from *capitalism*.

“We like magic bullets” (Campbell, 2014). Our culture shies away from complexity. We prefer quick fixes, such as taking vitamin C to cure a cold or a paleo diet to lose weight. These reductionist approaches leave little room for acknowledging other environmental or psychological factors that may contribute to these problems. Awakening critical consciousness allows for dialogue around systems change. General systems theory (GST; von Bertalanffy, 1968) is a useful tool for contextualizing complexity. GST, as imagined by von Bertalanffy (1968), promoted the practice of cooperating across disciplines to promote innovation to solve problems. This study adheres to that theory and explores its application further in Chapter III with an emphasis on using dialogue in a cross-sector environment to catalyze problem solving and increase self-efficacy in challenging the status quo of *capitalism*. Reducing the discussion of income inequality to a comparison of tax returns is a gross distraction from tackling urgent matters related to increasing global disasters, which are often reduced to unpreventable *natural* disasters (Chmutina & von Meding, 2019). Reductionism is antithetical to critical thinking or dialogue, as ignoring the human impact to our environment does nothing to help solve for global

warming. Although when contextualized as an output of an ethics of capital, where growth is a religiosity, reducing disasters to unpreventable acts of God becomes all the more acceptable.

The necessity of a GST approach in opposition to the status quo's use of reductionism in maintaining the current iteration of *capitalism* is an important element of this study. The participants in this study live and work in Los Angeles. The urgency of driving more capital towards social good in Los Angeles revolves around equity, immigration, homelessness, and growing income inequality. These issues are being exacerbated by the engineered growth of Silicon Beach, as the Los Angeles landscape is being aggressively redeveloped to meet the demands of *capitalism* (McDonald, 2019). Critical comprehension of these intersections will necessitate shifts in thinking by the targeted participants and their ability to imagine solutions that challenge *capitalism* and the policies that sustain it, in its current form.

“It is still not too late to save capitalism from itself” (Stiglitz, 2019, p. 247).

Understanding how to drive more capital towards social good requires one to first zoom out far enough to see the cosmos and the infinite potential that we have yet to grasp. Once we have accepted the limitation of our own finite existence and accompanying ignorance, we can focus on those aspects of understanding that are within our reach—the sun, the moon, the stars, our evolution, our beliefs, behaviors and systems. These are the bases for the philosophical, scientific, and spiritual stories that are the root to discourse across the disciplines and societies. The notions of freedom, equality, and community take shape as ideological beliefs that Nazis, Black Power proponents, Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, Communists, and numerous other movements have warred over for millennia. This is hopeful, as critical dialogues, couched in an emancipatory framework with a GST lens just might save *capitalism* from itself. *Capitalism* has changed over time. Reciprocity within the system used to exist (Zuboff, 2019), where workers

and consumers were a valued part of the ecosystem driving the GDP, another economic measure that is questionable in its calculation (Keen, 2015). Conservative economists still believe that increasing consumption is key to closing the inequality gap (Cass, 2018), and their scenarios weigh heavily on ignoring the rise of the intangible economy and the moniker of the automated workforce (Haskel & Westlake, 2018). Stiglitz (2019) still aims to preserve *capitalism*, with the advent of his suggestions for a new social contract. I believe through critical dialogues across disciplines and sectors, this is achievable.

This study had a runway. That runway has brought together individuals from different sectors, and different political and economic ideologies in the spirit of dialoging to identify strategies that position communities for economic resilience. The particular banner of economic resilience was born of the action research approach, whereby individuals selected a term that people of differing ideologies and sectors could find common ground. This process of landing on economic resiliency is discussed further in the methodological approach and description of the study. It was the use of emancipatory conversations using a general systems lens that provided for the creation of the Coalition on Economic Resiliency (CoER), which became the platform for this study.

The Problem in Practice

Action from principle, the perception and the performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with anything that was. It not only divides states and churches, it divides families; aye, it divides the individual, separating the diabolical in him from the divine.

—Henry David Thoreau (1849/1993)

Overview

In 2016, I started developing projects and collecting research that focused on the challenge at the center of this dissertation—driving more capital towards social good. This chapter encompasses how EAR and GST were applied during the course of my doctoral studies

and how that research resulted in the selection of influencing *capitalists'* attitudes. The problem is also about building a more critical understanding of how social good and capital operate in relationship to each other within the confines of *capitalism*. That relationship can be observed in the NPIC and within the venture capital community. As a practitioner-researcher, I had decades of experience with the NPIC and had seen an opportunity to use EAR and GST to engage venture capitalists, specifically, in dialogues that they were not accustomed to having. The learning achievements involved convening a group of venture capitalists, which I have called the Venture Capital Collective Exploring Community Economies (VCCECE). The discussions and accompanying research are what led to the design of the study outlined in Chapter III, which begins with the inaugural convening of the Coalition on Economic Resiliency (CoER). The study is a practice in separating the diabolical from the divine, as participants are engaged in wrestling with how they align their values with their actions. Our economic system implicitly exemplifies the kind of society we create for ourselves and the compassion or lack thereof; we bake social good into that system, or not. The ability to impart action from principle as it relates to driving more capital towards social good is about the ability to challenge *capitalism* and the Ethic of Capital that surrounds it. EAR and GST are the tools used with the participants in the study to spark shifts in thinking and catalyze problem-solving that challenges the status quo of capitalism and the policies that sustain it.

Income Inequality

A misshapen economy creates misshapen individuals and a misshapen society.
 —Stiglitz (2019, p. 29)

There are many different types of ethical frameworks that have been developed by practitioners and philosophers. Carlson et al. (2009) has defined ethics as “the rules or principles that define right and wrong conduct” (p. 535). These rules and principles vary individually and

organizationally and are what constitute an ethical framework. An ethical framework is a decision-making model that has been historically either “deliberative or emotional” (Koop, 2013, p. 527). Dual-systems in moral decision-making (Koop, 2013) bring to light the growing need for more complex thought processes or “System 2 thinking” (Kahneman, 2011, p. 13).

Kahnemann’s dual-systems theory explored the emotional deontological response to dilemmas and its direct conflict with the deliberative process of most decision-making theories. The topic of ethics is not always clearly discussed in economic theory or practice. The global growth of income inequality is an output of *capitalism* and the development of a specific kind of ethical framework related to neoliberal *capitalism*. I call this the *ethics of capital*. Unlike the ethics of care theory, born of Carol Gilligan’s (1982) disdain for Kohlberg’s ethic of justice theory—which she deemed as male-oriented—the ethics of care theory pairs the interconnectedness of interpersonal concern for others with a concern for equality and justice (Skoe, 2014). The ethics of care dictate that each and every life is valuable, and “rejects the notion of impartiality and believes that particular relationships are more important than universal moral principles like rights and freedom” (C. E. Johnson, 2012, p. 37). Rights and freedom—these loaded words are thrown around by conservatives, liberals and extremists, each defining them by their ideologies or ethical frameworks. The ethics of capital is an output of *capitalism*’s ideological tenets.

The ethics of capital explains why income inequality is growing. Its growth is a clear indicator of the prioritization of capital (tangible and intangible) over people. Every asset, behavior, person, space and idea are commodified through *capitalism* into a commodity to be valued and monetized with little to no reciprocities. If we better understand the inherent problem of this distorted ethical framework it is easier to determine how we might change it. EAR and

GST are used in this study to prepare the ground. This preparation begins with the inaugural convening on the Coalition on Economic Resiliency (CoER), which uses an EAR and GST approach throughout the dialogical discussions centered on identifying strategies to drive more capital towards social good, despite the limitations of *capitalism*. Once the ground is prepared, the study documents several participants' evolving emancipation from *capitalism* and the ethics of capital as they develop and present countering strategies.

Although philosophical in nature, this discussion of ethics is critical to understanding the premise for this study. Explaining the use of terms like social good, *capitalism*, and *capitalist*, and defining the ethics of capital help to identify where we might find leverage to create shifts and influence attitudes. Let us look at an application of Rawl's theory of justice (Gainer, 2013). According to Rawls's description of the difference principle, "society should allow inequality insofar as it is to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged" (Gainer, 2013, p.1). Gainer (2013) used Rawls's principle to evaluate how the welfare system benefits the underserved arguably at the expense of the privileged. The justification of the principle when applied to the beneficiaries of the welfare state is that those individuals are not necessarily happier than the privileged class, therefore, the perceived inequality is acceptable. This does not mean that inequality is acceptable. It means that Gainer's logic is wrong. The privileged class is not less privileged because of welfare. Welfare recipients are not happier than the privileged class because they have welfare. Welfare provides for basic necessities, while the privileged class enjoys a standard of living that goes far beyond basic necessities. The least advantaged, the welfare recipients, are not receiving the greatest benefit. Inequality, by Rawl's standards, should tilt prosperity towards the disadvantaged. This study reflects my positionality as a practitioner-researcher looking to tilt prosperity by influencing capitalist attitudes to drive more capital towards social good.

Commodification

“In the end, there can only be one” is a well-known line from the film *Highlander* (Davis et al., 1986) in which immortal beings battle one another for a grand prize. Organizations with social missions are hard-pressed to practice the dictum of the triple bottom line. The entire idea that an organization may equally prioritize people, planet, and profit is the very definition of *the road to hell is paved with good intentions*. If people and planet were as important in corporations as profit, then inequality and sustainability within organizations boasting triple bottom lines or conscious capitalism would be held to completely different standards.

Elkington (2018), who introduced the concept of the triple bottom line in 1999, has now suggested it be recalled: “It was supposed to provoke deeper thinking about capitalism and its future, but many early adopters understood the concept as a balancing act, adopting a trade-off mentality” (para. 8). While acknowledging the gains made in some sustainability efforts, Elkington came to question if much has been achieved in securing the health and well-being of billions globally.

In the 1990s, efforts to develop a social return on investment took shape (Cooney & Lynch-Cerullo, 2014). Since then, philanthropic organizations have been drivers in the creation of outcomes-based approaches to program design. Nonprofits are being directed to increase their use of evaluation and measurement tools to evidence the impact of their missions. The implementation of SROI has not decreased the structural racism within the NPIC, but it has elevated the importance of valuing social good. In the United States, nonprofits have grown exponentially over the last two decades, while inequality and poverty have also grown. According to Barrett (2016), in 2015, the top one million nonprofits in the United States grossed

about \$350 billion dollars in revenues from donations. The SROI of those \$350 billion dollars is questionable, and increasing income inequality and homelessness point to gaps in this sector.

The nonprofit sector has experienced tremendous growth in the last three decades. Many organizations are often criticized for having CEOs earning salaries of over two million dollars (Strachan, 2013), and hosting lavish events (Bertagnoli, 2011). The prevailing system of *capitalism* has commodified important aspects of the nonprofit sector and transformed it into the NPIC. This commodification might be scrutinized using EAR as a mechanism for raising consciousness and taking back a vital vehicle for driving capital towards social good.

Little compromise is made when profits are at stake. People and planet are recognized as subsidiary priorities, if at all. The nonprofit sector is no different. *Capitalism* is the prevailing system at play, therefore most nonprofits who wish to be viewed as successful, pursue profits at the expense of people and planet. This is not always an intentional practice and the reason why a critical application of GST and EAR helpful in unpacking this crisis of conscience in the nonprofit sector.

“For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change” (Lorde, 1984/2007, p. 110). The NPIC is an output of *capitalism*. It is a tool for managing poverty (DeFilippis et al., 2010) and is reflective of the systemically racist and oppressive nature of *capitalism*. In order for the nonprofit sector to become authentically mission driven, an awakening must occur. The sector must accept that they have been actors on a stage. Much like the film, *The Truman Show* (Rudin et al., 1998) where the main character realized that his entire life has been a contrived production, the nonprofit sector must do the same. Truman was born and raised in a highly-orchestrated television show, in which he was the only person

who did not know the true nature of his existence. After multiple events lead him to suspect that something is amiss, he rides out to the edges of his world, only to hit a wall. It is in that moment that he truly awakens to his reality. The nonprofit sector must do the same. If conscientização (Freire, 1970) is to become the driving force that authentically combats oppression in all its forms, we must hit the wall, and then tear it down.

Ludwig von Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory

GST was notably introduced by von Bertalanffy (1968) with a keen eye to dismantling reductionist approaches to research. The original publication has led to a wide array of applications, from mathematical to human to technological systems and beyond. Von Bertalanffy (1968) attacked the reductionist themes that run through much of academia and decried the spread of systems thinking in technology and engineering as it identifies humans as the greatest liability to growth and efficiency. GST was to be used as a means of strengthening open systems, like human social systems. I believe there is a hypocrisy in systems theory today that applies GST as a method for eliminating open systems rather than working within them. The development of a systems thinking instrument as a means to finding system thinkers (Castelle & Jaradat, 2016) demonstrates the desire to reduce systems thinking to a skillset that will enhance employee productivity and project management. Peter Senge's (2006) work in the application of systems thinking and theory to increasing organizational effectiveness, though impactful, is limited in its scope. Senge's seminal work on this topic reduces systems thinking to a discipline employed to inculcate learning as a praxis operationally. While Senge addressed complexity, he did so within the closed system of business operations and applying systems theory to ultimately improve financial bottom lines. In a previous study (Burton, 2018), one of my participants used the term *deceleration* to describe how we combat the hyper-competitiveness of capitalism.

Decelerating would allow for a return to the application of GST as von Bertalanffy envisioned, where practitioners work across disciplines to advance positive social change. As complexity increases with the advent of technology and globalization, there is an economic propensity towards growth, fueled by neoliberal ideologies that demand quick solutions to barriers of ethno-racial differences, sustainability, and varying governmental policies.

Neoliberalism found its greatest champions under the tutelage of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan during the 1980s, as nation states around the world were westernized in pursuit of capital (Harvey, 2007). Systems thinking as an applied science encourages big picture thinking and the development of tools that allow for understanding complexity. Six-sigma, lean six-sigma, theory of constraints, and total quality management (TQM) all have ties to systems thinking. Systems theory practices became a highly-lauded tool in the pursuit of capital and the management of the workforce.

This was not von Bertalanffy's (1968) intent in his development of the Society for General Systems Research, which he co-founded in 1954, as a means to "investigate the isomorphy of concepts . . . [and] promote the unity of science" (p. 15). The impetus for this unity came from a desire to find solutions to what von Bertalanffy described as "impending catastrophe" (p. 204).

The dominance of mass man and the suppression of the individual by an ever expanding social machinery; the breakdown of the traditional system of values and its replacement by pseudo-religions, ranging from nationalism to the cult of status symbols, to astrology, psychoanalysis and Californian sectarianism; the decay of creativity in art, music and poetry; the willing submission of the mass to authoritarianism, be it a dictator or an impersonal élite; the colossal fights between a decreasing number of super-states: these are some of the symptoms recurring in our days. (pp. 204–205)

Written before the rise of neoliberalism, this excerpt foreshadowed many of the global challenges we are facing today. Climate change, rising inequality, and the massive displacement of the poor via planetary gentrification (Lees et al., 2016) are all problems with tangible

solutions. Reductionist approaches, such as carbon offsets, welfare and affordable housing do not address the whole systems at play.

Identifying isomorphic similarities in processes across fields of discipline helps to decrease duplicative efforts and solve problems, quicker. It's a fairly simple dictate, but reductionism in science and hyper-competitive neoliberalism present a complexity all their own that stands in the way of von Bertalanffy's cooperative paradigm of GST.

Paolo Freire's Emancipatory Action Research

“Conscientização does not stop at the level of mere subjective perception of a situation, but through action prepares men for the struggle against the obstacle to their humanization” (Freire, 1970, p. 119). EAR, also referred to as critical action research, speaks to the need for people generally treated as objects to become the agents of their own struggle. Unlike other forms of action-research with positivist or interpretive approaches, EAR is a critical means to considering whole systems in the deliberation of research, questioning “how the situation in which it is conducted has been discursively, socially and historically constructed” (Kemmis, 2008, p. 95). EAR holds limitless possibilities for the transformational changes needed to influence attitudes and challenge the oppressive ideologies of *capitalism*.

Research is often a process that involves interactions between a subject and an object, with non-researchers being the objects. Nonprofit strategic planning activities engage in traditional processes that may or may not include some data collected via surveys or focus groups from the populations they impact. This is not very different from that of for profit companies engaged in market research to improve or develop a product or service. These activities all revolve around the prevailing system of capitalism, which requires a drive for profits. Conscientização is an awakening towards humanization. Critical EAR challenges

traditional research, requiring a subject-subject relationship, where objectification is combatted.

In the dialogical theory of action subjects meet in cooperation in order to transform the world.

The anti-dialogical, dominating *I* transforms the dominated, conquered *thou* into a mere it. The dialogical *I*, however, knows that it is precisely the *thou* (“not-I”) which has called forth his or her own existence. He also knows that the *thou* which calls forth his own existence in turn constitutes an *I* which has in his *I* its *thou*. The *I* and the *thou* thus become, in the dialectic of these relationships, two *thous* which become two *I*'s (Freire, 1970, p. 167).

In response to oppression and tyranny around the globe, Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) gave hope to masses of people with little else to cling to. As an educator, Freire explained how education had been coopted by the oppressor and his book was a guide for the oppressed and the oppressor to unlearn what they had been taught and to learn anew, together in a model of cooperation (1970). This is a guiding principle of this study.

The current crisis in the nonprofit sector of serving multiple masters speaks to how “community and community-based initiatives have increasingly become part of the regulation and management of social problems such as poverty” (DeFilippis et al., 2010). Economic liberalism and its advocates reference the presence of poor people as an indicator of success in metropolises globally (Glaeser, 2012) and encourage the necessary management of poverty through public programs that insure public health. EAR is a revolutionary practice, emboldened by a practicum that knowledge is co-created through what Che Guevara called a “communion” (as quoted in Gerassi, 1968, p. 56) between people. The revolution is in the acknowledgment that there is an oppressor and an oppressed and that in order to seek liberation from oppression, the oppressed must be engaged as co-creators in the strategies to obtain their liberation.

Freire provides a blueprint for working with communities facing oppressive environments. Freire's work still does not receive the regard it deserves as a pinnacle guide for implementing effective methods of change within systems, be they educational or otherwise.

Like von Bertalanffy's general systems theory, Freire's pedagogy is multidisciplinary, offering a universal lens for research, reflection and action. It is an enormous task to tear down the wall of reductionist thinking within academia. Complexity theory provides some small opening for discussion, but still seeks to reduce complexity into singular events within closed systems as opposed to issues across disciplines or industries. The imperative to practice compassion and to eliminate oppressive, neoliberal practices within *capitalism* should serve as the impetus for further exploration of how to disrupt the current trajectory of the ethics of capital.

Marx (1867/1976) spoke of the inevitable decline of capitalism which, if true, requires planning for "what's next" and answering the questions of how we plan for a post-capitalist society; how those who do not belong to the power-holding classes create paths towards prosperity and growth as opposed to wealth creation. Some of this work will be a reinstating of systems long-past in developing countries, while other learning will come from communities in less-developed nations, where populations continue to maintain their own prosperity through time-tested, resilient systems that have been in place for centuries. As programs like Universal Basic Income are being piloted globally in response to income inequality and rapidly declining opportunities for an inclusive workforce, EAR holds great potential for community building and problem solving now and in the future.

Venture Capital Collective Exploring Community Economies

The VCCECE was formed to discuss how to drive more capital towards social good and to engage in dialogue that included the perspective that *capitalism* limits the ability of anyone to drive more capital towards social good. The VCCECE was comprised of several individuals that I had encountered during my research between 2016 and 2018. The decision to focus on venture capital stemmed from my work in fundraising for nonprofit organizations for

the last 27 years. In 2016, I left a very lucrative position to reflect on what I had actually accomplished in that quarter of a century of my life. As I did so, an associate of mine who works in venture capital suggested I explore future opportunities in that industry as well as coach some of the women and people of color that he was encountering in the start-up community. These start-ups shared a few things in common: they were in desperate need of funding; they were led by women and/or people of color; and they had a business plan with a mission related to social good. Meeting with these folks spurred frustration on my part at the stark reality of how the immense resources we have as a society are withheld by capitalists in an effort to grow them further. This pursuit of accumulation is a significant tangible barrier to funding solid business plans that affect real world problems.

Venture capitalists are instrumental in the maintenance of capital and *capitalism*. They are like soldiers on the front lines, who have been conditioned to believe in a just cause; how else could they be effective? Their cause is the accumulation of wealth by any means necessary. *Capitalists* vest them with a fraction of their wealth and the responsibility to grow that wealth exponentially through high risk investments. Most of these investments will fail, but a few will not and they will yield ridiculously large returns, much to the satisfaction of the investors. This project was deeply impactful for me in the development of this doctoral study. The goals were to first demonstrate an understanding of action research methods through engagement with action research literature, second, to demonstrate an understanding of how action research is conducted through the development and implementation of an action research project, and lastly, to demonstrate an understanding of how to analyze and reflect on data collected through action research.

The first goal of reviewing the literature around action research ranged from Dewey's (year?) vision of radical social democracy through pragmatism (Stark, 2014) to Freire's (1970) model of emancipatory research. The latter caught my interest and I went further down the path of EAR studies and its effectiveness with oppressed populations. During the process of researching for the literature review part of this individualized assignment, community economies and the research around them grasped my attention. Just the idea of exploring community economies is a jarring thought to most people. It may be referred to as extreme, when thought of on a large scale or likened to socialism or dystopian in its ideology.

I wanted this gathering of minds to indicate something different, and bringing together venture capitalists under the banner of exploring community economies was my way of assuring the conversation was disruptive in nature. We would not be allowed to slip into typical conversations of dismissing seemingly impossible discussions, in favor of more comfortable dialogue that stays within the means of the status quo. If my goal was to create a shift and to have moments of discovery for all, there would need to be a vigilant commitment to fostering a dialogue that emancipated all involved from the safety of nihilistic discussions. Part of my role was to disallow conversations that begin and end with how things have always been or how they are perceived to always be.

Freire (1970) argued that dialogue is essential to progress and must not be contingent on assured agreement. Positionality is a constant concern and point of contention for practitioner-researchers, as the validity of the approach and the findings come into question. The plan-act-observe-reflect methodology is inclusive of the practitioner-researcher and others in the process. I began this research with a clear intention of finding venture capitalists interested in creating pathways between capital and social good.

As a lifelong nonprofit management professional, I have a vested interest in learning how to increase the capacity of organizations working for social justice and equity globally. I made my anti-capitalist beliefs known to prospective members of the VCCECE, not in an effort to dissuade dissenting ideologies but to further engage them in an authentic, transparent dialogue about the way forward. I also explained the emancipatory action research approach and why I chose it as a means of research. Deweyan philosophy purports that absolute truth may not be within reach, but there are situational solutions that may be discovered (Stark, 2014). This research project was about laying the groundwork for seeking out those solutions.

The VCCECE was formed through a process of individual and group discussions. The leading questions for each individual meeting were the same as I attempted to explore each collective member's values around their roles within the system of capitalism and their propensity for driving more capital towards social good. Following each discussion, I sent meeting notes to members recapping our discussions and the new questions that came out of those meetings. These new questions were then used to frame future conversations.

The group discussions were conducted in the same manner as members responded to one another and engaged an agenda that was driven by their own questions and proposed dilemmas to the issues of capital and social good. The action research process of plan-act-observe-reflect was employed and documented throughout multiple discussions. Below are some of the outputs from the VCCECE and the logic model of the process. Ultimately, the participants agreed that in order to really identify and prioritize scalable strategies, a larger gathering would need to be held.

Table 1.1 summarizes the outputs from the VCCECE convening including thematic summaries of each output.

Table 1.1*Outputs from VCCECE Discussions With Participants*

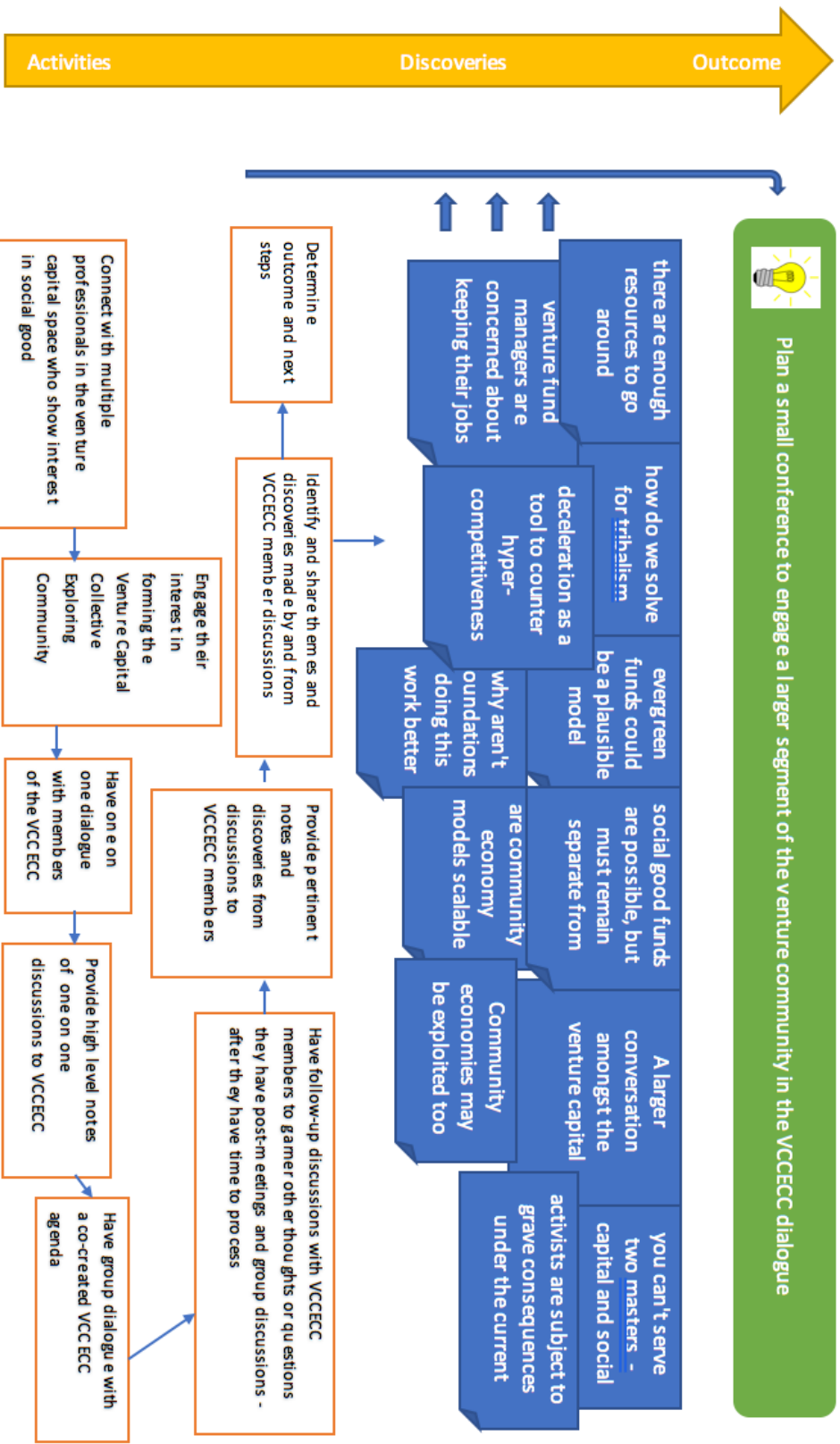
Output	Description
Capitalism needs to be broken.	The system itself needs a competitor that provides an attractive alternative that creates a new demand in the market.
We need to solve for tribalism.	People are innately selfish and implicitly biased. We need to acknowledge this, in order to create better systems to combat it.
We belong to each other.	Radical compassion, like that of Father Gregory Boyle of Homeboy Industries, is a philosophy that can be taught and embodied in other systems.
Urban gardens will not feed 10 billion people.	Small-scale local social movements are impactful but we need scalable solutions to address global problems.
We need to employ a theory of change.	We need to develop a theory of change as it relates to driving more capital towards social good by transforming or supplanting capitalism.
Venture capital is not a conduit for social good.	Venture funds have no relation to people or values only money. The venture community is not structured to act as a vehicle for social good.
The American political system is systemically racist and unfair.	Capitalism is pervaded by antithetical the United States' history of genocide, slavery and continued White supremacy. Social good cannot be advanced without challenging these issues.
Transforming capitalism is too skybox.	Capitalism is too big to change and we should leverage it better for social good.
Become decelerators.	Instead of accelerating everything, we need to combat hyper-competitiveness as a way to focus on social good. B-Corps are an example of this.
We need more evergreen funds.	These funds exist to fuel social good projects and once repaid cycle into other social good projects. This model could be scaled.
You cannot serve two masters.	Capitalism does not allow for prioritizing social good, it only allows for more capitalism.

The outputs in Table 1.1, along with further research provided in the next chapter's literature review, became the basis for the formation of the Coalition on Economic Resiliency (CoER).

Figure 1.1 depicts the logic model for the project.

Figure 1.1

Logic Model for VCCECE Action Research Project



Coalition on Economic Resiliency—Catalyzing Change

“Evolving a complex set of systems, like White supremacy and capitalism, and long-standing institutions like governments, banks and foundations, requires bridge builders who can envision opportunities for change and lead with compassion” (Villanueva, 2018, p. 96). One of the themes that emerged with the VCCECE related to the acknowledgement of systems. As I continued to look for ways to move forward collectively addressing the challenge of influencing *capitalist* attitudes and driving more capital towards social good, focus on the institutions most critical to supporting economic resiliency became a driver for the suggested gathering. Those institutions are compromised by the complex set of systems that Villanueva (2018) described. Their pervasiveness cannot be ignored nor solved easily. One of the goals of the CoER is finding levers to activate solutions and in doing so, directly and indirectly impact these systems, contributing to positive systems-change.

The CoER was formed when the VCCECE outputs were shared with Community Health Councils (CHCs), a community-based organization in South Los Angeles with a 26-year history of convening organizations and communities using a community-based participatory approach to policy and systems change. CHC reached out to the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco’s Community Development Field Group to gauge their interest in partnering around a convening.

A small planning committee was formed comprised of the following:

- John Baackes, CEO, LA Care Health Plan
- Michelle Burton, CSO, and Director, Social Change Institute, CHC (myself)
- Veronica Flores, CEO, CHC
- Matthew Haas, VP, Riverside Capital

- Melody Head, Manager, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco Community Development

The shared interest to have this dynamic gathering consider economic resiliency and building generational wealth in under-served communities in anticipation of the next recession, a growing concern amongst many. A white paper was produced collaboratively by this small planning committee, the details of which are included in Chapter III. The recommended levers from that white paper included the formation of the CoER to focus on using the following levers:

- Moving from recession and recovery to resilience—The new California Governor’s “Budget for All” approach and the opportunities presented in these inclusive economic ideas offer room for policy creation and implementation
- Building foundations for generation wealth—Securing pathways to the accumulation of assets for families will move the dial on closing the income inequality gap and boost economic resiliency
- Policy levers to strengthen the safety-net—Activating policy makers capacity to improve and enact automatic stabilizers in real time as recession impact in incurred
- Levers for social good, philanthropy and impact investing—Shifts in investing practices, increases in grant allocations made from net assets as well as expanded approaches to using venture capital as a tool for fueling solutions and strengthening the safety-net
- Positioning community-based organizations—A collective approach to creating and accessing a rainy-day fund and fostering the growth of social enterprises among nonprofits as mechanisms for diversifying portfolios and growing their reserves

With this shared agreement of how and what to convene around, the committee gave me a clear runway to develop the structure and program of the convening using an EAR and GST approach. This methodology and the format for engaging selected participants was designed to influence capitalist attitudes and catalyze strategies for driving more capital towards social good.

Chapter II: Literature Review

If I never become what I meant to be, but always remain what I am not, I shall spend eternity contradicting myself by being at once something and nothing, a life that wants to live and is dead, a death that wants to be dead and cannot quite achieve its own death because it still has to exist.

—Merton (2002, p. 33)

Capitalism: Evolution, Problems and Ways Forward

The goal of this section is to build on some of the concepts introduced in the introduction and to explain how *capitalism* has evolved to produce the ethics of capital I have defined. I provide some context for how the problem of *capitalism* has been addressed over the last two centuries through social movements and attempts at improving the system of *capitalism*. These attempts have yielded multiple versions of social contracts with explicit and implicit ideologies that have continued to drive income inequality and commodify social sector approaches to stemming social injustices. Lastly, I draw from the dystopic futures of *capitalism* that Zuboff (2019) and Harari (2015, 2016) depict for humanity and the planet as the proponents of *capitalism* continue to prevail in their oft misguided pursuit of growth at all costs.

Adam Smith's theories on economics outlined in *The Wealth of Nations* which was first published in 1776, birthed economic liberalism and the ideologies that foster capitalism.

The fundamental idea of Smith's critique was that the "wealth of the nation" derived not from the accumulation of wealth by the state, at the expense of its citizens and foreign powers, but from the development of the division of labour. (Clarke, 2013, p. 1)

This freedom of enterprise was contingent on free trade and, following the American Revolution, the Atlantic trade system grew and Smith's economic ideas profited. Free trade was most beneficial to the wealthy and helped to advance political agendas. The division of labor in this free trade environment created a further divide between the working class and the wealthy. "While free trade brought prosperity to the most advanced producers, it imposed destitution on those who were unable to compete" (Clarke, 2013, p. 2) leading to the sort of predictable

economic crises, that Marx (1867/1976) spoke of when criticizing the practice of capitalism and the division of labor. In 1887, over 100 years after Adam Smith's publication, Karl Marx produced *Capital*, which directly challenged the tenets of Smith's economic theories. Marx proclaimed and defined this free trade economy and its accompaniments of private property and division of labor as a system of capital that exploited the working class in favor of the wealthy (N. Smith & Lefaivre, 1996). Adam Smith's and Marx's theories are far more complex than outlined here, and economists, politicians, and scholars have debated the merits of both for centuries. Wars have been fought and many have died in defense of and opposition to these theories. Smith and Marx could be viewed as polarities on an economic spectrum and, over the course of the last two centuries, there have been paradigmatic shifts along this spectrum. Globally, those who do not generally ascribe to capitalism are often marginalized politically and labeled as communists or socialists (Wallerstein, 2010). Neo-liberalism and neo-capitalism emerged during the 20th century. The latter was developed as a means of countering the abuses and unintended consequences of large corporate structures while still maintaining capitalism; the former is just another iteration of Smith's economic liberalism, with an emphasis on increasing global free trade and the further shrinkage of government (Azevedo et al., 2019). In the United States, neo-liberalism does not define political parties but rather economic policies, that reinforce the original theories introduced by Smith.

The economy has often been depicted through the construction of machines (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013). In 1949, Bill Phillips created the Monetary National Income Analogue Computer (MONIAC), a device that provided a functional representation of how the economy ebbed and flowed through the use of pulleys and levers (Gibson-Graham et al, 2013). The "god-economist-operator" (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013, p. 2), a technological manifestation

of *capitalism*, unaffected by the fickleness of humans, MONIAC became a trusted oracle globally. It is not unusual to hear the economy referred to as a self-organizing, closed system (e.g., Krugman, 1996). Society and its subsystems are human social constructions; *capitalism* is one of our most enduring creations. Like nations, states and limited liability corporations, we construct ideas and then vest them with all our security (Harari, 2015). *Capitalism* has reached a level of such reverence that few are willing to challenge it. The problem of *capitalism* and the question of how to drive more capital towards social good then becomes an issue of agency. As rising income inequality and the ethics of capital present clear contradictions to the security of all, individuals need a sense of agency in order to take action towards any changes in *capitalism*. “If individuals are caught up in and are unable to separate themselves from these limit-situations, their theme in reference to these situations is fatalism” (Freire, 1970, p. 113).

Social Movements

The future of humanity is inextricably linked to the future of the planet on which humans have evolved. *Capitalism* defines the world economy as the reigning mode of production. Wallerstein (2010) argued that the world-system of capitalism is unsustainable, as it has exhausted its reach geographically, is slowly approaching a saturation point internally and will eventually reach an “asymptote” (p. 175), the equivalent of a world economic crisis from which there will be no capitalist means of recovery. There are innumerable accounts from poets, philosophers, historians, and politicians that speak of turning points in our history. Many of these moments revolved around the building or breaking of systems, locally or globally. Wallerstein was hopeful, rendering current events as indicators of the inevitable collapse of the world-system of capitalism and the slow but sure construction of a socialist world-government. Social

movements, revolutions, and rebellions continue to play a critical role in the shaping of a new world-system.

Activist and feminist philosopher Grace Lee Boggs, after living on this planet for 100 years, shared that change is better created from the bottom up rather than the top down. In one of her last books, she alluded to the ability to create an economy beyond capitalism that is within “the belly of the beast” (Boggs & Kurashige, 2011, p. 170). This economy via social movements would be driven by basic human practices of growing food, caring for one another’s children, and creating community networks that meet the needs of its residents. This idea of growing the movement within the belly of the beast refers to her belief that the next American revolution will not exist in opposition to the status quo but in spite of it. It will reclaim humanity in a world that has successfully commodified every aspect of day to day life. “In the domestic realm, the middle-class family is at once fortress—policed and policing the reproduction of its members—and “hothouse”—cultivating perfectly commodified children for the imagined niche markets of the future” (Katz, 2017, p. 4). Globally, there is a resistance to this commodification evidenced in movements like Occupy Wall Street and conscious capitalism along with the establishment of benefit corporations. Boggs and Kurashige (2011) pointed to the social movement activities occurring amongst the Zapatistas, urban gardening pioneers, and other small, local yet impactful representations of reclaiming our humaneness. This humanist approach to living, in her great opinion, is the best response to the current world-system.

Hawken (2008) explained that “effective solutions are both local and systemic” (p. 20). A well-known voice in the push for a more sustainable future, Hawken believes that the system of social movements is so far-reaching globally, that the world-system as it exists today will topple, to be replaced by smaller more efficient and humane forms of economy, which may

align with Wallerstein's prophesied socialist world-government (2010). An exponential growth in social movements globally between 1950 and 2003 (J. Smith & Wiest, 2012) has provided hope for this vision.

Planetary gentrification (Lees et al., 2016), has become a buzz-word of capitalism, from physical to virtual space, the accumulation and monetization of all is the final frontier. There is a rallying cry from populations around the world that the planet and its people will soon perish under these circumstances. The documentary film, *An Inconvenient Truth* (Guggenheim & Gore, 2006) was a manifestation of this urgency to save the planet.

Social movements have endured and even flourished during times when it seems that all might be lost. There is a plethora of opinion about what defines a social movement. A social movement cannot be reduced to revolution, rebellion, nonprofit, NGO, social enterprise, religion, or any other single activity. It is better understood as a system, encompassing all of the aforementioned elements and more. One of today's fastest growing social movement activities in the United States is urban gardening (Boggs & Kurshige, 2011). This rising tide of urban agriculture has found life amid growing concerns around access to fresh foods and vegetables that can be sourced locally. Urban gardening is a part of a larger intent to build community and create connections where they are lacking. This activity feeds a system of activism that mobilizes a group of people to move together in the same general direction towards a shared goal.

"Infinite games" may sound like a start-up in Silicon Valley, but is a term that Hawken (2008) used to describe social movements. A regular game has winners and losers, while an infinite game continuously shifts in order to stay in play. This description of infinite games plays well into the dialectics of Hegel (1807/1977), which require an ability to interpret contradictions on an on-going basis and adapt or become more sophisticated in reasoning. This tactic of

pivoting is what the infinite game of social movements is all about. Not all social movements are progressive. One of the most notable social movements of the day is the Tea Party movement in the United States. Their disruption of the political landscape resulted in the election of a candidate who many have deemed populist in thought, deed, and action (Johnson, 2017). The agenda of the Tea Party Movement included calls for the protection of a “beloved” “Christian nation” while still welcoming all “red-blooded U.S. Citizens” (Tea Party, 2017). Other projects of the Tea Party include opportunities to “Stop the Islamic Take-over of Schools,” “Indict Obama Now,” and “Join the Impeachment Defense Team” for President Trump. Although Hawken (2008), Boggs and Kurashige (2012), and Wallerstein (2010) have provided compelling evidence of a planet leaning towards a kinder, gentler world-system, social movements like the Tea Party are successfully taking strides towards their own version of a kinder, gentler world that boasts conservatism as the means to that end.

Social Contracts

In my introduction, social good was defined as involving altruistic behavior and concern with the welfare of human beings in society, assuring that people are free from injury, disease and deserving of respect. A social contract as described by Kant and not dissimilar to Hobbes (Rauscher, 2017), is an embodiment of state power and the general will of the people to live under the auspices of that power, given that the social contract secures their freedom and respect. It would follow that a social contract secures social good within a society. Driving more capital towards social good is likely to be most effective when part of whatever social contract is being employed by the state. In the United States, political parties have wielded their versions of effective social contracts as a means to gaining public trust. Most notably, in October 1929, *capitalism* crashed and the Great Depression began.

The Depression exemplified the lack of faith the populace had in the economy and, since trust and faith are what economic growth are built on, trust had to be restored in order to rebuild our fragile economic system. The New Deal was a social contract that President Roosevelt enacted to catalyze that trust-building effort. It included provisions that created jobs, reformed Wall Street, and established new institutions to create and regulate social service programs for vulnerable populations. The era of reciprocity in economics was evident as workers and consumers were valued, unlike today's focus on shareholder returns. Corporations like General Electric were called "welfare-capitalists" due to their allocation of resources that benefited employees, their families and the community at large (Freedman, 2013).

As neoliberalism took hold globally under the tutelage of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan (Harvey, 2007), a new social contract evolved—the low-wage social contract (Freedman, 2013). This neoliberal, low-wage social contract promised social good through low-priced consumer goods at mega-stores like Walmart and Amazon and assured respect through increases in child and earned income tax credits and Medicaid. Ultimately, the low-wage social contract era has created the growing income inequality gap being experienced in the United States and other developing countries globally (Christensen et al., 2019). Newt Gingrich's "Contract with America," still in support of neoliberal and capitalist ideology, stewarded a Republican sweep of the House and Senate in 1994 (Kennedy, 2018). This was an important development in the timeline of social contracts.

Until 1994, people had widely supported the New Deal of the 1930s and the many ensuing pieces of legislation that resulted in upholding their social good. What changed in 1994? What was so special about this Contract with America? The contract had 10 promises including a stronger death penalty, tax relief, job creation, and family reinforcement. In essence, the

headlines alluded to restoring trust in the Republican Party's ability to deliver on social good. Given its success, it was arguably a brilliant campaign on the part of Newt Gingrich and the Republican Party at that time. The neoliberal, *capitalist*, low-wage social contract was still held intact by the Contract with America; it was just under new management. This contract persists today although efforts to change it, like those led by Robert Reich (2019), seek to increase the national wage and value the worker once again.

The Next Social Contracts

Today, some economists such as Stiglitz (2019) and Pastor (2019) and historians Zuboff (2019) and Harari (2015, 2016), along with grassroots organizations and left and right leaning social movements, are asking for a new social contract that secures the social good. Rising income inequality, continued structural racism, increasing frequency of natural disasters, immigration policies, and domestic as well as international terrorism have perpetuated a loss of trust in the current neoliberal, *capitalist*, low-wage social contract. Pastor et al. (2018) called for a new social compact in California, laid out in a 12-step plan for creating a more inclusive economy. Not unlike the Contract with America or the New Deal, their 12-step plan includes securing public benefits, empowering workers, and successful de-incarceration (the alternative to a better death penalty). More importantly, the plan addresses the 21st century concerns of a secure environmental future, affordable housing, and humane immigration policies. Stiglitz (2019) described a more dynamic economy through a "new generation of civil-rights legislation" (p. 193), the promotion of a learning society (also mentioned in the 12-step plan), and, though he mentioned Universal Basic Income, he was tentative in supporting such a provision.

In 2016, Americans favored non-traditional presidential candidates reflecting their distrust of the neoliberal, *capitalist*, low-wage social contract. Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump

were similar in being anti-establishment candidates, running under Democrat and Republican banners with the support of the party establishment only to be competitive in the race. This worked out well for Trump. The campaign for the 2020 presidential election echoed many, if not all, of the same concerns seen in the 2016 elections, with newcomers like Andrew Yang and his Universal Basic Income platform drawing a surprising amount of support. Other propositions, like universal health care, which Bernie Sanders continued to promote as a central plank of his campaign. The Trump era heralded a new social contract that Trump's base of supporters has willfully agreed to.

This President, and this Republican-controlled Congress, are collectively set on nothing less than the complete re-specification of the basic relationships at play in contemporary America. They are set on redesigning the underlying social agreement now in place between the healthy and the sick, between immigrants and the native-born, between men and women, between Americans of differing sexual orientations and religions, between the rich and the poor, and—most of all—between those who own capital and those who do not. (Coates, 2018, para. 8)

One of the defining characteristics of Sanders's platform was his identification as a Democratic Socialist. Democratic Socialism is not *capitalism*. Stiglitz (2019) was still hopeful that *capitalism* can be saved. The next section explores the policies and discourse around how there might be better *capitalism*. The idea of a new social contract that improves on *capitalism*, has much to do with the fact that prior social contracts, like the New Deal and the neoliberal, low-wage *capitalism*, have either upheld or created oppressive policies or, at best, exploited them for gain politically, with few improvements in the quality of life for affected populations.

Better Capitalism

Understanding that societal problems are not due to specific individuals, but to society as a whole, is a point of contention in many debates, most notably between liberals and conservatives globally. Neoliberalism is identified with an agenda of anti-poverty and upward

mobility for the disenfranchised. In the United States, most of the nation's disenfranchised are concentrated in urban spaces, and urban policies have been created to manage the "unruly and uncooperative nature" of the "urban wilderness" (N. Smith, 1996, xiii). Turner's description of the new frontier during the massive, violent dispossession of space by European settlers across the Americas is adapted by N. Smith (1996) in his attempt to correlate gentrification with the same colonial-settler mentality. In this accounting, urban policy revolves around the accepted belief that cities are places of uncivility in need of civilizing. They are inherently uncivilized because they are comprised of people of color who are believed to be inferior, under the continued support of a systemically racist society.

In the case of the barrier presented by poor neighborhoods (and their negative "effects"), liberal urban policy is usually driven to reorder the socio-spatial demographic characteristics of established urban settlement patterns in two chief ways: (1) poor denizens of "ghettos" are *dispersed* (or deconcentrated), usually into more affluent suburban neighborhoods (so-called "communities of opportunity"), or (2) "ghetto" neighborhoods are transformed into *mixed-income* ones, via the dispersal of some subset of its poor and their replacement with those wealthier. (Imbroscio, 2016, p. 89)

The driving theory behind ghetto dispersal and other tenets of gentrification is meritocracy. Meritocracy means "where everyone is supposed to be given equal opportunities to progress regardless of race, language or religion" (Lim et al., 2014, p. 4). Although considered a neo-liberal creation, meritocracy is reminiscent of the "bootstraps" narrative (Joyce, 1922; Kunitz & Haycraft, 1936) attributed to conservatives, where every individual is capable of ascension through sheer grit and determination. Meritocracy differs little from this bootstraps diatribe in that "in a well-functioning meritocracy, or at least the perception of one, the balance of blame for a person's failure shifts—cruelly—from the society to the individual, limiting the latter's claim on the resources of the former" (Imbroscio, 2016, p. 95). If inequality is about

economic opportunity, then meritocracy is the neoliberal solution which allows for the burden of becoming equal to be rested on the already unequal population in question.

Gentrification could be seen as a love child, birthed by neo-liberalism and neo-capitalism under a blanket of meritocratic urban policy. Meritocracy, heralded as a cornerstone of liberal urban policy (Guinier, 2016; Imbroscio, 2016) puts little value on the social constructs of poor urban families. Described as the “unholy trinity” (Imbroscio, 2016, p. 80) of obstacles to opportunity, urban schools, families, and communities are targeted for improvement through urban policy. What better solution to the ills of the urban “jungle” (N. Smith, 1996, p. xiii), even scarier than the wilderness, than to deconstruct the damaged urban system of schools, families, and communities. Gentrification is ruthlessly efficient in this task. Much like the taming of indigenous populations or “savage” African slaves, urbanites are seen to benefit from the integration of the civilized classes into their schools, families and communities through the gentle deployment of gentrification (L. Freeman & Braconi, 2004).

Neo-liberals did not coin the term gentrification, but were quick to commandeer its meaning from the outset. Glass (1964) called out gentrification as “squeezing out of the poor” (p. xviii). As the phenomenon grew, intellectuals were called upon to re-contextualize the conversation. Gentrification became duplicitous. For neo-liberals, it was an excellent tool in the quest for meritocracy while for the working poor living in urban ghettos, gentrification was a “specter” (Imbroscio, 2016, p. 91) of things to come. The hegemony upheld by the ruling class uses ideas like meritocracy and gentrification as distractions from the broader discussion of *capitalism*.

Over the last half-century gentrification has been touted by politicians and capitalists as a means of furthering meritocratic urban policy. “The desired socioeconomic mix is achieved

by reordering the socio-spatial demographic characteristics of established urban settlement patterns via the replacement of a proportion of a neighborhood's impoverished residents with more affluent "in- movers" (Imbroscio, 2016, p. 90). This replacement has caused entire communities to be displaced (Ghertner, 2014; Hwang, 2015; Newman & Wyly, 2006; N. Smith & Lefavre, 1984), which has become the tipping point of gentrification. By tipping point, it is meant that gentrification, until very recently, was still seen as a means of creating opportunity for poor urban families, a means to solving for inequalities. As displacement has grown and affordable housing disappeared, proponents of gentrification are finding it difficult to defend its original guise of meritocratic agency.

The Nature of Capital

If gentrification's parents were neo-capitalism and neo-liberalism, then its grandparents were nature and capital. Gentrification is merely a means to an end in the production of space, which, Lefebvre (1991) asserted, has been capitalism's life raft. In an age of rising intangibles within capitalism, the commodification of space through gentrification is a final frontier of the tangible capital marketplace. Embedded within gentrification is the rise of intangible capital in the form of behavioral surplus, data collection, and design, to name just a few impacts (Haskel & Westlake, 2018; Zuboff, 2018). *Capitalism* continues to expand its reach, within a systemically racist society that only allows for the accumulation of wealth by the world's most superior hegemonies. Marx (1867/1976) reviled the *capitalist* as the creator and enslaver of the working class. Lefebvre (1991) further described *capitalists* as a class in constant pursuit of their hegemony.

Hegemony implies more than an influence, more even than the permanent use of repressive violence. It is exercised over society as a whole, culture and knowledge included, and generally via human mediation: policies, political leaders, parties, as also a good many intellectuals and experts. (p. 10)

The role of nature and human belief systems in the production of space is not an abstraction. A topic meriting much deeper discussion, this relationship between *capitalism*, nature and the production of space is explained quite simply by N. Smith (1984):

It is capitalism which ardently defies the inherited separation of nature and society, and with pride rather than shame. In its constant drive to accumulate larger and larger quantities of social wealth under its control, capital transforms the shape of the entire world. No God-given stone is left unturned, no original relation with nature unaltered, no living thing unaffected. To this extent, the problems of nature, of space, of uneven development are tied together by capital itself. (p. 8)

If our second nature is to produce capital (N. Smith, 1984) and to create and oppress a laboring class (Marx, 1867/1976), then meritocracy is indeed a myth. It may even be a master distraction, an excellent tool for avoiding the real problem, which *capitalists* have created. The documented failures of meritocracy demonstrate its role as detractor from creating and implementing solutions (Imbroscio, 2016).

The hegemony has been successful in maintaining its perceivably European, Westernized, and largely White power center through an economic anomie (Dawson, 2015). The hegemony is complicit in the affective alienation of the majority of the world's non-White and non-western populations. How then, did the problem of ethno-racial diversity amongst their hegemonic ranks occur? *Capitalists* furthering their accumulation of surplus-value through real estate development and redevelopment have found themselves beset by the world's emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (collectively referred to as BRICS) and the "Tiger Economies" of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore (Rogers, 2017). In debt to some and in bed with others, capital is beholden only to capital. Neo-capitalism for capitalism's sake has left the hegemonic ideologies of Whiteness and its ideologues by the wayside, in favor of less White pastures and the promise of more accumulation. More importantly, ethno-racial diversity continues to be an excellent tool in the effort to uphold the

hegemony of capital. Ethno-racial diversity amongst the hegemony is proof that meritocracy is working. If such diversity can exist, it must be attributable to the opportunities afforded these individuals and their ability to rise above their former socio-economic status. At least neo-liberals have figured out how to effectively spin the unintended consequences of capitalism to their advantage. This argument in favor of meritocracy further distracts from the oppressive conditions caused by capitalism as the working class becomes further disenfranchised and increasingly obsolete in the Information Age.

As the conditions of life are changed, the standard according to which needs were regulated can no longer remain the same; for it varies with social resources, since it largely determines the share for each class of producers. The scale is upset; but a new scale cannot be immediately improvised. (Durkheim, 1952, p. 213)

Rogers (2017) referred to BRICS and the Tiger Economies as sources of the foreign elite. In the United States, this disruption of the scales has become an on-going drama in the White House. As income inequality has grown, racial tensions continue to escalate, which is not unfamiliar in the United States. The election of Donald Trump has been called a “whitelash” (Van Jones as quoted in Ryan, 2016, para. 1) on the heels of a Black presidency and amidst the browning of America (Montanaro, 2016). What is different, is that the hegemony’s increasing heterogeneity is causing fractures and a lack of concentrated effort on the accumulation of capital. “Non-whites now make up a majority of kindergartners; by the next presidential election, the Census Bureau predicts they will be a majority of all children; and by 2044, no one racial group will be a majority of the country” (Montanaro, 2016). This fact alone sheds light on the Trump administration’s fight to exclude such racial groups from the census as a means to maintaining White supremacy in the United States.

“China’s 1.4 billion people, India’s 1.3 billion, and dozens of other societies around the world are rapidly urbanizing. They are striving to build their own Golden Ages: Xi Jinping now

regularly speaks of the *Chinese Dream*” (Wyly, 2017, p. 484). Ethno-racial diversity intersects with gentrification as a product of neo-capitalism. The participation of foreign elites in the geopolitics of real estate is awkward for racists and opportune for neo-liberals (those who are not racists). Marx (1867/1976) asserted that capitalism was wrought with the inevitability of crises. According to Durkheim’s (1897/1952) theory of economic anomie, human desire is unquenchable; humans have “insatiable appetites which are ‘unlimited . . . as they depend on the individual alone’ . . . Unlike animals, there are no organic or psychological limits to our desires, our wants are an ‘insatiable and bottomless abyss’” (Dawson, 2015, p. 323). Hence, arises the unintended consequence or for some, crisis, of ethno-racial diversity in the on-going accumulation of capital by the hegemony of the ruling class.

Capitalism 2.0

Human beliefs, behaviors and systems have yielded many attempts at creating utopian societies based on theories and beliefs held by charismatic and/or powerful figures. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the Holocaust, and democracy are products of social constructs based on human beliefs. Economic systems and who they benefit have been at the crux of the development of these social constructs. I am not going to unpack the historical complexities of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade or the Holocaust. Both these, and the present-day, wide-spread impact of global gentrification depict tangible and traditional forms of *capitalism*. Zuboff (2019) coined the term *instrumentarianism* to describe a modern day totalitarianism, based on theories of operant conditioning (Skinner, 1967/2008). The rise of intangible capital (Haskel & Westlake, 2018), and the potential for cognitive *capitalism* (Wyly, 2015) also lends to this dystopic path of society. At a time when the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) has been legitimized by NASA and embodied in a doctoral track at Penn State (Scoles, 2019), the

academic validity of contributing to the discourse on how society en masse, may be looking at a future where technology successfully controls and predicts human behavior for the sake of the greater good, is completely up for observation. If human beliefs and behaviors shape our systems, then understanding the speed at which *capitalism* is working to engineer our beliefs and behaviors is of paramount importance to any discussion around influencing *capitalist* attitudes.

“Then they came for me” (Martin Niemoller as quoted in United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2012). Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Microsoft are known as the Big Five technology companies (Zuboff, 2019). Together, they are credited with orchestrating a new form of totalitarianism called instrumentarianism (Zuboff, 2019), where all human behavior is not only mined for surplus but is also controlled in a Skinnerian-like dystopia. It is not a far-fetched notion that the Big Five have the luxury of employing some of the world’s most talented and innovative thinkers from a cross-sector of disciplines. An example is Alex Pentland, currently seen as one of the most influential data scientists globally (Zuboff, 2019). Pentland is one of the contributing architects of global privacy regulations in Europe and abroad as well as the founder of a social enterprise, Data Transparency Lab (which as of December 2019, has gone off-line) that supported innovations around privacy and transparency to users on how their data is being used. He is also a proponent of *capitalism*, supporting the idea that human behavior is a form of intangible capital that may be commodified:

Clearly our notions of privacy and ownership of data need to evolve in order to adapt to these new capabilities. Perhaps the first step is to give people ownership of their data, creating what economists know as a “fair market” for the information that will drive this new social nervous system. (Pentland, 2009, para. 11)

This dissertation did not delve deeply into the machinations of the Big Five, as Zuboff (2019) already has done this in great depth. Instead, I am looking at how human beliefs and behaviors are being increasingly engineered to create the systems in which we live, the systems

that determine how much capital goes towards social good. If human beliefs and behaviors become commodified in an era of instrumentarianism, what then of social good? Zuboff goes into grave detail regarding her understanding of Pentland's desire for a Skinnerian utopia, where human behavior is no longer left to the fickle will of humans. In defense of this utopia, I might argue that Pentland, and other *capitalists* who stand to maintain their status in such a utopia, have little evidence of humankind's ability to self-regulate. Self-regulation theory (Baumeister et al., 1994; Baumeister & Tierny, 2011) is central to behavior therapy models in mental health practices globally. Whether the issue is of a sociopathic, criminal nature or simply a matter of mild neuroticism, self-regulation comes into play. This is where ethics becomes critical to any dialogue about the next iteration of societal systems and social constructs. I am comfortable making the statement that not all *capitalists* are inherently averse to issues of social justice. That being said, not all proponents of social justice agree on the ethics of how to achieve equity and global harmony in the face of such poor self-regulation as it relates to the human behaviors that have created the inequities that social justice advocates are working to change.

If there is any hope for a future where humans retain any level of agency, real or imagined, a critical understanding of the ethics of *capitalism*, real or imagined, must be included in the discourse developing around our future world system and the Big Five entities influencing it. Emancipating the *capitalists* from *capitalism* is a priority in the struggle for social justice, as their enlistment in an ethics of care, different than that of an ethics of capital, will determine how closely our future society resembles Skinner's (1948/2008) *Walden Two*. This will be evident when self-proclaimed *capitalists*, unaware of the thinness of their privilege will find themselves amongst the ranks of the ever-increasing population of humans whose greatest value has become their contribution to the vast intangible capital sourced from reality mining (Pentland, 2014) for

the “business and pleasure” (The Willie Lynch Letter as presented in Archive.com, n.d., p. 1) of the real capitalists. And, as Niemöller learned, by then, it will be too late.

Mahatma Gandhi’s theory of state speaks to the questionable lack of values within an ethics of capital as manifested through Westernized neoliberal policies championed by the United States (Patel, 2015). Gandhi’s recommendations for leadership involved the adherence to “sarvodaya, (the welfare of all)” (Patel, 2015, p. 367), embodying an ethics of care. Many of the world’s most notable social movements share common themes of EAR, conscientização, and sarvodaya. The practice of authenticity and compassion is shared globally and has succeeded in winning victories for humanity on large and small scales over the course of history.

If the oppressed are to occupy roles as agents of the change, board rooms and executive seats across the nation will have to be relinquished for that purpose. This is a controversial proposition to say the least. The complexity of the social systems at work make such a proposition all the more difficult to implement. If “complexity, integration, interconnectivity, ambiguity, emergence, uncertainty and evolutionary development” (Castelle & Jaradat, 2016, p. 82) are all attributes of this complex system, then EAR will be needed at each juncture in the process. The top-down executives know best, organizational structures will be left behind, replaced by co-creative groups. EAR removes the safety-net of bureaucracy, where although the collective group participates in co-creating the path forward, executives retain the power to change or quash those decisions. This safety-net is there for the powerholders. The participants are woefully aware of the power structure and seek to make decisions that they know are in alignment with what that power structure is seeking. Oppression is an insidious system. It lurks

in every corner of our best intentions and requires deep reflection in order to ferret it out in favor of a state that practices a more *sarvodaya*¹-like role in the lives of its people.

In summary, there is great hope for advancing positive social change in disrupting *capitalism* and increasing income inequality. People are malleable and subject to influence at all levels of society. Our social contracts may be constructed and deconstructed at will, providing that individuals, singularly and collectively, have the agency to affect such change. Powell's (2019) fully inclusive "we" is a suggestion that catalyzes like-minded people to take action in realizing the tenets needed to embolden the sentiment into our social contracts. The means to driving more capital towards social good might look like Pentland's (2009, 2014) Skinnerian utopia where heightened behavior modification and regulation may increase world peace. Or it could embody Gandhi's promotion of *sarvodaya* (Patel, 2015) where the state provides adequate care for all people, thereby decreasing suffering. Chapter III explains the methodologies I used in dialoguing with participants in this study as we grappled with the problems of *capitalism* and their strategies for disrupting the status quo.

¹ *Sarvodaya* is a Sanskrit word for "universal uplift" or "progress for all." It was used often by Mahatma Gandhi and continues to this day as the name of a social movement (Narayanasamy, 2003).

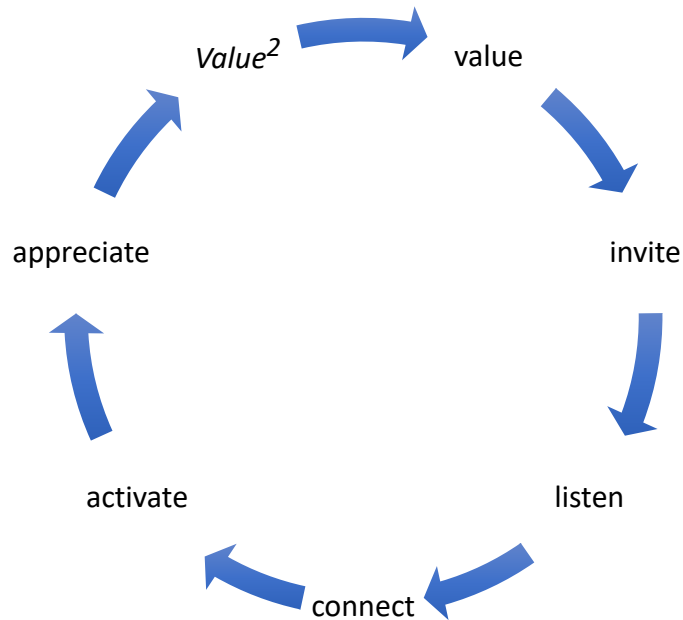
Chapter III: Methodology

Chapter Overview

The principal issue being explored through this action research study is, influencing capitalist attitudes to drive more capital towards social good. Action research is a quest for “knowledge that is useful, valid, descriptive of the world, and informative of how we might change it” (Argyris et al., 1985, p. x). The catalyst for the study was the inaugural convening for the CoER. Key participants of the convening have been identified as the focus of this study. Using an EAR and GST framework, I involved each participant in a series of discussions and activities that challenge them to tackle the complexities of capitalism through critical thinking and problem-solving. I am committed to the idea of research as social action (Herr & Anderson, 2014). Emancipating capitalists from an ethics of capital towards an ethics of care where social good is lived out through actionable strategies is my moonshot. The results of each engagement with each participant of the study is shared as short case studies that summarize their experiences, discoveries and actions. My theory of action, *Value²*, represents the steps I have followed in influencing each participant and engaging them in dialogue that fosters action. I explain this theory of action further in the next section.

Theory of Action—*Value²*

In this study, I employed a theory of action that exemplifies how I have traditionally influenced attitudes to align capital resources with social good. This theory of action has aided me over the years in my role as a fundraiser, strategist and nonprofit executive. Similar to the steps involved in action research of plan-act-observe-reflect, my theory of action involves seven steps that may be entered at any point but work in a cyclical nature as shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1*Steps in Theory of Action—Value²*

The main stages of the theory of action cycle are as follows:

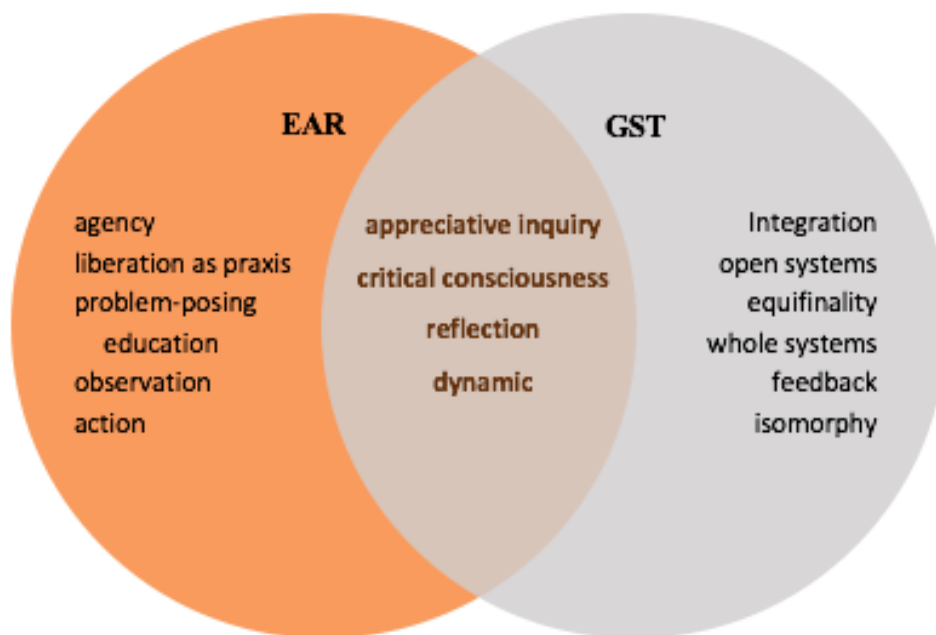
1. Value—identify and communicate the value that the other person/organization inherently provides
2. Invite—invite them into a dialogue around the subject matter
3. Listen—employ critical listening skills in order to understand how they relate to the subject matter
4. Connect—reflect on what aspects of how they relate to the subject matter connect with you and/or your effort or organization
5. Activate—create a purpose for them to use their inherent value to support your shared connection to the subject matter

6. Appreciate—after the activation, thank them for their efforts and congratulate them on having taken action to share their value to impact the subject matter or issue in a meaningful way
7. *Value*²—articulate how their action has increased their value exponentially and added additional momentum to affecting the subject matter or issue

A more sophisticated explanation for each of these steps overlaps with the theoretical elements identified in the Venn diagram in Figure 3.2. Theoretically, EAR and GST as tools were applied during the discussions and interactions between each participant and me. Figure 3.2 depicts the intersections and unique elements emphasized in this study.. It shows my understanding of how EAR and GST compare and intersect to catalyze individuals to challenge the status quo and advance positive social change.

Figure 3.2

EAR and GST Venn Diagram—Theoretical Elements



The elements of EAR—agency, liberation as praxis, problem-posing, education, observation and action— are evident in the *Value*² steps, as they seek to create and support an individual’s ability to connect with a particular problem, understand how they might affect it and then believe in their own value and ability to take action. With GST, the elements of integration, open systems, equifinality, whole systems, feedback, and isomorphy are integral to being able to make connections to a problem and critically assess its impact on a macro and micro level as well as across lines, whether they be geographic, socio-economic, cultural or otherwise. In the center of that Venn diagram are the interchangeable elements of appreciative inquiry, critical consciousness, reflection and the dynamic aspects of these theories. My theory of action is deeply embedded in these elements most of all. Encouraging action in the face of the entrenched problems being perpetuated by *capitalism* is a daunting task. Individuals need to have a space where they are allowed to explore, through dialogue, how they relate to these problems, what their value is in this relatedness and then how their actions add collectively to the historicity and progress of these issues. The Fast Pitch for Solutions and the steps involved in preparing and participating in this event, uses this theory of action and creates that space.

Catalyst—Inaugural Convening

The CoER convening applied a blended approach to advancing strategies for economic resiliency by pairing best practices from design sprints, which are often used in tech companies to create innovative solutions and products, with community based social change models. I worked closely with a team of “design sprinters” to create a unique structure for the convening that allowed for dialogue yet limited unnecessary conversation in order to identify priorities and actionable next steps within the EAR and GST framework. In my experience, the approach for CoER (convened in September 2019) was purposefully different from traditional coalition

gatherings in Los Angeles in two ways: first, we included a cross-sector of individuals from many different industries; second, we had a tight knit agenda geared towards prioritization. Other similar coalitions generally include one or two self-interested industries and are primarily “talking head” events, with plenaries, panels, and brief question and answer sessions. The format used for CoER was more reminiscent of strategic planning, design sprints and think tanks. The individuals who participated in the convening were largely comprised of CEO’s, founders, influencers, and executives who were familiar with strategic planning processes within their industries and a few had participated in design sprints and think tanks, also, within their industries. Having a cross-sector coalition that allowed for dialogue and forced prioritization of strategies was unlike any other event that participants had attended. This was consistent feedback provided by attendees prior to and following the event.

In this section, I will recount the activities leading to the convening of the CoER. In Chapter I, I provided a synopsis of the learning achievements that preceded this doctoral project. Those learning achievements included literature reviews around EAR, GST, and action research in theory and in practice. They also included my initiation of the Venture Capital Collective Exploring Community Economies (VCCECE), with several members of the venture capital community. The logic model provided in chapter one demonstrated the activities, discoveries, and outcomes that resulted from the employment of EAR and GST with the VCCECE group. This included dialogues, using Freire’s (1970) approach to dialogical praxis, challenging ideas of how capital is accumulated and distributed and how we might influence or change the system of capitalism to allow for more capital to flow towards social good. My role as a practitioner-researcher using EAR and GST was to call out any tendencies towards defeatist

thinking in order to create a safe space for discoveries around how to drive more capital towards social good, despite the perceived status quo. These discoveries included:

- There are enough resources to go around
- Evergreen funds could be a plausible model
- Social good funds are possible but must remain separate from traditional funds
- We need a larger conversation among the venture capital community
- You cannot serve two masters, capital and social
- Venture fund managers are concerned about keeping their jobs
- Deceleration as a tool to counter hyper-competitiveness
- Are community economies scalable
- Activists are subject to grave consequences

The discovery lifted up and prioritized as the next step to host a larger conversation through an invitation-only event. As the practitioner-researcher using an EAR approach, with a plan-act-observe-reflect methodology, I took time to reflect on how I wanted to move forward, as I knew this would be the beginning of my doctoral project. The convening would be a catalyst for strategies to drive more capital towards social good. My doctoral project would identify and track the progression of key participants from the convening. The parameters I outlined for the convening were as follows:

- A planning committee of partners comprised of funders and influencers to help resource and populate the convening
- An invitation-only event for influencers, CEO's, founders and decision-makers from a cross-sector of industries
- A highly-structured dialogue that would yield actionable strategies

- Data collection on-site and in real-time to capture discussions and identify themes

With these guidelines in place, I proceeded to engineer the production of this convening through the acquisition of planning committee partners in May of 2019.

Planning Committee Partners

The planning for this convening was the result of the activities outlined in Chapter I and demonstrated in the logic model. In order to execute the convening, I needed to identify other partners and resources to support and evolve the concept. The partners were identified through five activities. Table 3.1 describes the activities and the partners identified thereby.

Table 3.1

Activities in Securing Planning Committee Partners

Activities	Partners Identified
Contracting with a willing organization—I secured a contract with Community Health Councils, Inc.(CHC) as their Chief Strategy Officer and Director of their Social Change Institute (a social enterprise) with the caveat that I would be able to work with CHC to create and produce this convening as a continuation of my doctoral studies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veronica Flores, CEO, Community Health Councils, Inc.
Proposal to Federal Reserve of San Francisco—CHC was introduced to the Federal Reserve Community Development department and after a couple of calls, I submitted a proposal to partner on an event that would host thought leaders, decision-makers, CEO’s and influencers to focus on how to drive more capital towards social good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melody Head, Regional Manager • Joselyn Cousins, Senior District Manager • Community Development, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco
Hosting a Los Angeles nonprofit CEO roundtable—the purpose of the gathering was to identify common interests among the CEO’s and their willingness to partner around a collective impact strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Baackes, CEO of LA Care Health Plan • Louise McCarthy, CEO, Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles

Activities	Partners Identified
Securing support of VCCECE participants—I reached out to the individuals who participated in prior dialogues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin Clements, OPV Intentional Capital Firm, Chair, Pledge LA • Sergio Munoz – Los Angeles Venture Association, Board Member & Pledge LA member • Matthew Haas, Vice President, Riverside Capital
Identifying leaders from other collaborations—I co-lead and participate on other initiatives. I reached out to some of the members on these initiatives to gain their support for the convening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eric Gurna, CEO LA’s Best Afterschool Program • Lisa Richter, Managing Partner, Avivar Capital • Tomas Duran, President, Concerned Capital • Kim Renard Nazel “Arabian Prince”, Founding member N.W.A. Rap Group, Founder, Inov8 Next • Lara Jeremko, Founder and Managing Partner, Beyond Ventures • Dr. Chris Benner, Santa Cruz Institute for Social Transformation

I took the results from the logic model with VCCECE and used it as the basis for discussions with potential planning committee partners in the creation and production of the convening. The key talking points I discussed throughout the five activities included:

- In my experience, as a nonprofit professional for the last two and half decades I have experienced many obstacles to driving more capital towards social good. These obstacles consist of (1) racial equity issues, (2) constraints of capitalism as an economic system, and (3) individual and collective belief systems.
- As a doctoral student in leadership and change, I had conversations with members of the venture capital community to explore how we might drive more capital towards

social good. This group of venture capitalists determined that a larger gathering would be necessary to further identify possible strategies to increase the amount of capital flowing towards social good.

- In my experience, similar gatherings with similar goals currently have limitations that include the following: a limited number of sectors with narrow interests; single issue focus; limited dialogue; limited actionable ideas.

Economic resiliency as a topic and the formation of a coalition around that issue formed through the action research process and many dialogues grounded in my *Value²* theory of action. I had multiple one on one conversations with the identified planning partners and then there were several group discussions. The outputs included the development of a white paper by Veronica Flores on preparing for the next recession. Veronica was keenly focused on generating wealth in communities of color and our discussions with the Federal Reserve as well as with John Baackes, CEO of LA Care Health Plan revolved around a sense of urgency stemming from an impending economic downturn.

The White Paper centered on the fallout that disenfranchised communities were still experiencing as a result of the Great Recession (Falvo, 2010) and how another recession would continue to impact these communities disproportionately. I was asked to edit the White Paper. As I thought about the many dialogues I had already participated in with each of the stakeholders now involved in planning some sort of gathering, I knew the paper was a potential call to action around that gathering. Advancing positive social change collectively meant finding common ground and a shared understanding of how to move forward. I edited the white paper to reflect the rationale for a gathering (Appendix A and B). By calling out levers for advancing strategies using a cross-sector approach, it allowed me to make the case for creating an inclusive event that

would extend beyond nonprofits and the finance sector. Tensions around this idea of inclusivity arose as the updated White Paper was circulated. One tension was about the idea of focusing solely on advancing strategies for resilience for community health centers. I advocated against this suggestion, and the concerned party approached a northern California foundation and secured funding to have a separate convening. The remaining stakeholders agreed that a cross-sector approach reflected the collective impact framework that we had originally discussed as a mechanism for advancing positive social change and driving more capital towards social good. Upon agreement, I moved forward with the creation of the Coalition on Economic Resiliency (CoER) and the inaugural convening, which occurred on September 10th, 2019 at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco Los Angeles Branch (Appendix C).

At this juncture, in communication with my planning partners, we began to identify table hosts to champion specific topics around economic resiliency. In my theory of action, the *Value*² step specifically allowed me to validate individuals' potential contribution to this convening. By emphasizing their inherent value, I was able to create a safe space for their ideas, the kinds of ideas that they are not readily shared in other environments. The venue at the Federal Reserve would allow for 10 tables of eight. The goal was to identify table hosts representative of a cross-sector of industries and topics that tackled the issue of economic resiliency from different angles.

The conversations with prospective table hosts included the same talking points that had been used to identify planning partners bolstered by the narrative of the White Paper. Table hosts were also intrigued by their autonomy over their table topic. Magical thinking was introduced as a way to encourage table hosts to choose topics that they truly felt could potentially advance economic resiliency despite the limitations of systemic issues of racism, capitalism and other

perceived challenges. Each host and I had extensive conversations around how EAR and GST were being employed as the methodological approach to the formation of CoER. Table topics had to be crafted with these methodologies in mind, as the dialogues at each table would be structured along those lines. Table 3.2 shows the topics that were selected and the cross-sector of industries represented by the table hosts

Table 3.2

Coalition on Economic Resiliency Table Hosts and Topics

First Name	Title	Type of Organization	Table Topic
Stephen	CEO	Nonprofit	What happened to corporate charity?
Richard	Founder	Social Enterprise	Breaking an IP pipeline: Innovation and the inner cities
Jakob	Vice-President	Finance	Disaster and trauma-informed community planning—Strength in resilience
Linda	Executive	Technology	Future of work: Closing the income inequality gap
Rebecca	Managing Partner	Finance	Philanthropic investment portfolios: Solving the social impact conundrum
James	Stanton Fellow	Social Services	Global perspectives: Exploring intersectionality and resiliency between South Johannesburg and South Los Angeles
Luis	President	Financial	Employee ownership: Expanding economic resiliency Development and resiliency
Barbara	Associate	Financial	Mainstreet resilience: Promoting awareness and inclusive business ownership
Sophia	CEO	Nonprofit	Debt alleviation and wealth building
Joshua	Chair	Academic	Solidarity economic and mutuality

Note. Names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

As table hosts and topics were being solidified, a curated list of participants from across industries and sectors was being confirmed with the following criteria for participants:

- hold a decision-making role (or be an influencer) within your organization or industry
- have a willingness to advance economic resiliency for communities
- be available to attend the entire event

Titles and affiliations of CoER attendees on September 10, 2019, are presented in Appendix F.

Designing for Dialogue and Action

“Real consciousness implies the impossibility of perceiving the untested feasibility which lies beyond the limit-situations. But whereas the untested feasibility cannot be achieved at the level of real [or present] consciousness, it can be realized through testing action” (Freire, 1970, p. 113). The purpose of holding a series of dialogues was to influence attitudes that constructively challenge the machine of *capitalism*. The dialogues would serve as a mechanism in catalyzing critical thinking and priming individuals to take further action.

Designing the program was challenging for all. The design sprinters and I spent several hours reviewing every step of the day down to the last minute and detail. There were four speakers, three dialogue sessions, and a lunch break to fit into a five-hour agenda. The design sprinters ran test sessions with volunteers prior to the event date to work out kinks and assure that the timing was on point. Each table had a facilitator and a note taker to steward the agenda and keep discussions on track. The design sprint team was onsite to oversee the facilitation as well. Figure 3.3 shows the final program while Figure 3.4 displays a few images from the 27-page facilitator guide used during the event.

Figure 3.3

Coalition on Economic Resiliency—Program

COER COALITION ON ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

FINDING LEVERS

ADVANCING STRATEGIES FOR RESILIENCE

SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

PROGRAM

- 8:30 AM** REGISTRATION AND CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
- 9:00 AM** OPENING REMARKS
JOSELYN COUSINS, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, FEDERAL RESERVE BANK
VERONICA FLORES, CEO, COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCILS & SOCIAL CHANGE INSTITUTE
- 9:10 AM** VERONICA FLORES, CEO, COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCILS
- 9:20 AM** JOHN BAACKES, CEO, LA CARE HEALTH PLAN
- 9:25 AM** DR. CHRIS BENNER, UC SANTA CRUZ
- 9:40 AM** MICHELLE BURTON, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, CHC
INTRODUCES RACHAEL & MAICOL CHAVEZ-PARKER, EMSPRINT
- 9:45 AM** ROUNDTABLE DIALOGUES: UNDERSTAND
- 10:40 AM** MICHELLE BURTON INTRODUCES LARA JEREMKO
- 10:45 AM** LARA JEREMKO, VENTURE CAPITAL INVESTOR, STRATEGIST, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, XR PRIZE INNOVATOR - BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION
- 11:00 AM** EARLY LUNCH BREAK
- 11:30 AM** ROUNDTABLE DIALOGUES: LIFT UP
- 12:35 PM** VERONICA FLORES INTRODUCES ARABIAN PRINCE
- 12:40 PM** KIM RENARD NAZEL "ARABIAN PRINCE", FOUNDING MEMBER OF NWA, ENTREPRENEUR, INNOVATOR & TECH DESIGNER
- 12:50 PM** ROUNDTABLE DIALOGUES: ADVANCE
- 1:35 PM** SHARING NEXT STEPS - ALL TABLES

This project is funded in part by L.A. Care Health Plan and will benefit low-income and uninsured residents of Los Angeles County.

Figure 3.4

Excerpts from the Coalition on Economic Resiliency Facilitator Guide

CoER

Roles

EMSPRINT

We are here to guide the overall workshop and help you with whatever you need to make the day successful. Before each part, one or both of the EmSprint team members will be at the front giving instructions to the entire room. During the processes, we'll be walking around the room to assist and answer questions.

TABLE HOST

You are the **Subject Matter Expert**. You'll help guide conversations and fill in knowledge gaps. You'll act as the decider - using your expertise to make decisions on how to move forward if or when votes are tied.

TIP

There are specific times for discussion where participants may share opinions or anecdotes that are not consistent with what you know as an expert from research and/or lived experience - feel free to inject "expert bias" to provide additional context or clarification when needed.

FACILITATOR

You keep it all together. You'll lead the participants through the processes making sure each step is understood and completed. You'll ensure people aren't talking over one another or monopolizing discussions, that there's no discussion when a process calls for it and that we're sticking to time limits.

TIP

Be BEHOLDEN to the timer. Each step is time-bound and the time for each step is listed directly below it in this guide. Use a cell phone or [this website](#) as a reliable way to alert people when time is up. [Return to page 1](#)

Session 1 / Part 2

Lean Convo

STEP 4

18 minutes / 6 minutes per area of interest

ACTIVITY

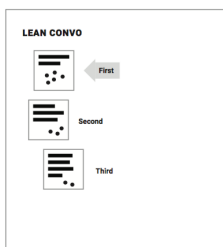
Start with the top voted area and **discuss** as a group for six minutes. Then, discuss the second and third top voted areas, respectively, for **six minutes** each.

TABLE HOST

If more than three areas receive an equal number of top votes, decide which are most relevant for discussion. Help guide the conversation, add context, clarification and expertise to the discussion.

FACILITATOR

Keep time (6 minutes/area of interest). Ensure **no one person is monopolizing the conversation** and everyone who desires to speak is getting the chance. Kindly encourage team members to wrap-up if they're speaking for several consecutive minutes.



CoER

Terms

Words you'll see frequently in this guide and how they're defined in the context of this process.

BOARD

The large poster post-its you'll find on the easel. Boards will be prepared ahead of time to streamline facilitation and are perforated to make it easy to move from one to the next - simply tear the sheet and place it on top of the table. You'll stack boards as you move through the process.

NOTE

Meaning to write a word or phrase on a post-it with a sharpie marker. Participants will always write only one word or phrase per post-in during this workshop.

VOTING DOTS

The small round black stickers participants will use to vote during certain processes. Each participant will have a sheet of dots to use for voting and be asked to use a specific number to vote during certain processes.

CAMPAIGNING

Advocating for a particular challenge or solution in order to sway other's opinions or votes.

ABSTRACT

Solutions that are more general, theoretical concepts and themes.

CONCRETE

Solutions that are more specific, identifiable examples and illustrations.

Session 2 / Part 3

Create Solutions

STEP 2

3 minutes

ACTIVITY

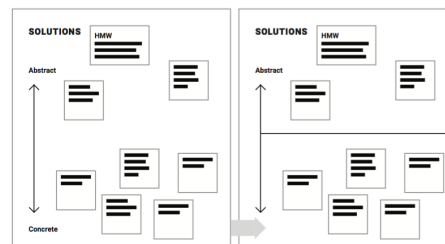
Each team member **places** solution post-its where they belong on the abstraction ladder drawn on the board - **more abstract solutions at the top, more concrete solutions at the bottom.**

TABLE HOST

Assist team members in identifying where solutions belong on the abstraction ladder.

FACILITATOR

Once all solutions are posted, draw a line across the board (splitting the posts into two groups) to signify which concrete solutions the team will vote on in the next session.

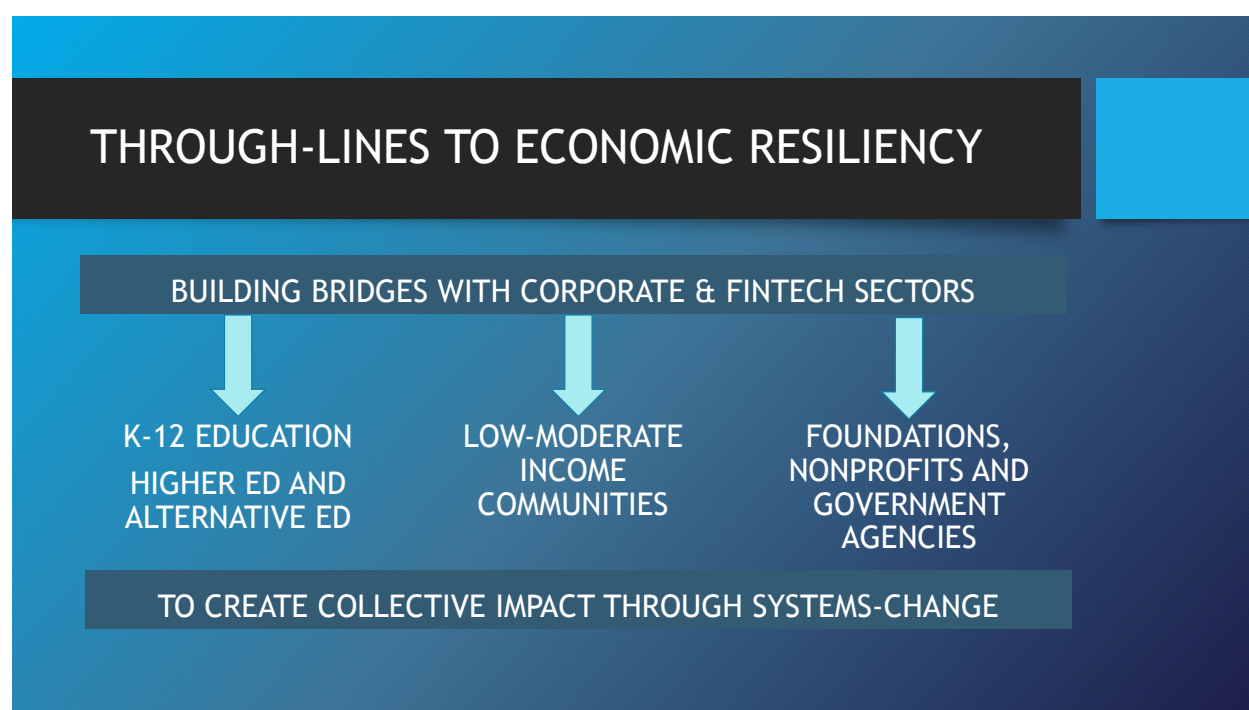


Now What? Finding the Through-Lines and Advancing Strategies

The final dialogue session focused on lifting up possible solutions and identifying next steps to advancing those strategies. These are displayed in Appendix E. Through analysis of these action steps and the notes provided by assigned note takers at each table, I identified the through-lines shown in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5

Through-Lines from Coalition on Economic Resiliency Inaugural Convening



The next steps for the CoER were isolated as the action research study. The key participants targeted were positioned to advance strategies in alignment with the through-lines identified at the inaugural convening. Each participant was enlisted as the first cohort in the CoER Fast Pitch on Solutions towards Economic Resiliency. The through-lines of building bridges with corporate, financial and technology industries as a means to create collective impact through systems-change was realized through the Fast Pitch for Solutions. The case studies in the Chapter IV exemplify how participants identified specific levers in their own field of work that

they felt confident about influencing through their selected strategies. Their participation in the Fast Pitch served as the mechanism for their emancipation from an ethics of capital towards an ethics of care.

Instilling *Fight*: Fast Pitch for Solutions

“As long as I fight, I am moved by hope; and if I fight with hope, then I can wait” (Freire, 1970, p. 92). An emancipatory approach to dialogue requires some *fight*. The Fast Pitch for Solutions was used as a means to instill hope and provoke some *fight* within the participants. In revisiting the Figure 3.2, *fight* is an excellent characterization of the elements called out in the EAR section of this diagram. I can see how the word fight might engender negative connotations. On the other hand, the deliberateness with which I chose the word stems from my frustration with armchair intellectualism that shies away from inflammatory and disruptive challenges to the status quo. Anger is sometimes needed to catalyze change in proactive ways. Freire (1970) communicates this and his idea of *fight* as a catalyst for critical consciousness. My use of *fight* in this context revolves around the relationship between anger and social activism.

Martin Luther King Jr. makes the connection while praising W.E.B. DuBois, “history has taught him it is not enough for people to be angry—the supreme task is to organize and unite people so that their anger becomes a transforming force” (King, 1968, p. 109). This study does not focus on the significant relationship between anger and activism, but it is important that the distinction of EAR as a praxis in liberation involves this relationship. My goal of influencing capitalists’ attitudes to shift towards an ethics of care and challenge the status quo requires me as a practitioner in this study to create a sense of urgency in participants. I want participants to view themselves as oppressed individuals in need of liberation from an unjust status quo. Intellectualism alone cannot win freedom. Freedom requires *fight*.

The Fast Pitch for Solutions (Appendix D) was much like the fast pitches that the venture community creates in order to find the next unicorn—a term used to describe a start-up that successfully becomes a highly profitable corporation valued at one billion dollars or more. There is a lot of hope involved in *capitalism* and this model will be commodified for social good. “If there is a pervasive criticism of global capitalism that is shared by all actors in the movement, it is this observation: goods seem to have become more important and are treated better than people. What would a world look like if that emphasis were reversed?” (Hawken, 2007, p. 14). This quote and question was posed to the fast pitchers. The through-lines identified in the inaugural convening for CoER point to building bridges with the corporate, financial and technology sectors to create collective impact through systems-change, affecting our communities as well as our educational and social institutions. This collective impact will require the hope and fight Freire (1970) spoke of. Fast Pitchers were asked to first, think critically about the problems of the *capitalism*, and second, create, advocate for, and employ solutions to those problems. Unlike traditional fast pitches, Fast Pitch for Solutions did not offer a monetary reward. The phrase in the promotional flier read “passion over profit.” Participation in the fast pitch was a passion project and granted permission to fast pitchers to pitch solutions that were not beholden to becoming unicorns. The process of participating in the Fast Pitch for Solutions supported participants in shifting away from validating an ethics of capital to fostering an ethics of care that prioritizes people over goods.

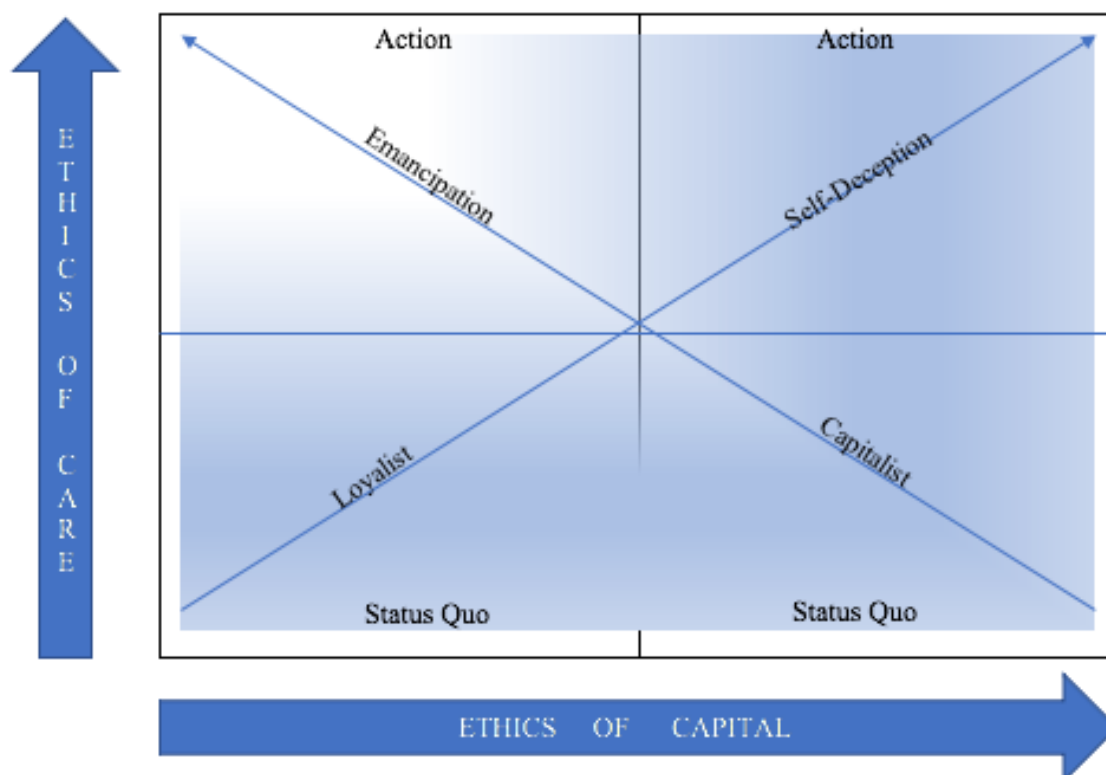
Moving from an Ethics of Capital to an Ethics of Care – Case Studies of Participants

In the development of the interview instruments used in this study, I also created a mapping tool to plot how participants responded over the course of our interactions. Figure 3.6

displays how participant attitudes shifted as we worked together in preparation for the Fast Pitch for Solutions.

Figure 3.6

Emancipatory Action Map—Moving from Capital to Care



This map was used to plot participant attitudes throughout the study. Emancipating individuals from entrenched and oppressive belief systems is complex in nature. Participants experienced cognitive dissonance and jumped around from quadrant to quadrant as I engaged them in discussions using my theory of action. Similar to what Senge (2006) described in providing a rationale for inserting delays into a system, in order to change it, the system will make an effort to rebalance itself by eliminating that delay (or change). The dissonance that participants experienced was caused by the effort they made to create and advance solutions that go against the current system of the status quo. As they entertained what solutions they might

advance, they wobbled between ideas they felt were acceptable under the current status quo versus more risky strategies, that go against the status quo.

An example of this may be seen in asking someone to change their route to work or switch the side of the bed they are used to sleeping on. The practice of emancipation from the ethics of capital requires a freedom of thought that allows individuals to craft ideas that are not bound by *capitalist* ideology. For example, when I was engaging the table hosts for the CoER inaugural convening, every conversation with each of the hosts required me to repeat that they could choose whatever topic they wanted, no matter how crazy they thought it might be. Given the list of topics that were selected, *crazy* meant that they presented a topic that they felt was impossible to solve under the current system of *capitalism* and therefore, a waste of time to discuss.

To curate the list of participants for the CoER meeting, I had multiple conversations, specifically with executive employees of Los Angeles County who struggled with whether or not they could attend the convening without compromising their representation of the Board of Supervisors. My response was that they could consider attending as themselves. They could just be John or Sally, not John or Sally of the LA County Executive. No one from LA County attended the convening. I believe that their participation just would have been too crazy. Table 3.3 presents the list of participants who eventually attended with some background on their affiliations and relationships with me.

Table 3.3*Participants at Initial CoER Meeting*

Name	Title	Affiliation	Background and Relationship
Abel	Founder	Private Equity	Professional contact through members of the CoER participant list, met January 2020 in Sacramento advocating for overturning Proposition 209 (which ended affirmative action in California). I explained efforts to create gathering of individuals with members of the venture sector to explore driving more capital towards social good; he agreed to participate in Fast Pitch. He works in private equity. Recently launched own firm.
Jakob	Vice President	Capital Corporation in Housing Sector	Member of CoER planning team; Informed my doctoral research when I conducted a critical review of research around gentrification. In June 2017, I discovered them on LinkedIn and sent them a request to meet, given their background in housing and finance.
Shirley	Founder/ Managing Partner	Venture Fund	Participant at CoER; We met at CoER; they is highly regarded advocate for social change; they is the founder of the fund, which focuses on growth venture capital with a focus on women and minority-owned companies and job creation. they were vested in overturning Proposition 209 (eliminated affirmative action) in LA as a means to economic resiliency; currently advising California Billionaire, Steve Ballmer, owner of the LA Clippers and founder of the Ballmer Group.
Sol	Change Officer	Finance/ Social Enterprise	Facilitator at CoER; Member of the VCCECE; during the course of the last two years, they have left full time employment as SVP of a venture capital fund started working for nonprofit organization building social enterprises, teaching equity and learning how to drive more capital towards social good.
Sophia	CEO	Social Enterprise	Presenter and table host at CoER; I met Sophia two years ago and agreed to help with her social enterprising; at that time she also agreed to participate in my doctoral work as it aligned with her activities.

Oddly, someone from LA County followed up with me after the session, continuing to struggle (experiencing dissonance) with how they might be able to attend in the future, as they heard good things about the gathering. If I were to use the Emancipatory Map shown in Figure 3.6 to chart our conversation, from my perspective, this individual moved from Loyalist, to

Self-Deception to Emancipation over and over again. They sang the praises of LA County as innovators, then discussed how they had had a career as an organizer and understood how flawed and antiquated the LA County system really was. Yet, they said, that LA County was committed to improving the social determinants of health in all communities. Our conversation ended with a tentative commitment to stay engaged with one another as the next convening approached.

In keeping with the EAR and GST Venn Diagram presented earlier, the mapping of participants correlated with how effectively they engaged in elements like appreciative inquiry, whole-systems thinking, and liberation as praxis. The Fast Pitch for Solutions approach allowed participants to align their actions with their values—unless, of course, their values aligned with the status quo. As a practitioner-researcher, I worked through my assumptions with participants, and the case studies reflect that collaboration. The activities that I engaged in with each participant included the following:

- identifying and conducting baseline interviews
- providing prompts and reviewing drafts
- observing fast pitch presentations and conducting post-fast pitch interviews.

Identifying and Conducting Baseline Interviews

I reached out to each of the identified participants shown in Table 3.3 to discuss the parameters of the Fast Pitch for Solutions and their interest in participating. Once I secured their participation, we discussed what solutions and strategies they were exploring and why they thought those solutions were compelling. I asked them to consider how their solution challenges the current system of *capitalism* and how they intended to address that challenge in order to advance their strategies. We discussed economic resiliency as a method in driving more capital towards social good and establishing new social contracts. The goal of this base-line discussion

Deception to Emancipation over and over again. They sang the praises of LA County as innovators, then discussed how they had had a career as an organizer and understood how flawed and antiquated the LA County system really was. Yet, they said, that LA County was committed to improving the social determinants of health in all communities. Our conversation ended with a tentative commitment to stay engaged with one another as the next convening approached.

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was to revisit concepts introduced in the inaugural convening; employ the GST lens of addressing this particular issue across systems in order to avoid reductionist solutions; and support emancipatory practices by identifying challenges in capitalism and the status quo that are being targeted by their solutions.

Providing Prompts and Reviewing Drafts

The prompts provided to the confirmed Fast Pitch participants included discussion points related to the GST lens and the emancipatory practices. Each participant scheduled time with me to review their presentations prior to the Fast Pitch event. During that discussion they reviewed if and how they responded to the prompts in their presentation and in their thinking; I continued to engage them in dialogues that supported the GST lens and the emancipatory practices as well as observed how some of the theoretical applications represented in the Venn Diagram (Figure 3.2) presented in our discussions and in their presentations.

Observing Fast Pitch Presentations and Conducting Post-Fast Pitch Interviews

During their presentations, I continued to observe how participants engaged the theoretical applications while presenting to the audience. I observed where their public presentations landed on the Emancipatory Action Map as well as how they engaged the theoretical elements. The interview after the fast pitch allowed us to revisit where our discussions began in the base-line interview, where they landed regarding their final presentations and what they experienced throughout the process. I shared my observations of their journey with them and invited their input and reaction to my interpretations.

Through careful journaling and reflection, I documented and reflected on my interactions with each participant. As shown in Table 3.3, I varied and adapted working relationships with each person. There were at least three structured conversations with each participant leading up

to and following their fast pitches. First was a qualifying discussion to determine their interest and understanding of the fast pitch goals. Second was a review of their proposed solution and a discussion about how they felt it met the criteria of building economic resiliency through collective impact to inform an improved social contract that prioritizes people over goods. And third, there was a debrief discussion, assessing their experience following the fast pitch, inclusive of their recommendations for future action. During these dialogues, I gauged participants hope and *fight* and how effectively I was able to engage them in the theoretical elements shown in Figure 3.6. I charted their journey according to the Emancipatory Action Map and summarized my reflections and the aforementioned documentation through case studies on each participant.

Figure 3.7

Activities and Timeline for Study

Activity	January	February	March	April
Identify willing participants.				
Conduct baseline interview.				
Provide Fast Pitch prompts.				
Review drafts for Fast Pitch from each participant and engage in dialogue around how effective they are in embracing the theoretical elements of EAR and GST.				
Observe participants Fast Pitch presentations.				
Conduct post-Fast Pitch interviews.				
Summarize the experiences of each participant and chart their course using the Emancipatory Action Map.				

Theoretical Applications and Aspirations

My methodological goal is to capture how my theory of action, *Value²*, paired with EAR and GST, influenced attitudes to drive more capital towards social good. I identified how these elements helped individuals to think more critically about their beliefs, behaviors, and the systems they are engaged in. There are elements of Freire's (1970) EAR and von Bertalanffy's (1968) GST that I find similar and the areas that are different are complimentary in nature. Using

these elements as guideposts for the dialogues, inclusive of feedback loops, dynamism, and reflection, my results and findings produced a critical application of how these theoretical elements presented during our dialogues.

EAR and GST are frustrating methodologies. As a practitioner-researcher, I cannot draw a bright line of causality between my conversations and any participant's behavior or beliefs. I can draw on the cause and effect relationship that might exist, especially if there are patterns of behavior that create the grounds for some meta-analyses that further corroborate the methodological approach. For example, two members of the VCCECE worked for venture capital funds with no real social impact leanings when I first involved them. Over the course of our critical conversations in the last two years, both members have shifted into roles with social impact leanings, one in social impact venture capital and the other in social enterprising. As far as micro-studies go, I am excited about their shifts. The results and findings of this action research study are a snapshot of a dynamic process in planting seeds of emancipatory actions and whole systems thinking, both excellent tools in driving more capital towards social good.

Conscientização

“To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity” (Freire, 1968, p. 47). Freire's conscientization aligns with von Bertalanffy's (1968) GST, in its emphasis on critically understanding the complexities of social realities. “Integrative studies would prove to be an essential part of the quest for an understanding of reality” (von Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 50). The CoER event, was produced in support of advancing dialogues with a cross-section of individuals who each represented different social realities and lived experiences. “Mechanisms of a feedback nature are the base of

teleological or purposeful behavior in man-made machines as well as in living organisms, and in social systems” (von Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 43). Not unlike the plan-act-observe-reflect approach in action research, von Bertalanffy’s GST calls on practitioners to listen to one another figuratively and literally. This feedback trick of systems theorists was used during my study as I engaged participants in dialogue regarding issues of economic resiliency, capital, social good, and the impact CoER has had on them.

There were tensions during the convening when some participants became frustrated with these social realities, either as proponents who lobbied for the dialogue to focus on oppression or as opponents, objecting to its relevance as too big of a problem and too intangible to even address. These activities created a dialogue between the participants and me that supported thinking critically about the issue of oppression, rather than dismissing the conversation as too broad of “lofty” as one CoER participant mentioned. My role as practitioner-researcher using an action research approach with an emancipatory framework required that I act as an engaged participant in these dialogues. Although our discussions had some structure, they led to other questions and subject matter that is summarized and shared in the final case studies in chapter four. Those results and findings have offered the insights I was hoping to uncover around how we create and implement a new social contract that dissolves our current ethics of capital and replaces it with a more caring system. Boggs and Kurashige (2011), in observations of Dr. Martin Luther King’s life and work argued:

At the heart of movement building is the concept of two-sided transformation, both of ourselves and of our institutions. Even though justice is on our side, we recognize that we are also products of this society. That is why we make sure that the methods we use in our struggles are transforming ourselves as well as our opponents into *more human* human beings. (p. 100)

I believe that each of the participants in this study were positively influenced to critically consider how their solutions addressed social good, thereby moving their attitudes away from an ethics of capital and towards an ethics of care

Chapter IV: Case Studies

“Conscientização does not stop at the level of mere subjective perception of a situation, but through action prepares men for the struggle against the obstacles to their humanization” (Freire, 1970, p. 119). The purpose of this study is to better understand how to influence capitalist attitudes and drive more capital towards social good. The case studies herein, represent outputs and observations of the numerous interactions I shared with each participant. My theory of action, *Value²* centers on the use of dialogical action as a primer and driver of critical thinking. As participants reflected on their beliefs and behaviors related to their roles within the status quo of *capitalism*, I used the emancipatory map to capture and reflect on the qualitative data, expressed through participants’ dissonance throughout the course of this study. The structural format for the case studies includes a brief explanation of my relationship with them, their professional background and the rationale behind their Fast Pitch presentations. The penultimate goal of emancipating *capitalists* from an ethics of capital towards an ethics of care is complex. These case studies, one for each participant, provide insight into that complexity and the challenges of lifting up values of humanization within the limitations of *capitalism*. They reflect the experiences of Sol, Abel, Jakob, Shirley, and Sophia, a group of venture capitalists and finance professionals, as they grapple with their own humanity in the face of an inhuman status quo. The quotations within the section about each individual are from interviews undertaken in 2019 and 2020, unless otherwise indicated.

Sol and the Equity Lookbook

The Reluctant Immigrant

Sol’s Fast Pitch was for an educational tool he developed in the format of a graphic novel. He called it an Equity Lookbook. The purpose of the Equity Lookbook is to inspire and

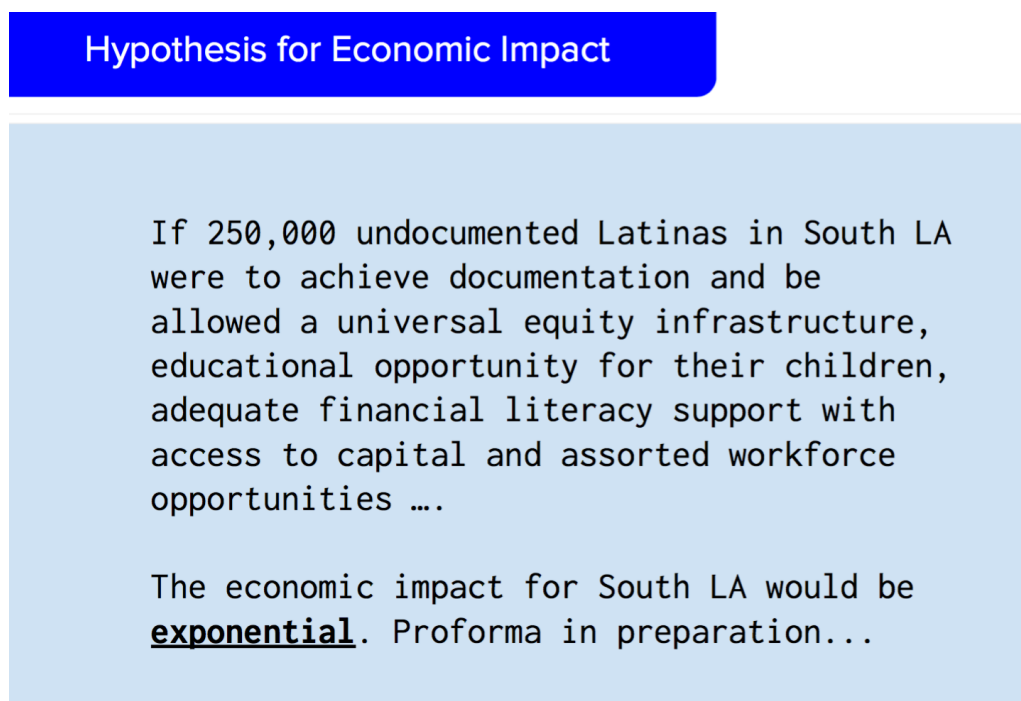
educate Latina immigrants and other women of color on how to secure their economic futures. Sol believes that women's leadership, if cultivated, is one of society's greatest assets in the path towards creating a more equitable and compassionate society. Sol was born in Mexico to educated parents. They moved to the United States when he was three-years-old, where he was raised, in his words, as "an Orange County boy." His family legacy was marked by generational access to Mexican presidents and a familial wealth that did not follow them to the United States. Sol struggles with this reality as, although his life was comfortable in comparison to most, it is not the life of affluence that marked his lineage. He is conflicted about his feelings on this subject, especially now that he is a new father. "If you were about to die and you had \$10M under your mattress, would you tell your children about it or would you tell them to go chop mountains with the edge of their own hand and then set the mattress on fire?"

He is fair-skinned, some might say, White. He is also of Jewish descent. His life in Orange County, California was not deprived, just different. His father was the publisher of one of the nation's leading newspapers and eventually earned his doctorate. His mother and sister are both educated and accomplished women. Sol shunned academia and institutions, resisting a formal higher education. At heart, he is an artist and found that his ability to sell could afford him the luxury of supporting his art studio, where he produced music, podcasts, essays, literature and other forms of expression. In 1998, he found himself working at an ad agency where he overheard a conversation about a larger ad agency in Vermont that was working on emerging technologies to service the financial sector. He was intrigued, so he made a cold call to the Vermont-based business and they offered him a job in business development. He moved to Montpelier and started learning all there was to learn about the banking system and how his new employer's technology might provide solutions to that industry. He loved "selling money." Sol

understood that capitalism revolved around an “invented value.” He knew that his ability to be a broker for access to this value was a beneficial position to be in. More importantly, he understood the potential for him to connect Latinos and women to capital that they may otherwise not have the ability to access. For Sol, this was a practice in advancing social good. To him, social good is represented in a society “that is not a zero-sum society” where “winning isn’t based on there being losers.” This definition is juxtaposed to Sol’s perspective of capitalism which he describes as “socialism or welfare for the oligarchy” (2020), which is not capitalism, theoretically. Inequality, to Sol, is evidenced by how immigrant women in LA have so many obstacles that cannot be surmounted and do not allow them to even enter into the actual economy, keeping them unable to compete, forever. “There is no solution.”

Figure 4.1

Sol’s Fast Pitch—Hypothesis for Economic Impact



Note. Created by participant; used with permission per consent form.

Red Pedagogy

Sol was an early participant in my preliminary study with the VCCECE. At that time, he expressed that he felt his only options were to participate in the current system of capitalism to his own benefit and possibly the benefit of other disenfranchised people or to live on a tiny island with his family in silent protest to a society that has long been broken. At that time he was Senior Vice President of a ventures division at a company in Irvine, California, with a focus on tech start-ups. He had helped them to invest in numerous companies. In that role, he was promised a small percentage of equity in lieu of a higher salary, with the hopes of receiving a multi-million-dollar payout should one of the ventures have a lucrative exit. After six years, he finally left that role and transitioned into consulting for several different clients around business development. I invited him to start collaborating with me on building social enterprises in South LA. He was not any closer to moving to his tiny island, so he agreed to explore the opportunity. Sol and I have worked together on several projects over the last 10 years and he happily agreed to continuing his support of my doctoral work by participating in the Fast Pitch for Solutions.

Earlier, Sol alluded to his lack of faith in ever finding a solution to the problem of inequality, especially as it relates to Latina immigrants. His Equity Lookbook, an educational tool in the form of a graphic novel, is a humble response to the enormity of that dilemma. During the inaugural convening of CoER, Sol acted as a facilitator. He observed that at his table, the participants chose to defer to two of their table-mates in an effort to focus on a problem that was manageable—overturning California’s Proposition 209, which essentially ended the practice of affirmative action in the state. When it was time for Sol to decide what strategy he would posit for the Fast Pitch for Solutions, he landed on a tool that allowed him to further his goal of connecting Latina immigrants to capital. His Equity Lookbook would work at a grassroots level

to build their capacity to understand and penetrate the systems that continue to limit their pathway towards economic resiliency. The other catalyst for creating the Equity Lookbook was Sol's experience participating in a capacity-building program for residents in South LA. The residents' participation was sponsored by a foundation interested in improving outcomes for children aged 0–5. Over half of the participants in the class were mono-lingual Spanish-speaking mothers, many of whom were undocumented. Sol wanted to develop a more updated curriculum that was less driven by White supremacist institutions and more informed by women of color that Latina immigrants could learn from and relate to. One example of Sol's prior attempts includes creating a beautifully illustrated book of Latina Chefs in Mexico, whose talents are often exploited by their male counterparts. Sol had funded his project using his own resources, but had little success in finding additional capital to increase the project's visibility.

Sol agreed that capitalism is broken and referred to *Red Pedagogy* (Grande, 2004) and the way of the Dakota. His summation of the pedagogy in application to his approach to advancing social good was that indigenous communities did not attempt to change the system, rather, they changed who was at the top of the system. By placing a better steward at the top of the system, it benefited everyone at the bottom which translated into community schools, bilingual education and parent involvement. “Unlike, American society, where people surrender to the State, the Dakota surrender to the community by being responsible to one another.” Sol believes that if women are placed at the top of the current system, there could be increased differentiation in the beneficiaries of capitalism. He is hopeful, with that sort of paradigmatic shift, the terms of capitalism would be “more gentle and forgiving and that could single-handedly change the status quo.”

Figure 4.2*Sol's Fast Pitch—Building Equitable Systems*

Note. Created by participant; used with permission per consent form.

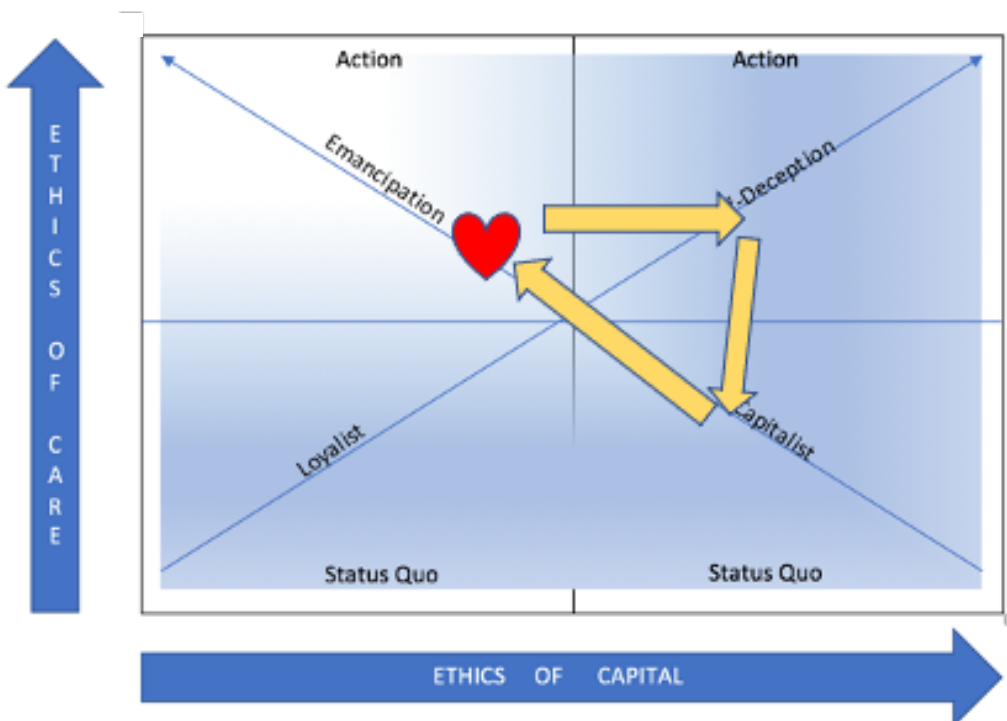
Even with that perspective, Sol became less optimistic when asked directly about if capitalism could be saved: "I don't think so. If I read all the fine print I still think it's likely self-serving and rigged in favor of something and my skepticism would win. It doesn't go far enough for me." Sol was his wife's only support system as she struggled on a tenuous path towards citizenship under the rules of the United States immigration policy of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. His wife's immigration status was a constant source of fear, degradation, and more fear. When she finally became a naturalized citizen, she celebrated, while Sol remained a reluctant immigrant, less enthusiastic about his American citizenship and his status in what he sees as a clearly White supremacist society run by predominantly White men.

now had legal status, it only put her on the first rung of an impossibly unwieldy ladder designed for her failure.

The value proposition Sol hopes to achieve through his Equity Lookbook is the crafting of an illustrated narrative with a Latina heroine who experiences love, religion, and politics. The heroine's success at overcoming obstacles within these systems would inspire other Latinas to seek similar success. Men featured in the story would play the roles "they should play" in valuing and honoring the heroine's journey. In making the pitch for the Equity Lookbook, he felt confident about his motivation and ability to continue producing the content but less so about generating broader support without the help of others. "I have failed in the past trying to do the exact same thing and it's difficult to break through. But enough men have to agree that they should live in a world run by women."

Figure 4.3

Sol's Emancipatory Action Map



Emancipation Action Map: Sol's Loop of Resistance

Sol's loop represents his ultimate desire is to be emancipated from the constraints of capitalism and the ethics of capital. The heart represents where his primary beliefs are held. Sol deeply covets the design of a more utopic society, referencing Grande's (2015) *Red Pedagogy*, which aligns with the definition of capitalism offered in this study. Grande's work centers on the commodification of indigenous culture and people with an emphasis on what was lost through the brutality of capitalism and imperialism. Sol does not believe in capitalism. He also does not believe that it can be transformed. His Fast Pitch offered a solution that centered on the education and advancement of women of color. He closed the pitch with an ask for support that would allow his Equity Look Book to become an investable social enterprise, seeing this pursuit of capital as the only viable option for scaling up. Sol, early on, had discussed targeting women-centric brands, like Unilever, to partner with him around his idea, hoping they might see it as a good tool to lift up their own brand. His self-deception is a conscious choice. The status-quo cannot easily be changed and entertaining that change "is too sky box" (2017) for Sol, and instead, he continues capitalist pursuits as a means to his much-desired tiny island sanctuary.

Abel's Trojan Horse—Inclusion and Investment

Warren Christopher Scholar

Abel's Fast Pitch revolved around his career in private equity and the on-going lack of diversity across the field. I only recently met Abel. He was introduced to me in Sacramento, when I traveled to meet with the Women's Caucus at the request of Shirley, our mutual contact. Our goal was to encourage the legislators in the Women's Caucus to champion a bill that would overturn Proposition 209. Proposition 209 had made affirmative action an illegal practice for many systems and institutions in the state. Abel was a colleague of Shirley's. He had recently

launched his own business, focused on raising capital and “solving institutional investing challenges at exclusive private equity firms through differentiated investment strategies.” These strategies included having in-house technology and research expertise, something that Abel described as lacking in most private equity firms.

Raised in East Los Angeles, Abel had parents who were immigrants from Mexico. He was not privileged in many ways and credits his success to his innate skills in math. “My strong math skills made me confident that I could compete no matter how unconventional my path, that fundamentally, I was as smart as everyone else. Being smart and driven allowed me to compete.” Abel described the private equity sector as one of the world’s largest holders of capital with venture capital, holding only a fraction of the wealth, comparatively. He was selected as a recipient of the Warren Christopher Scholarship Fund, whose awardees are young people “attending high schools with exceptionally high drop-out rates and living in circumstances ravaged by drugs, violence, poverty and illness” (California Community Foundation, 2021, para. 2). Abel entered Stanford University. He did not major in math. He majored in Urban Studies and during his junior and senior years, worked as an intern for the mayor of a large city, as well as a presidential candidate. In those roles, he was privy to conversations with investment bankers and Wall Street advisors: “I was listening to advisors and followed the money trail to Wall Street and understood that I needed to get there. I needed to figure out how money works and how it flowed.”

Originally, with a focus on urban studies, Abel was learning about power building and ways in which he might lift others out of poverty. As a result of those internships, he came to believe that power building was about having either “a lot of money or a lot of people.” It was then, that he made a bold decision to extend his time at Stanford by two more summers. His

goals were to have two more internships and make his way to Wall Street. His mentors disapproved and warned him against it. Even Warren Christopher, the former Secretary of State, told Abel that he thought his idea was highly unconventional.

I had a scholarship from Warren Christopher and even he said, “Don’t do it.” But he’s a White guy with a lot of access and your Stanford degree will get you in different places and I have to make my own connections.

Productivity and Grease

When asked about his definition of capital, Abel described it as “sheer dollars” and then elaborated on “the ability to allow those dollars to access more things than others.” And his interpretation of social good equated to how access to capital provides increased opportunities for those who may not otherwise have it, like people of color, low-income families or Third World countries. In his words, social good is about “using capital to unlock doors.”

Abel did not attend the convening on economic resiliency that the other Fast Pitch volunteers participated in, so we talked about why he agreed to travel to Sacramento and his thoughts on economic resiliency. He said that he came to Sacramento because of his support of other people of color working in the financial sector who believe that overturning Proposition 209 would help to increase the flow of capital funding to more women and people of color in California. Abel agreed with this insofar as he believes that social good is about creating access and Proposition 209 has limited access to certain pools of funding for himself and his colleagues.

On economic resiliency, his response toggled between personal and societal factors. “I can build resiliency because of the adversity I went through. You can be resilient. How do you create grit?” His question was rhetorical and pointed to the idea that resiliency may not be teachable but that his adversity fostered his own resiliency. He added that economic resiliency is a societal issue and that, although controversial, he believed that if the economic pie grows then more people benefit, while “others believe in shifting existing dollars.” The others he is

referring to are those who may be of a more liberal mindset, as he mentioned that even his neoconservative friends might agree with him about enlarging the pie for the benefit of social good. As the chairperson of a notable organization with a mission of advancing the Latino community in the United States, Abel supports enrichment programs for youth focused on finance and technology programs. These areas are what he called, “productivity and grease” industries, where the highest paying jobs may be found. If more youth of color are geared towards these jobs, then they will have more access to capital.

Power Building

There is absolutely income inequality—when you can get the money to work for you and you don’t have to do anything. Why does one person have to work and another doesn’t? You have 80 hours to think about how to make your money work, and its multiplying, while others are stressed about making a wage.

Abel understands that racism exists and he has intimate understanding of how it has been systematized in the field of private equity. When he set his sights on Wall Street, he realized that the likelihood that he would gain access to it was low. The undergraduates who won internships at Goldman Sachs had been groomed either through familial ties, and/or they started studying the field in high school and they were not urban planning majors. Abel had managed to leverage the contacts he made during his internship and although he was unprepared, he was given an internship in private wealth management the first summer of his extended undergraduate career. There, he learned that he needed to gain access to a role where he would be exposed to applying financial analysis and buying securities.

His next internship seemed like another impossibility—a position at Goldman Sachs. Abel’s grit paid off and he had made it into Goldman Sachs, conducting sales and trading with mutual funds and hedge funds. He was in. Hearing his story makes his Fast Pitch all the more understandable. Abel’s Fast Pitch was his business model. When I asked him what he believed

was a viable strategy for driving more capital towards social good, he did not hesitate. It was his new venture, a private equity company that is owned by two people of color with a family of advisors that are 43% women and 67% underrepresented minorities. Admittedly, this was not a fun fact that he presented to prospective investors. He knew they did not care about the diversity of his firm, but rather their ability to grow their investments. Abel believes that his business model is about inclusivity and diversity, but that advertising that fact will only limit their access and opportunities. His approach to driving more capital towards social good is to build the wealth of women and people of color, discretely. His is the only presentation that will not be shared, given the stealth nature of his approach to addressing this issue.

The first time we went through his presentation, he made references to the lack of diversity in private equity and how diverse his advisory team was, but it was not a part of the overall business model. I suggested that he emphasize diversity and inclusion more. He agreed that for this particular audience he might do that but that he did not believe he would present it that way in any other situation. He made some minor adjustments. I asked him how these edits made him feel. Abel expressed his uneasiness with having possibly positioned himself as an outsider to an insider's game. Earlier in our conversation, he had mentioned a Latino-centric investing conference he produced annually. When I asked him about the possibility of not being so discreet in his desire to increase diversity in private equity at this conference, he responded with a resounding no. The conference was largely Latino, but they were predominantly affluent Latinos who did not identify with the marginalized status that Americans often gave them. Abel's value in this circle was his access to capital. The lack of diversity in private equity was the exact reason that these affluent Latinos needed him. Abel was the insider, in the United States, that they needed to help them grow their wealth exponentially. Hardly any of these

conference attendees were aware of Abel's status as the child of Mexican-American immigrants with little access to capital. This type of presentation was the first time he had mixed his personal values (or background) so openly with a business pitch. In hindsight, he felt he could have been more comfortable, recognizing that the audience was more accepting than what he's accustomed to. He said that there are only ten Latino-owned private equity firms, including his. His business partner is the son of a Columbian ambassador and he is able to connect with wealthy Latinos in ways that Abel is limited. The Fast Pitch took him out of his learned comfort zone of shielding his upbringing: "I can talk about supporting one another, although I won't talk about growing up in the streets of LA."

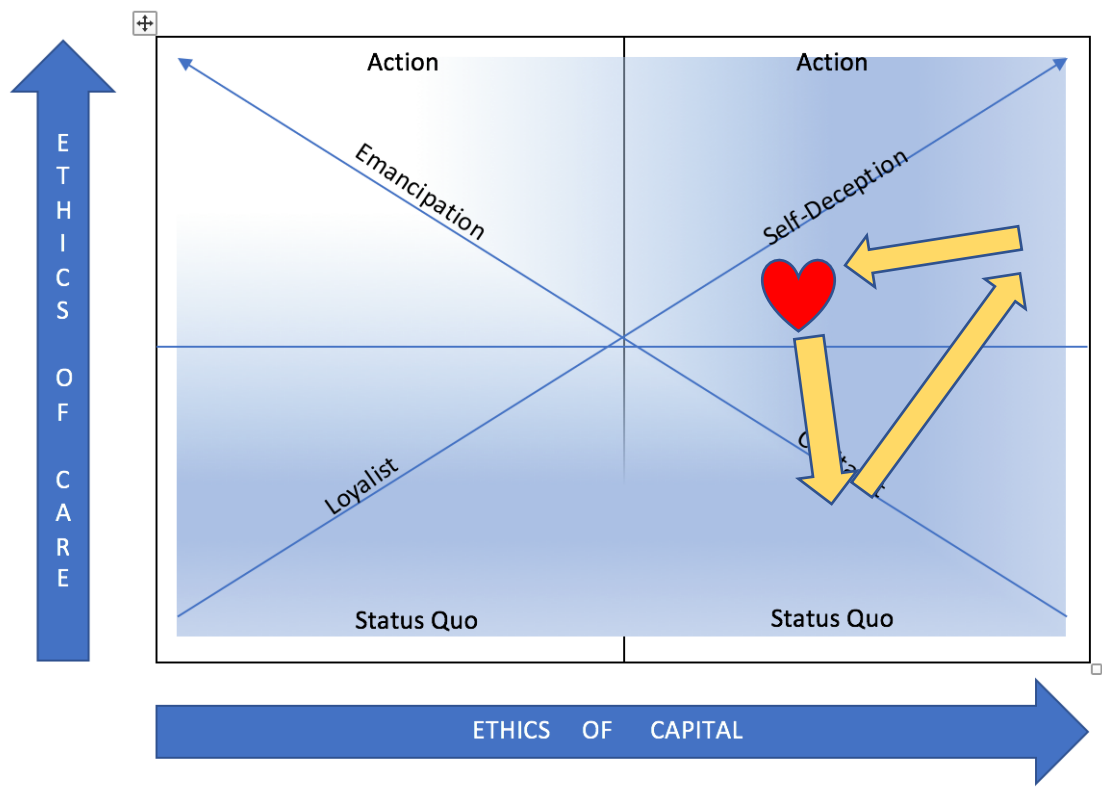
Billionaires Boy's Club

Private equity is a good ole' boys club. Abel had attempted to state this diplomatically, but eventually acknowledged the Whiteness of the industry. "If I can be a billionaire and walk in those circles then I can use that to siphon off some of it to social good. I have now sat in different seats and I have more knowledge about how to multiply dollars." I asked him once more about the likelihood that he would present his Fast Pitch and the strategies of inclusion and diversity in another setting. There are Chavelas that he participates in, where he could entertain presenting those ideas and having discussions. Abel did not focus on any specific stories of hardship, but he alluded to having experienced the difficulties that came with being raised humbly in East Los Angeles. "Resiliency comes in the form of sacrifice." When you're not born into wealth, Abel seemed to think that instead of buying hundreds of dollars' worth of Christmas gifts (like his sister often does), you should invest all your money, "no Christmas gifts." Abel's understanding of financial markets and the potential for accumulating wealth is what keeps him motivated: "I am as confident as I have ever been. All the people that have helped me along the way and all the

access I've had. Stanford, Goldman and McKinsey and I'm a beneficiary. I have those tickets." Capitalism, if regulated properly, has the ability to help everyone, according to Abel. Education and healthcare should be provided to all and the federal government, which is the biggest company, by his definition, needs the most regulation in order to increase the money-multiplier effect that is essential to capitalism and allows the economic pie to grow. "I'm going to utilize my ticket to reach the heights and take what I can and do what I think is the right thing to do. It's selfish, but then I think of the 200 families that run this world and no one is telling them why you are executing your own world vision."

Figure 4.4

Abel's Emancipatory Action Map



Emancipatory Action Map: Abel's Faith in the System

Abel's faith in the current system of *capitalism* is driven by his belief that responsible capitalists have the power to improve the system and fix what is broken. As we dialogued around his presentation and the taboo issues of inclusion and diversity, his commitments to equity and social good were firm. For Abel, *capitalism* is not the problem, it is the access to *capitalism* that is most troublesome. His tactic of increasing opportunities for wealth accumulation for women and people of color will tip the scales towards an ethics of care, but one that should be earned. Abel's pragmatism prevailed in our discussions, as he focused on shifting power through traditional methods of education and policy reform. The path towards creating a society that practices an ethics of care, for Abel, uses opportunities afforded through a capitalist society. Capitalism will allow him and others to right wrongs and advance a more inclusive world through the accumulation of wealth by people like himself. His activities in educating youth of color about careers in finance support his belief that *capitalism* can be saved if those currently holding the power are displaced by those who aren't.

Jakob's C-Suite Reciprocity

Community and Connection

Jakob's Fast Pitch took a broad stroke around equity, diversity, and inclusion in the C-suite (executive level management). On any given day, Jakob's Facebook page is a daily reflection on inequality and injustice. He keeps a private group on Facebook and invites likeminded individuals to contribute to heady conversations. Postings include thoughtful exchanges on the complexities of capitalism, racism, climate change and other taboo topics that would not be welcome conversation in his otherwise corporate existence as a White male executive working in the financial sector. The only wrinkle in his role is that he is also Jewish.

You might say his family and he were also like reluctant immigrants. Jakob describes himself as privileged. His career stemmed from an early interest in community and connection—“I was very moved by architectural history, synagogues in the Renaissance the way you shaped people and faith and understanding their place in the world and in the community they resided.”

As a Berkeley graduate with a BA in Architecture and Environmental Design, one of his early jobs was at the New York Department of Housing and Urban Development. Much of the focus at that time was around the acquisition of property by the City in the form of REO's (real-estate-owned property). During the Civil Rights Movement, between 1964 and 1968, New York experienced several riots related to racial injustice and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In the 1970s, property owners stopped paying their property taxes in communities most affected by the unrest and the city took the properties. Jakob functioned primarily as a project manager, experiencing first-hand how underserved communities were impacted by the housing and finance sectors and the policies that support them. When asked about what he enjoys most about his current work, his response was, “I never have a dull day in my world of social engineering. As markets move and as people face challenges around insecurity and instability and limited resources, if you can be an instrument to bring about an equitable distribution of capital you can always be excited about it.” At the urging of an associate, Jakob completed a Masters in Urban Planning. Around that time, he sought out a role with Chicago's finance agency in order to sharpen his understanding of how capital was managed in the development of building communities. He worked in underwriting projects for affordable housing, then for an equity partner and his career advanced further and further, as did his understanding of the inequities that are created and sustained through housing and urban development.

The Dog Whistle

“I’m doing meaningful work and making an impact.” Jakob’s work continues to be in the field of affordable housing and finance. He sees opportunities for more reciprocity and is disappointed by how credit is codified and defined, creating further constraints. “I don’t like the word low-income, it’s derogatory.” While Jakob wants to help circulate opportunity and capital to those who do not have it, he struggles with choosing words that do not perpetuate discriminatory practices. Even the word “homeless” is loaded and he would rather say “veterans” or use whatever language humanizes them most. But even there lies the dilemma of dog whistles. Jakob knows how dog whistles are used to marginalize and stigmatize certain groups, so that if you say Latino family, in certain circles, that is code for something negative.

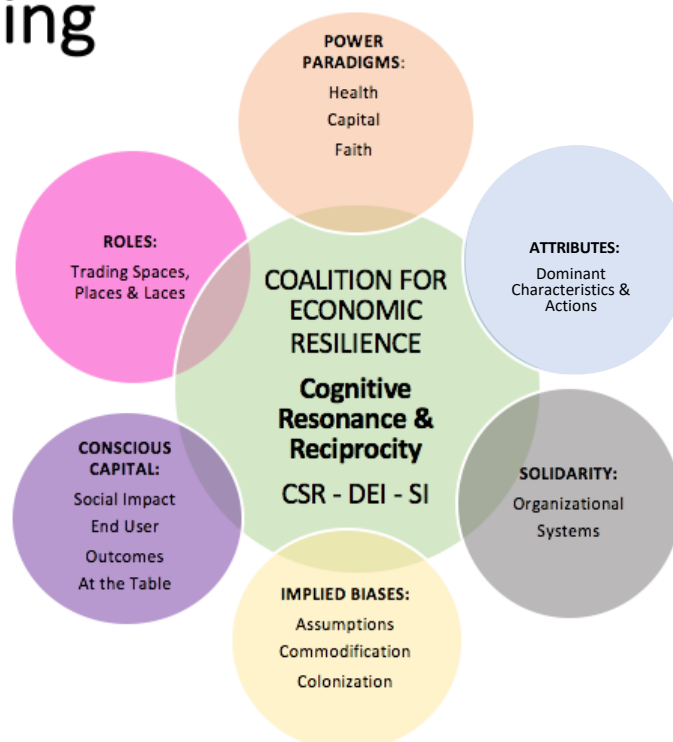
Designing financial instruments to the benefit of investors is Jakob’s job. He also believes that it is possible to design financial instruments that benefit the users, not just the investors. One example he explained was a jail to housing recidivism study that did not bode well for the formerly incarcerated. The issue, Jakob, points out, was a lack of support. The housing development was just that, a housing development, with no systems in place to position formerly incarcerated tenants to successfully remain out of the prison system. One solution Jakob posed was that tenants (users) be offered a financial benefit, similar to the investors. Perhaps with an incentive, along with other support systems, their recidivism rates might have been greatly improved. When asked about how he defined capital, Jakob framed his response around the many forms of capital, such as social capital, which is seemingly tied into one’s ability to access financial capital. “It is about connectivity of capital as an individual.” From his perspective, Jakob sees plenty of opportunities and tools for developing more meaningful social impact through the design of capital instruments and policy. The bigger challenge lay in

individuals' unwillingness or fear in sharing and shifting power. "We all have good intentions, but we fail to see through the ways in which we assume the status quo . . . we need the dog whistle."

Figure 4.5

Jakob's Fast Pitch—Mapping for Cognitive Resonance and Reciprocity

CoER Mapping



OUTER Circles INTERSECT and GROW into each other depending upon how much OXYGEN (reciprocity) exists.

Note. Figure created by participants; used with permission per consent form.

The Connector

Jakob and I met in 2016, when I reached out to him via LinkedIn. I had started researching capital and the creation of space, which led me to literature on gentrification. I knew little about urban planning or housing development and when I searched locally for experts, Jakob's name popped up and I sent him a message describing my doctoral studies and he agreed

to meet. I found him to be not only a wealth of information, but filled with an inspiring amount of compassion and curiosity. I was honored when he invited me to join his private Facebook group of heady rabble rousers. It would be a couple of years before we would actually speak again. When we did, it was prompted by another newly shared contact at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, one of the supporting partners for CoER.

Jakob became a table host and out of a room of 100 seats, he had easily filled half of them through his network. Gladwell (2000) would classify him as a *connector*. He was a true leader in stewarding the success of the gathering. As a table host, he chose his own topic for discussion, which revolved around disaster and trauma-informed community planning. Their dialogues included identifying structural and systemic challenges to responding to disasters effectively. These challenges included public institutions inability to analyze their own mistakes and allow employees to speak freely about inequities and flaws in the system, in an effort to improve.

As Jakob and I unpacked these conversations following the convening, we landed on the lack of equity in the C-Suite across sectors, be they public or private. If equity is not operationalized than how will institutions ever be free to address structural and systemic challenges, especially during times of disaster? And then COVID happened. Jakob never faltered in his commitment to be in the Fast Pitch, but as a White male, he was deeply concerned about going it alone. He wanted a co-pilot in the effort, maybe a woman? He was not sure. On September 10th, at the inaugural convening, he had made a comment that included the word *tribal*. An African-American woman at his table took offense. She was fairly reserved in her reaction, but it nonetheless shook Jakob. As he worked on his pitch about C-Suite Reciprocity, we talked a lot about language, equity and trauma. I offered to be his co-pilot. That allayed his

concerns, and he began to focus on the development of his presentation. His CoER mapping as shown in Figure 4.5 and in his pitch gave voice to the many convictions Jakob had about all that is wrong within current systems and those wrongs might be righted by enacting a movement that operationalizes equity. What better place to start, than the C-Suite! As we continued to review his presentation, I think his confidence grew and we no longer talked about my role as his co-pilot. This was his presentation and he was going to give it.

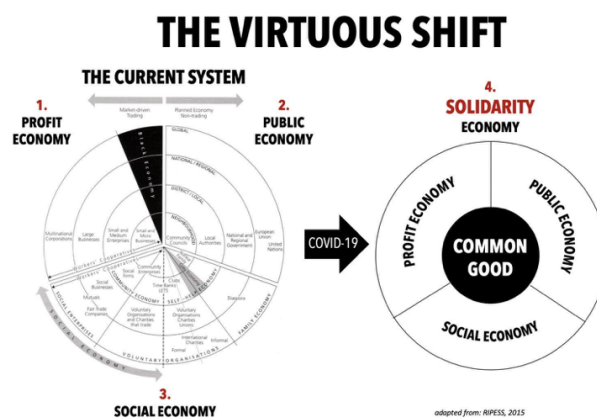
Figure 4.6

Jakob's Fast Pitch—Solidarity Solutions

Solidarity Solutions: Solving for Reciprocity in the Corporate Suite

In the Corporate Suite, 5 steps to a Diversity Equity & Inclusion Officer:

- 1) Don't just make it part of HR, Marketing/Branding);
- 2) Bring it up to the Board Room (seat at the table);
- 3) Make this role and its impact part of Shareholder Values (Return On Reciprocity);
- 4) Set out a framework for longer term (3, 5, 7 & 10 yrs) goals; and
- 5) Advocate / Lobby for all the common good from bottom up – worker to senior managers to board to shareholders



Note: Figure by participant; used with permission per consent form.

The Dreamer

The Fast Pitch for Solutions took place via Zoom, with stay-at-home orders in full effect across Los Angeles and many other places around the world. Jakob chose to sit outside on his patio. Behind Jakob, was a large metallic sign that spelled out “dreamer.” He is not a young man,

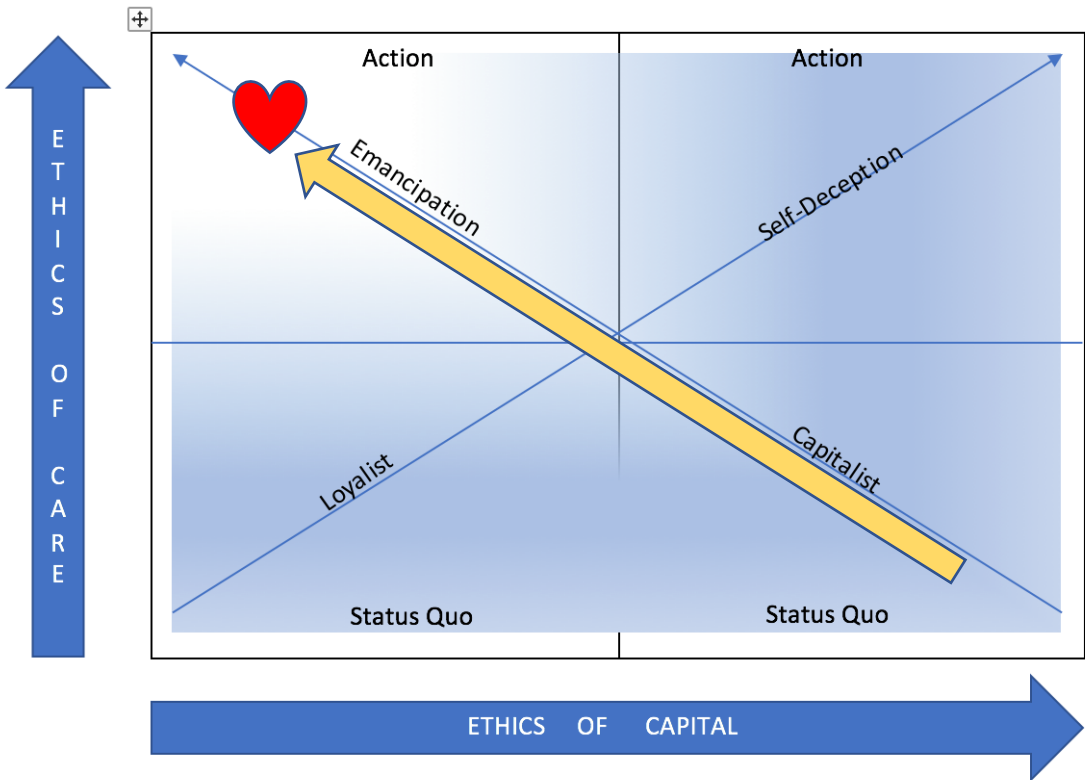
but there, in his garden, with a head covered in large, messy curls and a five-o-clock shadow, he appeared care-free and youthful.

He began with a disclaimer that his opinions did not represent his company's views. His presentation was heady. Each slide attempted to unmask our hidden and unhidden biases of language, culture and gender. It was vulnerable and honest. He talked about his place and his responsibility as a White male in this inequitable system. Coming from a finance background his final slide spoke in terms of shareholder values and reciprocity and referenced an illustration around solidarity economy, which had been the topic presented at the September 10th convening and the subject of dialogue being discussed in between Fast Pitches.

Following his presentation, I asked Jakob to tell me about his experience and if he was inspired to advance his solution. Jakob always answers my questions with more questions. His response included how he thought about his audience:

How do they see themselves as agents of change? I had the privilege to be open about my narrative. Have I inspired others to be comfortable enough to also be agents, be vulnerable and how much of that goes back to my own narrative?

He had no misgivings about his presentation or how vulnerable he made himself. His comments reflected confidence in his ability to continue these conversations and find a path forward to advance his strategy for C-Suite Reciprocity. At the very least, he has Facebook: "I get comfort in the fact that when I post, I get really good feedback. I can connect the dots more so than most. I'm really getting to a narrative that opens up and provides a better light."

Figure 4.7*Jakob's Emancipatory Action Map**Emancipatory Action Map—Jakob's One-Track Mind*

Jakob's one-track mind is a steady stream of consciousness-raising dialogue and questioning of the status-quo. Having been born with admittedly more privilege than others, his position within the status quo is not a banner of success, but rather a reminder of his many advantages. His heart's position in the upper-left quadrant represents his desire to be a part of a more inclusive society. Although he functions at an advantage within the status quo, he openly challenges it in his work and personal life. Jakob indicated that he does not entertain ideas that perhaps he deserves his privilege or that he has earned it. He does not hint at any notion of being ordained by destiny to occupy ivory towers and move through the world more easily than others.

Instead, he says that he experiences a sense of shame in these flagrant freedoms that he enjoys at the expense of other people. His Fast Pitch boldly goes straight to the C-suite and questions every aspect of how *capitalism* permeates our society, and promotes an ethics of capital, in favor of homogeneity. Jakob wants an emancipated society and shared that if he could make his Fast Pitch into a full-time job, he would.

Shirley's \$100-Million-Dollar Fast Pitch

A Would-Be Astronaut

Shirley's Fast Pitch raised the need to overturn Proposition 209 and bring back affirmative action in the State of California as a means of releasing more capital to women of color in the venture capital community. "I started as a systems-engineer because I wanted to be an astronaut." Shirley's early career consisted of briefing NASA on space shuttle missions. It is 80 times harder to get a job at NASA than it is to get into Harvard (Gallo, 2018). There is little doubt that Shirley would have been an incredible astronaut, "but the tech was from the 50's and made for men" (2020), so she got as close as she could, given the tremendous structural barriers facing women of color in an already impenetrable space program. Although Shirley did not work directly for NASA, it is safe to say that she held a position not easily entrusted nor accessed by most people. She had top secret clearance and due to her outspoken progressive leanings, she was "investigated for being a subversive" (2020) and a potential security threat. The accusations were unfounded and the Department of Defense and the Federal Bureau of Investigations cleared her, and she remained in her role for ten years. After an accomplished life as a top-secret space shuttle systems-engineer, she made an interesting leap into another coveted role in the music and entertainment industries, managing bands. In the late 1990s, venture funds were not as common and when Shirley's music industry boss was tapped by a well-known venture capitalist to help

build and run a new fund, Shirley thought he was nuts. His response was to hire her. Given her background in technology and now entertainment, she was a perfect fit for the new venture. “I was the only woman on the investment side. All the companies that came to us were all White men.” It was a fortuitous opportunity, given the growth of venture capital in the world today. “I loved the strategy, marketing and supporting growth.”

As an advisor to the Mayor of Los Angeles during the Obama Administration, she supported advancing strategies for job growth. One of the primary tools revolved around increasing exports: “we have a consumer-based economy.” These businesses tend to be owned and operated by women and people of color, making them a great way to advance equity in the investment space, as well as to grow jobs. Shirley’s incredible intellect is matched by her high-energy and passionate disposition. She is extremely committed to advancing equitable practices in the venture community as women of color are being locked out as fund managers. When she started her first firm, there were virtually no women or people of color in technology as far as her eyes could see: “no one believed that there were women and people of color to invest in. Foundations said this to me, and even stated, *isn’t technology over?*” Their misconceptions stemmed from the dot com bubble burst, as Shirley described. She knew better. After several years advising the Mayor of Los Angeles, she founded her first firm, a collaborative entity that would invest in a virtually invisible population of women and people of color seeking support in the technology start-up arena.

Black Unicorns

Shirley attended the inaugural convening for the Coalition on Economic Resiliency at the invitation of Jakob, another Fast Pitch participant. I had long-been a fan of Shirley’s, having followed her recent trajectory as what I like to call a “Black unicorn.” This is from comedian

Tiffany Haddish's (2019) memoirs, *The Last Black Unicorn*. Her meaning was that Black women in America have a unique story and statistically grim health outcomes that start at conception; maternal and infant mortality rates among Black women have far surpassed other populations for over 200 years (Owens & Fett, 2019). I had been largely isolated in my own field of work, as Black women do not comprise a large share of executive roles in any sector. Tiffany Haddish attended the same high school as I did and Shirley was married to a man that ran a political campaign I worked for over 20 years ago. We all share that feeling of being a unicorn. In fact, the unicorn contingent of Black women earning six-figures or more is so small that it is not unusual for us to have less than six degrees of separation from one another, especially if we were born, raised, and educated in the same region.

At the convening, Shirley and another fund manager who is also a Woman of Color were seated at the table that Sol was facilitating. As he described it, there were 12 people at their table, but two "alpha women" directed their conversation towards overturning Proposition 209 as a critical strategy for unleashing capital for women and people of color. According to Shirley, "finance is a system created by White men doing well with no incentive to change."

After debriefing with the facilitators and reading the notes, I followed up with Shirley to see how we might advance the work needed to overturn the legislation. Soon after, I travelled to Sacramento to meet with Democratic State Senator Holly Mitchell, the first African American to chair the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee. I had met the Senator several years prior, when an organization I represented honored her at our gala for her championing of access to healthcare and preserving programs for youth. Shirley also had known Senator Mitchell during her past role advising the Mayor of Los Angeles. After listening to Shirley and Maya (the other Woman of Color and fund manager at the table with Shirley on September 10th) give their

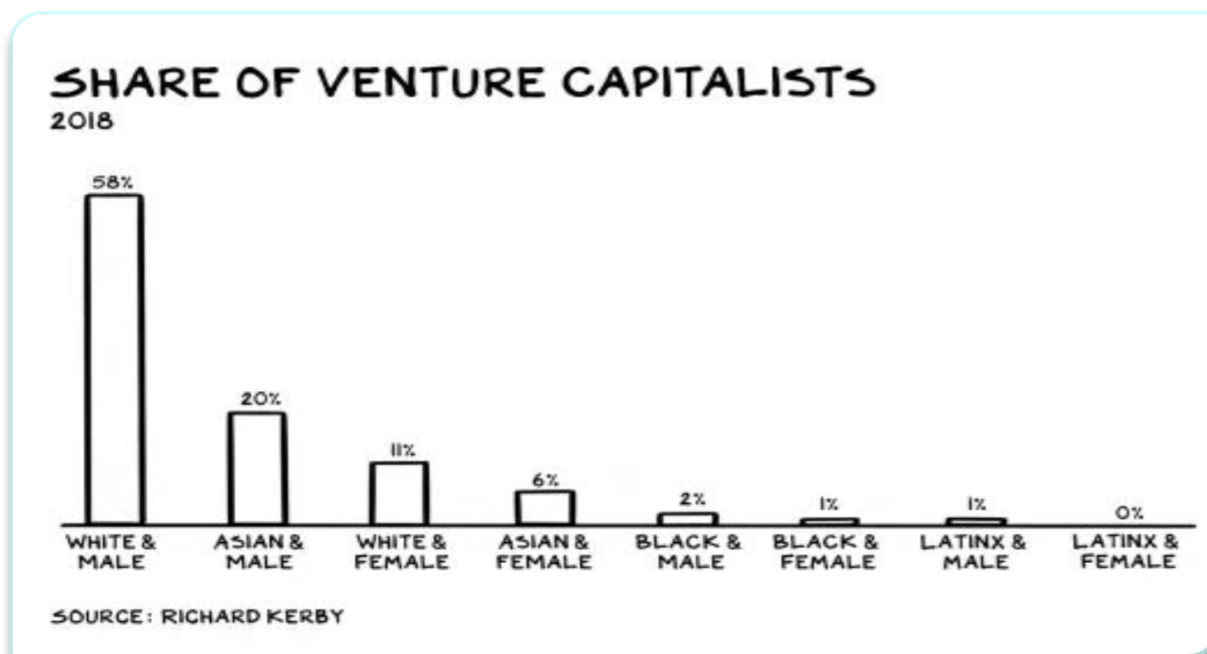
presentations to the Senator and, later that day, to the Women's Caucus, I invited them both to participate in the Fast Pitch for Solutions to further promote this effort.

The Inside Game

I'm not a revolutionary and I don't believe in tearing it all down. There's an inside outside game and you need to make changes while the same system is in place and then slowly shift it. Usually if you blow it all up it's the same people getting hurt. (Shirley)

When I asked Shirley about her definitions of capital and social good, she pointed to Mario Cuomo, past New York State Governor and father of the current Governor. She admired his pragmatism and his progressiveness. Some might call it being a centrist. Obamacare, a universal wage, and other progressive platforms are all positions that Shirley supports, while at the same time understanding that "capitalists have no incentive to change, White dudes raising 10s of billions of dollars, legacy finance will stay the same. We need a parallel system that we control." Today, she believes one of the major problems with capitalism is that the Republicans have been allowed to define the rules of the game. Her Fast Pitch focused on rescinding Proposition 209 and establishing a 100 million dollar fund. This Innovation Fund, as she referred to it, would invest in women and People of Color and provide further evidence of the superior financial returns yielded from diverse fund managers.

Visuals from Shirley's Fast Pitch are shown in Figures 4.8 and 4.9.

Figure 4.8*Shirley's Fast Pitch—Share of Venture Capitalists*

Note. Figure created by participant and used with permission per consent form.

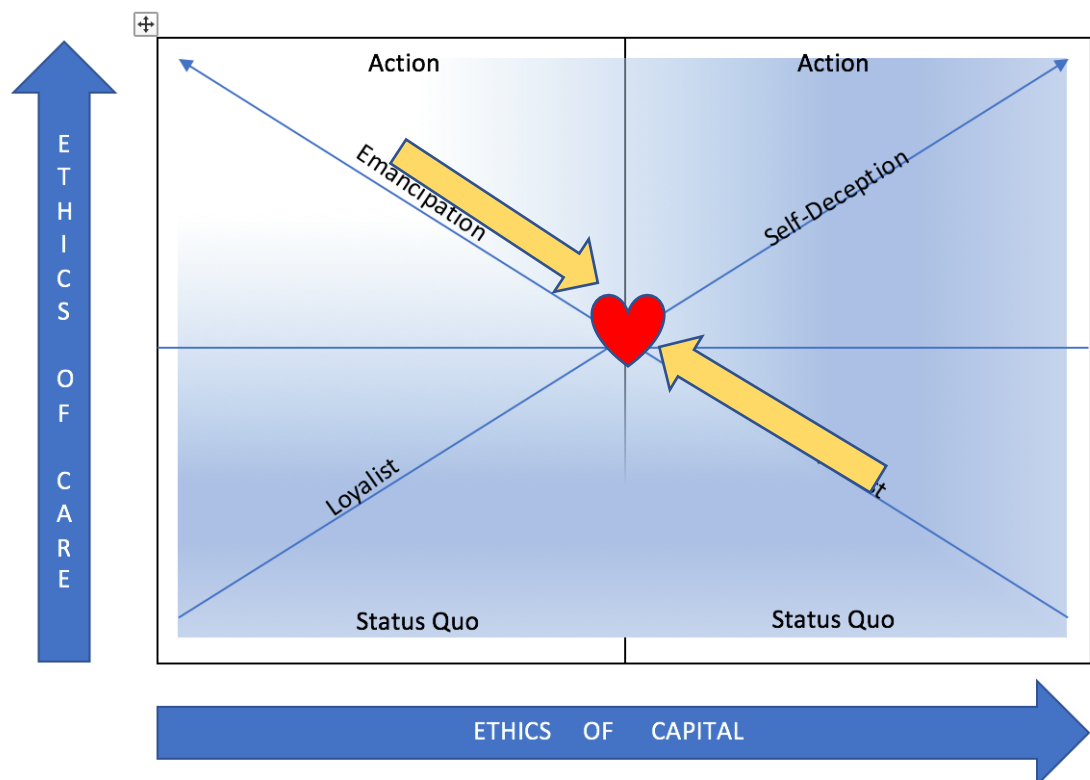
Figure 4.9*Shirley's Fast Pitch—The Multiplier Effect*

Note. Figure created by participant; used with permission per consent form.

“Data around access to capital hasn’t changed in 20 years because of structural barriers.” Shirley’s pitch, like her tone, was unapologetic. Racism and sexism are the problem and we need to acknowledge it and fix it. Their pitch, unlike others, had little fluff and aired on the side of brevity. The multiplier effect they outlined points to data evidencing that fund managers do give preference to people that look like them, and that behavior can work in favor of increasing diversity when women and people of color are in charge of allocating capital. Furthermore, diverse teams yield higher returns, another well-known data point that was touched on by Abel, in his presentation as well. Steve Ballmer, a well-known multi-billionaire and owner of the Los Angeles Clippers has progressive leanings and Shirley has had the opportunity to sit with him in an advisory capacity. Her goal is to gain his support for the Innovation Fund so that others will join him from the corporate and philanthropic sectors.

Figure 4.10

Shirley’s Emancipatory Action Map



When I first met Shirley at the convening event in September of 2019, I quickly realized how kind and authentic she was in her demeanor. That kindness cannot be mistaken for weakness. To most people, the idea of raising 100 million dollars sounds daunting, if not just ridiculous. To Shirley, it was just another NASA:

We need a carrot and a stick, the hard questions can shame them, Prop 209 is a way to opt out of making changes- even though it's their duty to put money where there is a highest return, but the real place with the highest return is with diversity, we can demonstrate that they are investing against their interests.

She may not be the astronaut on this mission, but she has top secret clearance and access to capital and with her training as a systems-engineer, it is safe to assume the odds are on her side.

Sophia's Finance for the Many

The Communist

"I thought I would die at the age of 40 and so I planned my life around it." Sophia's family fled Chile in 1974, arriving in the United States seeking asylum from the political unrest that threatened her family. Her father was an outspoken critic of the regime, making Chile unsafe, the only home that Sophia had ever known. She was 14 and before her world was completely disrupted, she fantasized about moving to "Valparaiso, the city of my dreams, and my father's birthplace." There, she would live independently in her own apartment because, as she explained, "when I watched television I used to be fascinated by the term apartment because it always showed people living on their own." Later in life, she would not only live in apartments, she would own them as well. Although her father was supportive of her independence, "what that really meant was that as long as I got married and had children, I could attend college." As a girl, in Chile, she could not venture far without a chaperone, nor ride bikes or just play in the streets. In the United States, her prospects would change and as refugees, her

family's plan had been to work and save money for when they would return home. She started working to contribute to that savings at 15 years of age. Sophia's passion for wealth-building for women was present early in her life, prior to attending college. In her early 20s, she became a Certified Financial Planner, in the midst of her social justice work around immigration and political asylum. "Understanding how capitalism was the driving force and being a communist, I wanted to understand it. I was able to develop products and services that were focused on women."

One Suitcase

Sophia started a dollar-a-day savings challenge to help women save and invest. Her definition of capital involved "being able to have assets that duplicate." In Chile, her family had had a comfortable life, a home, and many belongings that were all lost. Similar to many other refugees' stories, they had to escape in secret, and crafted an elaborate plan involving a contrived story of her parents' separation and a much-needed family holiday. "My father got a vacation visa and we hid all of our favorite photos in our clothes and we were only allowed one vacation sized suitcase."

There is an undefinable anguish in that sort of loss, the inability to ever go home. Sophia would never be able to replace what had been taken from her family but she was still determined to establish her independence, despite the challenges she faced being a Latina in the United States. It was not long after she became a financial planner that she realized a college education might fuel her goals further. Her first experience in higher education started when she earned a full scholarship to Occidental College, where she majored in psychology. "I was asked repeatedly by White girls to just go back to wherever I was from" and the psychology department only had one professor of color and there was little diversity on the campus. After

one year, Sophia left, unwilling to accept the racism and xenophobia she was encountering on a daily basis. Fortunately, after a series of fortunate events, she was accepted to California State University Los Angeles, where she graduated with honors with a Bachelors in Psychology. She immediately attended graduate school in Santa Barbara, earning a Masters in Human and Organizational Development from Fielding Graduate University. “I was accepted to the PhD program and did all the coursework, but life got in the way and I was unable to complete my dissertation.” By then, Sophia had overcome an insurmountable amount of challenges in her life as a refugee, a woman, a person of color and a lesbian. She never lost focus on the value of accumulating wealth. She started purchasing real estate early in life, sometimes refurbishing old properties and selling them and other times keeping the real estate to generate rental income. Sophia launched and ran her own businesses ranging from making and selling jewelry to taking consulting contracts with businesses and cities in need of her organizational development skills. By all standards, Sophia had achieved the American dream several times over, against all odds, with one vacation-sized suitcase.

Social Entrepreneur

Sophia’s Fast Pitch (Figure 4.11) built on her long-held desire to create paths towards economic resiliency for women and People of Color.

Figure 4.11*Sophia's Fast Pitch—What is Social Impact*

Note. Figure created by participant; used with permission per consent form.

When I met Sophia, I was looking for meaningful projects, after having taken off a couple of years to work on my doctorate and escape the rat race I had found myself in. She was engaging. The vision she had created for the small nonprofit she ran in South Los Angeles was bold. The founding CEO had passed away after 25 years and she had joined as an interim consultant to save the organization from becoming insolvent. They needed a new CEO and the prospects of getting top talent were not high, given the meager salary that was being offered. As the interim consultant, Sophia knew that there was potential for the organization to reinvent itself. She was no stranger to creating something from virtually nothing, and she enjoyed the challenge. She took the job of CEO, under the condition that she would be able to use her entrepreneurial skills to expand the organization's revenue sources. I had come along in her third year and by that time she had managed to launch a \$53 million development project with a goal

of building wealth in South Los Angeles for organizations and residents. I was in. With my doctoral research about driving more capital towards social good, our visions were aligned. The Coalition on Economic Resiliency (CoER) was the product of our partnership. “Having things like CoER, where I can talk about economics and social justice, I feel like the space allows me to make a difference.”

With her finance background, Sophia is not a traditional nonprofit executive. She has grown frustrated with all the politics of panhandling for a good cause. Instead, she focuses on creating investable strategies for resilience. Her Fast Pitch was about creating a social enterprise that would solve for the problem of debt as an obstacle to wealth building. Sophia’s passion around this particular issue is palpable. Her father used to tell her, “without property, you are nothing.” If women can save money, invest and own property, they will have power. Given all the structural barriers of redlining and other racist policies enacted in the course of America’s history, people of color are at a disadvantage. Sophia wants to change that through the creation of a social enterprise that forgives the debt of those unfairly impacted. The business model would capitalize on the debt of people more economically advantaged but they too, would benefit from lowered costs and a path towards debt freedom.

At the end of the Fast Pitches, I conducted a poll and asked two questions:

1. Which pitch do you think was most impactful to building economic resilience?
2. Which pitch would you be most likely to dedicate time, talent or resources to?

Sophia’s pitch gained the most votes for both questions. Clearly, debt alleviation was something that everyone could relate to. During the breakout sessions and dialogue that occurred between the fast pitch presentations, Sophia questioned a peer’s comment on why we keep knocking capitalism. “People in the finance industry aren’t always in the nonprofit space and it’s hard to

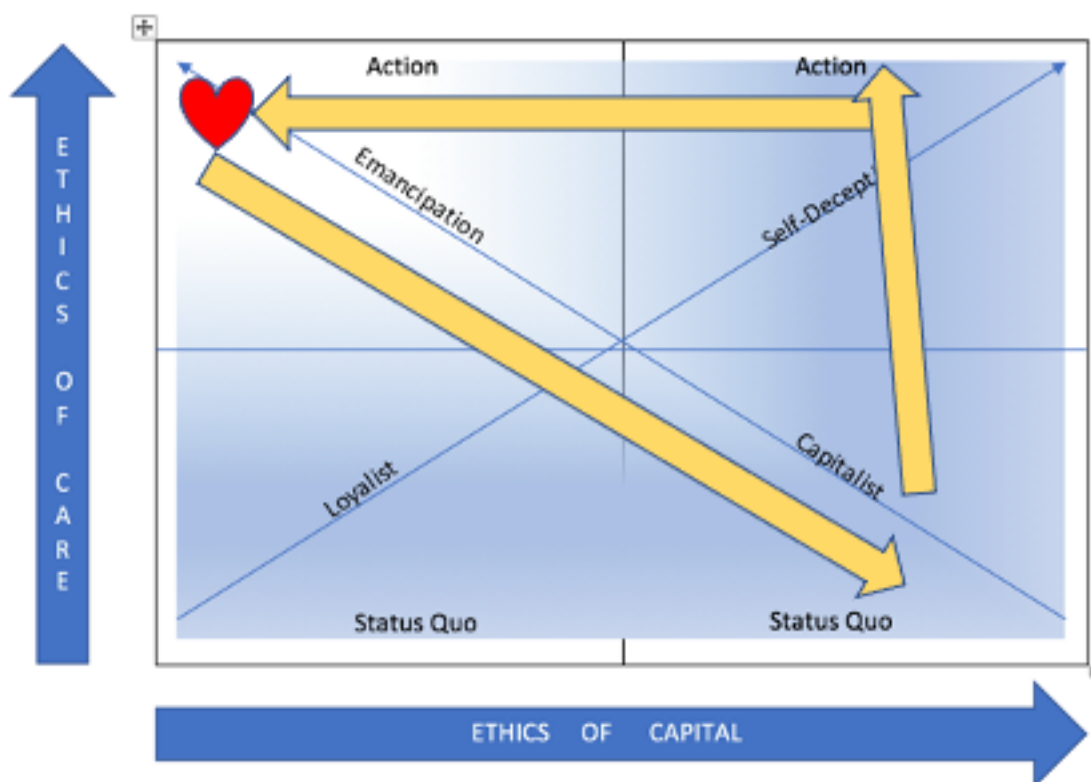
have these conversations. I believe this is the moment to have an impact. It's a good opportunity to move from me, me, me to us."

Emancipatory Action Map— Sophia's Super Loop

Sophia's Emancipatory Action Map is shown in Figure 4.12. Her super loop represents the amount of effort she puts into understanding capitalism and finance as a means to advancing equity for women and people of color. She knows that most of the activities she has participated in were innately unequal, but she stayed the course, often in the hopes of learning how to use it against an oppressive capitalist system.

Figure 4.12

Sophia's Emancipatory Action Map



For all the enthusiasm she has around her Fast Pitch, Sophia is acutely aware that it will not solve the problem of capitalism. Her upbringing, as a political refugee, make it hard for her to

forget the plight of others, but success in the United States, meant becoming a capitalist that owned property and had assets. As a self-described communist, she has no real love for *capitalism*, but she will use it as a weapon against those who prefer not to share their wealth through the creation of smart social enterprises that have social impact and might even, somehow, replace *capitalism* altogether.

Interlude: A Historical Moment

“I can’t breathe, sir”

—Manuel Ellis (as quoted in Baker, 2020, para. 10)

Before I venture into the final chapter of this study, it is necessary to provide a short reflection on the historical moments of 2020 that have swirled around myself and the participants as we finished this work. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 to be a global pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020). The Coronavirus is inarguably one of the world’s most remarkable disasters. Historically, it is a dark moment in time, an incredibly telling aisle in the halls of humanity. Humanity has faced other remarkable challenges that bear similarities in how they especially ravage poor and marginalized populations compared to the rich and privileged classes. As early data are being gathered, African Americans are on full display as the sacrificial lambs of the epidemic, disproportionately infected and, dying in Milwaukee, New Orleans, Detroit, and other hot spots across the nation (Brooks, 2020; A. Johnson & Buford, 2020). Although this dissertation has addressed the complexities of *capitalism*, GST and EAR, there is nothing complicated about the higher mortality rate of African Americans from COVID-19. Indigenous populations are also suffering at disproportionate rates in states like Arizona where only 6% of the population is Native American but they represent 20% of the death toll (Arizona Department of Health Services, 2020).

This is not news. Blacks and Native Americans have long suffered the impacts of historical colonialism and genocide, kindly referred to today as structural racism. COVID-19 has challenged *capitalism*. Wikipedia already reads of the Great Lockdown and Coronavirus Recession, exceeding that of the Great Depression or the Global Financial Crisis (Thompson, 2020). In Los Angeles, where my study takes place, rent and mortgage payments have been officially suspended for several months due to shelter in place orders and increasing unemployment rates stemming from a complete economic standstill (Fine, 2020). Unemployment was projected to hit nearly 32% by May of 2020, exceeding Los Angeles' unemployment rate during the global financial crisis in 2010 of 13.4% (Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation , 2020).

Capitalism has been backed into a corner, and it is out for blood, literally. Policy makers, celebrities, and evangelists have called on Americans to sacrifice their lives in order to restart the economy (Bailey, 2020; Corn, 2020). The \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law in March 2020 and a second \$484 billion-dollar package, in April 2020.

The first round of stimulus dollars barely made a dent in assuaging the damage wrought by COVID-19 (Litvan et al., 2020). Where is all this capital going? Some \$669 billion has been earmarked for the Paycheck Protection Program (Weisul, 2020). These funds were an effort to float small businesses through the lockdown and salvage American jobs. A meager amount of stimulus dollars is being deposited directly into the hands of families, in the form a one-time payment determined by factors including prior annual income and citizenship status. The maximum payout is \$1,200 per individual with an additional \$500 per child 16 years of age and younger (Bernard & Lieber, 2020). Unemployment benefits also received a boost through the

first stimulus package, increasing the weekly benefit by \$600 through the end of July. I am a consultant serving several nonprofit organizations and philanthropic entities. Since the Great Lockdown began in California in mid-March, the prognosis has been clear: people exploited by poverty and people of color are bearing the brunt of this pandemic.

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a Black man, died at the hands of a White police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Floyd was pinned to the ground, with a police officer's knee to his neck for eight minutes and 48 seconds. He and surrounding witnesses called out for help. That help never came and Floyd died of "mechanical asphyxia" (Robles & Burch, 2020, para. 6). His death was a tipping point, amidst tensions induced by Coronavirus and the ineptness of President Donald J. Trump. If Trump's rise to the White House, was a "white-lash" (Ross, 2017, para. 1), then the global Black Lives Matter movement that has been ignited is the response. As of June 2020, there have been world-wide protests calling for racial and social justice for oppressed populations globally. A campaign to defund the police in cities across the United States have been set in motion by activists and policy makers (Kaba, 2020). Confederate statues are being removed around the country (Fisher, 2020) and Juneteenth is now being recognized as a paid holiday by Nike (Brown, 2020). It feels like a new day.

Between the outbreak of COVID-19 and world-wide protests sparked by George Floyd's death, several of those who participated in this study, presented their solutions for driving more capital towards social good and increasing economic resiliency through the Fast Pitch for Solutions. The current wealth gap between Blacks and Whites is exemplified by the vast difference in mean household wealth—for Whites at \$933,700 and Blacks at \$138,200 (Economist, 2019). COVID-19 will only exacerbate this economic harm. In the dozens of webinars and Zoom meetings I have been privy to in 2020, policy makers and funders offer little

by way of solutions or innovations. In a few months, when the moratorium on rents is over and the stimulus checks have been totally expended on food and basic necessities, many Americans will have lost their lives, their homes, and any hope of their families recovering economically in their lifetimes.

When we launched the Coalition on Economic Resiliency in September of 2019, we were well aware of a pending recession along with the threat of increasing natural disasters and domestic terrorism. As I reached out to the participants for the Fast Pitch to gauge their willingness and ability to continue our engagement, I was struck by their commitment to move forward. All agreed that we need solutions now more than ever and, while the Fast Pitch would be no magic bullet, it was a step in the right direction. While death tolls climbed around the world and in our own city of Los Angeles, I worked with each participant, interviewing them and challenging them to be disruptive and vulnerable with their strategies. Each of them shared their stories and concerns openly. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to spend the first part of the Great Lockdown on Zoom and phone calls with this inspiring group of people. They fed my spirit daily as the news grew grimmer and anxieties increased over how long this would last and how bad the situation might become. We still do not know. What we do know, is that we need to advance social good and shift capital into the hands of those who need it most. The case studies herein describe how these particular individuals worked to emancipate their own practices.

Chapter V: Influencing Capitalists Attitudes—The Results

Overview

This qualitative study employed EAR as the primary approach to engaging a group of venture capitalists and finance professionals in activities and dialogues around influencing capitalist attitudes to drive more capital towards social good. EAR, introduced by Paolo Freire (1970), was a tool for liberation. This praxis is focused on raising critical consciousness using dialogical action. This study identifies *capitalism* as a form of oppression that is contributing to a newly developed ethics of capital (a term introduced in this study). Ethics of capital justifies the prioritization of the accumulation of wealth over any meaningful social contracts that secure health, housing, and other forms of social good for the general population. *Value²* is the theory of action I have outlined to describe how dialogue is used to influence the attitudes of the participants in the study. *Value²* uses EAR's questioning approach to influence attitudes and catalyze an awakening of critical consciousness to facilitate dialogues around a new social contract, one that speaks to Powell's (2019) fully inclusive "we." This final chapter provides my analysis of the case studies presented in Chapter IV. The case studies present the unique lived experiences of each participant and how those experiences shaped their engagement in the Fast Pitch for Solutions. There were also common themes between certain participants and stark contrasts. In this chapter, I will spend some time discussing the common themes and contrasts and how they might inform future activist research, practice and scholarship.

Emancipatory Maps, Dissonance, and New Knowledge

I developed the Emancipatory Action Map as a tool for capturing the epistemological process catalyzed by dialogical action. More simply put, it is a visualization of how we experience shifts in thinking through conversations and actions. It portrays how we either adhere

to belief systems that maintain our status quo or move away from them through the development of new beliefs, which involve new actions and behaviors to validate the emerging new beliefs.

Shifting our beliefs and behaviors is not a linear process for most. As with any significant behavior change, there is regression back to the familiar. The lines that segment the map represent fault lines of dissonance, where critical consciousness might be awakened, spurring the intended shifts away from the status quo. Along these fault lines are descriptive terms that help to understand the reinforcing thoughts and behaviors that maintain the status quo, such as acting as a capitalist, maintaining beliefs and behaviors that validate capitalism as an absolute, whether you like it or not. Loyalist thinking and behavior occur when you believe the status quo is not only absolute, but socially acceptable, and you will defend it in its entirety, inclusive of all its *isms*.

Self-deception is not as bad as it sounds; it happens because of dissonance and in direct response to the awakening of critical consciousness, which may be so uncomfortable that our mind enacts somewhat irrational tactics to drive us back towards the familiarity of the status quo (Wergin, 2020). Emancipation is actively engaging in thoughts and actions that deny the status quo its false autonomy over beliefs and behaviors. Using my *Value*² theory of action, the map charts the course of how dialogues with participants paired with their correlating actions of developing and presenting Fast Pitches for Solutions resulting in the creation of new knowledge. This new knowledge was my aspiration for this study: influencing capitalist attitudes to drive more capital towards social good.

The question of how to drive more capital towards social good from a GST perspective is extraordinarily complex. It is a “System 2” (Kahneman, 2011, p. 13) sort of problem. System 2 thinking, as Kahneman explained, is critical in nature. When triggered, this type of thinking may

prompt cognitive dilemmas, self-deception, and other psychological responses within individuals as they attempt to either make sense of a given situation or to avoid it, due to its complexity.

Wergin (2020) described it as “constructive disorientation” (p. 57), a state that occurs when there is a “disconnect between the current and a desired state, accompanied by a sense of efficacy that one is capable of dealing with that disconnect” (p. 57). In Figure 3.6, I depicted the theoretical elements of EAR and GST that I used in concert with *Value*², my theory of action for this study. Those theoretical elements will serve to better understand the resulting emancipatory maps for each participant as they—and I—navigated their path away from the status quo of an ethics of capital towards an ethics of care. Common themes and contrasts were found in how participants rationalized their problem-solving, how they responded to the isomorphism between systems operating within *capitalism*, and how they experienced their own agency in relationship to the problem of driving more capital towards social good.

Equifinality—Many Paths, One Destination

Both Freire (1970) and von Bertalanffy (1968) understood the significance of how systems intersect and relate, especially when considering problem-posing and problem-solving. Sol was very direct in his comments around this issue, stating that he could not fix his mind to solve for the overall problem of capitalism, but he could think tactically about specific, smaller problems within the status quo, knowing that the larger problem still existed. Sol’s Equity Lookbook spoke to the duality that Freire (1970) described as existing in a society where “to be, is to be like and to be like, is to be like the oppressor” (p. 48). The Equity Lookbook was developed as a tool for using the lived experiences of Latina immigrants and women of color as the basis for education and inspiration. The equifinality of the Fast Pitch was purposeful.

I worked with each participant to identify what problem around driving more capital towards social good they were most passionate about. Then we discussed why they were passionate about it and how they intended to solve that problem. Once they identified their solution, I asked more questions about how they planned to advance that solution given the obstacles presented by the status quo. For example, Abel was most excited by the proposition of establishing himself and a select group of women and people of color within his network as successful owners and managers of large amounts of capital in the private equity space. This accomplishment would allow Abel to model the success he wanted younger women and people of color to see and strive towards. Also, he believed that if he achieved a billionaire status, he could affect further change to the status quo through how he deployed his wealth and influence.

Shirley's problem-solving was similar, in that her solution also centered on accumulation of capital by a select number of women and people of color in her network. Both Shirley and Abel discussed the data that pointed towards higher returns on investments when diversity was a factor. Undergirding their presentations was the idea of investing and prioritizing other people's economic resilience (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013). There was a "scalpel approach" to their problem-solving, as both echoed a belief that disrupting the system of capitalism too broadly or swiftly seemed risky. Abel believed this risk arose from the lack of a better solution or economic system to replace capitalism. Shirley saw the risk directly related to the potential harm that disruption would cause, disproportionately impacting women and people of color—reminding me of the adage that when America catches a cold, Black people get pneumonia (T. L. Freeman, 2020).

Sophia's solution was broader, as it impacted a larger population of disadvantaged people burdened by debt, but her adherence to the use of *capitalism* to solve the problems caused by

capitalism was consistent with Abel's and Shirley's. Sophia's solution involved the establishment of social enterprise that would buy and sell debt, much like other existing businesses in that market. The difference in her social enterprise proposition was that it sought to deal with social impact by forgiving the debt of those most burdened and only turning a profit where the least amount of harm is found. "Ordinary people who become aware of injustice all face crossroads where they must decide how to respond. At such points people choose whether to become courageous resisters or to take a different path" (Thalhammer et al., 2007, p. 48).

As each participant grappled with the inherent injustices of capitalism, their solutions were largely predicated on their place and role within capitalism. Abel, Shirley, and Sophia, by their own admissions, have mastered the language and art of capitalism. They have spent their lives infiltrating a system that they know was not designed for their success as women and people of color. Each of them shared their understanding of how systemic racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and classism, all intersected with the system of capitalism. They each offered examples of how the prevalence and homogeneity of White, male, straight capitalists continues to sustain all the aforementioned isms that they daily endure. The homogeneity of capitalism is inherently risk-averse. That risk aversion allows for the continued support of a status quo defined by these isms. Abel, Shirley, and Sophia presented plans that challenged this risk-aversion by encouraging investments into heterogeneous people and populations. As Abel and Shirley expressed their own aversions to the risk of disrupting capitalism too much or too soon, their presentations were advocating for existing capitalists to indulge in it. Abel clearly understood the boldness in that request, as he articulated that discussing inclusion and diversity in his presentation was outside of his comfort zone. It was really outside of the comfort zone of capitalism. Shirley was less concerned about this and was completely unapologetic in her

solution. She addressed this issue in our discussions, commenting on how men of color in her field fare better than women of color because they are men. Abel, Shirley, and Sophia challenge the status quo of capitalism daily through their coveted positions as stewards of large amounts of capital and as *capitalists* of color operating within a largely White, male system. Their place, albeit at the margins of this system, was secured through their ability to understand it and navigate their careers along the fault-lines of the many isms they have encountered. This meant managing their own risk. Each of them told of specific moments in their careers when they had to prove their worth by performing according to the expectations of their superiors. If they wanted to combat isms, they had to use stealth—or jeopardize their hard-won careers. Their meritocratic approach to problem-solving reflected this learned behavior of tempered or even hidden tactics of affecting social good through diverting capital.

Sol and Jakob had markedly different processes in the development and presentation of their solutions. Although Sol is also a person of color, as defined by his Mexican heritage, he admits to being from a privileged and educated class. Jakob also acknowledges his privilege and education. Both Sol and Jakob are of Jewish descent as well, further coloring their world-views. As men of privilege, they have operated in the homogenous White, male landscape of *capitalism* more easily than most. Their lived experiences differ from Abel's, Shirley's, or Sophia's in having experienced a sense of belonging within the ivory towers of *capitalism* where others are acutely aware of their status as unwelcome visitors or intruders. While Abel, Shirley, and Sophia have spent their lifetimes seeking inclusion, Sol and Jakob long for a release from the expectations that abound when one is born to some degree into privilege and power. Sol's quest for capital lay in his desire to ferry his family off to a tiny island, where they will live away from all the isms of society at large. He has little faith in *capitalism's* ability to shift towards an ethics

of care. He sees his Equity Look Book as a tool for salvation. Undocumented immigrant women have no upward mobility. The solution Sol provided was driving more educational capital towards Latinas who have few points of relation in an educational system that also reflects the neoliberal homogeneity of *capitalism*. Sol believed that they needed to see themselves in the literature and imagery used to encourage their self-efficacy. Similar to Abel, Shirley, and Sophia, Sol still sought to convince *capitalists* that if they invested in his solution, they might capitalize on its novelty.

This idea of capitalizing on novelty is a way to decrease the perceived risk of investment. Novelty is a way to mask the intention of social impact, which is also synonymous with risk, as social impact investments have not yet gained the trust that traditional investments have maintained in *capitalism*. Novel ideas, like making pink nail polish as a benefit to cancer research, and a great way to sell nail polish to a sympathetic market, will not threaten homogenous neoliberal *capitalism*. *Capitalists* may benefit while also supporting social good, within reason. Sol and Sophia had solutions that sought to benefit marginalized groups of economically challenged populations. Abel and Shirley advanced solutions that could have a trickle-down effect, first benefiting *capitalists* representing diversity, which would eventually increase the overall access to wealth for diverse communities. All of them used the carrot-and-stick approach, promising *capitalism* a lucrative return and evidence pointing to the benefits of diversity as a counter to the perceived risk of non-White, non-male investment opportunities that either overtly or covertly hint at social impact or social good. These compromises were portrayed in the emancipatory maps. The willing or unwilling adherence to capitalism, the attempts at emancipating from those capitalist's tenets towards solutions that imbue an ethics of care, was then projected into necessary practices of self-deception as a means

to operating successfully within *capitalism*. The theme of unwillingness will be further explored in my recommendations as this attitude offers activist scholarship continued openings for disruption and raising of critical consciousness in advancing positive social change.

Jakob, as the only White male, gave a pointedly different presentation. His solution, like the others', was peer-focused—but his peers were White capitalists operating in C-suites. Jakob's vantage point was a different position from the other participants within the *capitalist* system. As he contemplated his problem-solving and solution-making, he was not constricted by thoughts of riskiness or losing his place within the system of *capitalism*. Jakob understood that the status quo was set up to benefit him as a White male and that his actions in advancing solutions to drive more capital towards social good would have little impact to his privilege. This immunity also bothered him. While the other participants carefully vied for increased diversity and inclusion, while not endangering the social engineering they used to attain access to capital, Jakob was fiercely trying to unlock the gate to the ivory towers in which he had always resided. His solution of bringing equity to the C-suite was about the C-suite of Whiteness, which is most embodied throughout corporate America. As he worked to understand how to articulate his intent, Jakob went through an exercise of critically understanding Whiteness and toxic masculinity and how those ideologies cannot co-exist with equity. In our discussions, we likened this to there not leaving any oxygen in the room for equity. His approach to problem-solving involved his acute awareness of the pervasiveness of *capitalism*. The other participants were also acutely aware of this, but they are not in the same position as Jakob. The other participants treated the pervasiveness of *capitalism* and all its comorbidities like a field of landmines, that are impossible to remove but may be maneuvered around. Jakob, in contrast, is a landmine among landmines, which is still daunting. He wondered aloud how he might give voice to the problem

of his own White, male privilege without inadvertently causing harm to those still carefully trying to make their way through the field. His solution revolved around establishing an imperative for understanding and advancing equity from the upper echelons of *capitalism*, the C-suite. There was no carrot, just stick. Jakob wanted to create oxygen in the room for equity, which would allow for more capital to be driven towards social good.

Responding to Isomorphy

Isomorphy is a catalyst for cognitive dilemmas. Learning is sometimes described as filling a glass full of liquid and once a student has reached their limit, the glass overflows, unable to hold all of that which is being poured. If we begin with Jakob's response to the isomorphism of *capitalism*, he was often overwhelmed, by his own admission, by the commodification of innumerable aspects of society by *capitalism*—so much so that his presentation introduced this isomorphy of isms and systems as the problem that needed to be solved in order to advance equity and increase the flow of capital to non-White, non-male groups. The other participants, Abel, Shirley, Sophia, and Sol were far more tactical. Their presentations, unlike Jakob's, focused on specific areas like reinstating affirmative action, debt alleviation, diversification of private equity practitioners, and inspiring and educating Latina immigrants. Their role as tacticians was practiced due to their ineffable ability to maintain their place within a capitalist system that is largely hostile towards them as women and people of color. Isomorphy presents a chicken-an-egg dilemma. If the problems of racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, classism, and other isms are all co-existing within the prevailing system of *capitalism*, which should be solved first?

The attractiveness of *capitalism* as a system is in the meritocratic belief that if everyone has equitable access to capital, everyone has the ability to be capitalists. This belief seemed to

hold true for all participants. The real problem with *capitalism*, was not *capitalism* at all, but rather these other systems of isms that were problematizing *capitalism*. The re-regulation of *capitalism* via financial institutions and systems has also been posed (Benner & Pastor, 2012) as a means to creating more access to capital for those on the margins. Each participant experienced this dissonance differently.

Abel's perspective revolved around his background as a Mexican-American, raised in a lower income family in an underserved area of East Los Angeles. He agreed that income inequality was definitely a growing problem in our communities. As we discussed this issue, his focus turned towards solutions that were based on an individual's capacity to understand and practice good financial behaviors, such as saving and investing. This idea of providing financial literacy and education to communities of color has long been a popular programmatic component supported by philanthropy. It does not address the systemic isms that continue to limit communities of color and their ability to access banks and other capital, once they have become financially literate and stable.

Shirley and Sol had similar responses to this issue, acknowledging the complexity of multiple isms at play. They both chose to see the mountain of isms as insurmountable, given the lack of willingness or motivation of the status quo, homogenous, White, male *capitalists*, to release or share their power. Shirley understood that focusing on a strategy that included a broad policy change, like overturning Proposition 209, was critical to opening up avenues for capital for women and people of color. Sol did not want to waste efforts focusing on a status quo that is not sympathetic to the needs of people at the margins, and preferred to intentionally provide support and education to a specific population of Latinas, whose potential to grow within the status quo might be realized, if properly fostered.

Sophia has a graduate degree in organizational development and a firm grasp of systems-change and the issue of complexity related to whole-systems, open systems, equifinality and isomorphy. Creating strategies to address these multiple isms is a practice that she willingly supports and engages in regularly in her role as a CEO of a community-based organization. Ultimately, though, Sophia believes that economic development opportunities for women and people of color are the most critical to further social good. Mastering *capitalism* through wealth accumulation is the best way forward in addressing the isomorphy that *capitalism* presents.

All five participants in this study focused on the populations with whom they felt most aligned. Jakob focused on how to affect change amongst White, males in C-suites, while the other participants sought to affect change amongst women and people of color. I challenged each of them to consider how they might incorporate strategies that impact the status quo more directly, given the fact that the majority of capital is tightly controlled by a system that is structured to deny access to women and people of color. I encouraged them to provide personal context to their presentations and exemplify how they, especially those who were women and/or people of color, experienced isms throughout their careers.

Everyone agreed that their lived experiences were valid, but there was hesitancy in sharing these. The hesitancy related to the shared understanding that the status quo did not want to hear about their lived experiences and the structural problems of isms that limit certain groups ability to full participate in *capitalism*. The status quo operates under an ethics of capital, concerned only with issues of growth and wealth accumulation. There was a resistance to expressing vulnerability, as it might negatively impact the participant's fast pitch and their overall reputation, professionally. This too, will be further explored under recommendations for future activist scholarship.

Jakob and Abel made the most substantial changes to their power point presentations resulting from this area of discussion. Jakob's presentation was most prescient, offering a broad focus represented in his mapping diagram that touched on power paradigms, implicit biases and conscious capital as examples. Abel took steps to include the word *inclusion* in his presentation, providing an additional dimension to his business model that had largely gone unspoken in his previous presentations. Sol, Shirley, and Sophia experienced shifts that were expressed in other areas that will be highlighted in the next sections.

Agency and Action

It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves. This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis. (Freire, 1970, p. 65)

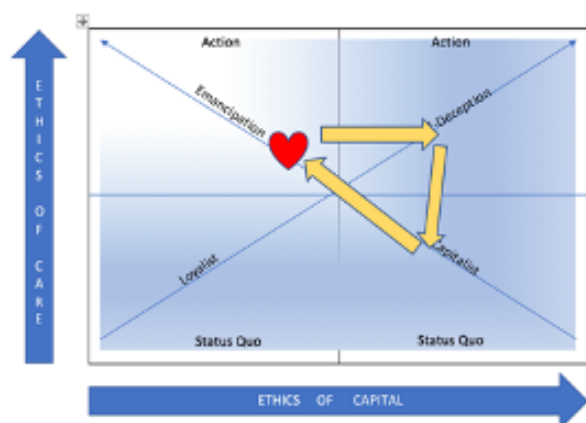
Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Bandura et al., 1997). Agency is defined as “the capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The participants in the study have exhibited high levels of self-efficacy, given their academic and professional attainments. Critical race theory points to the lack of agency felt by individual's in an oppressive system (Robinson, 2004). I asked each participant if they believed they had the ability to advance their solution successfully. The emancipatory maps created for each participant provide an understanding of how their capitalist attitudes were influenced throughout this study.

Figure 5.1 is a snapshot of all participant maps. The yellow arrows provide my interpretation of the pattern of thoughts catalyzed through the dissonance of critical thinking.

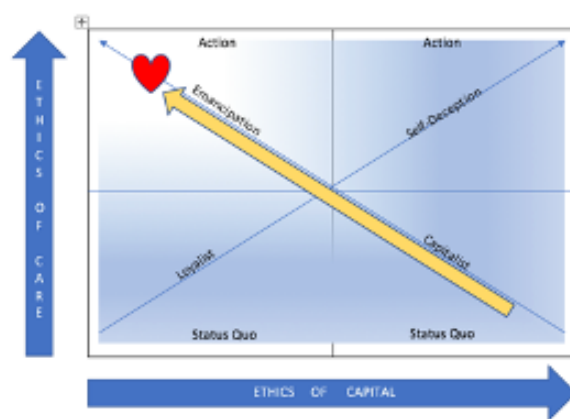
Figure 5.1

Completed Emancipatory Action Maps of Study Participants

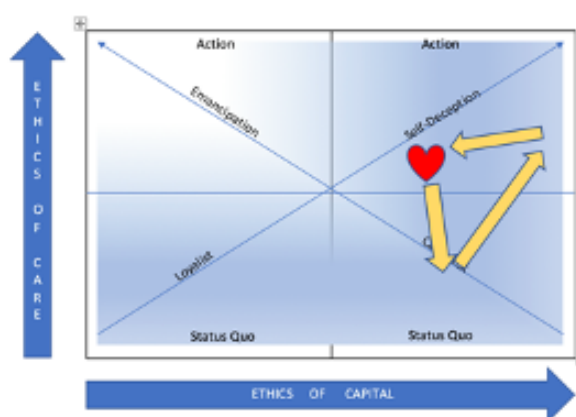
Sol's Loop of Resistance



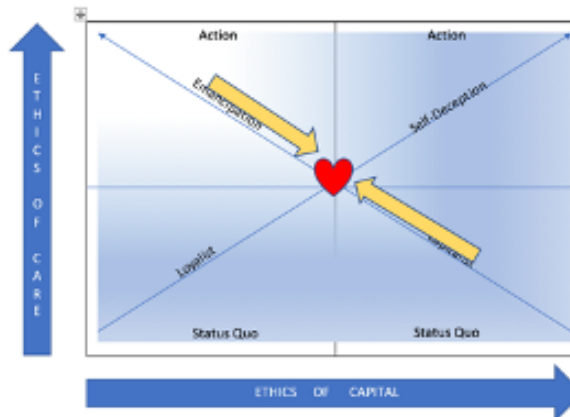
Jakob's One Track Mind



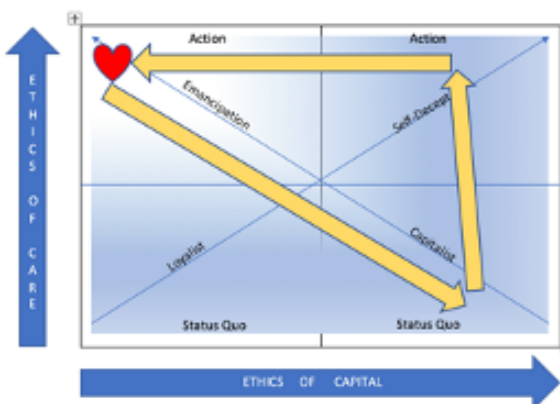
Abel's Faith in the System



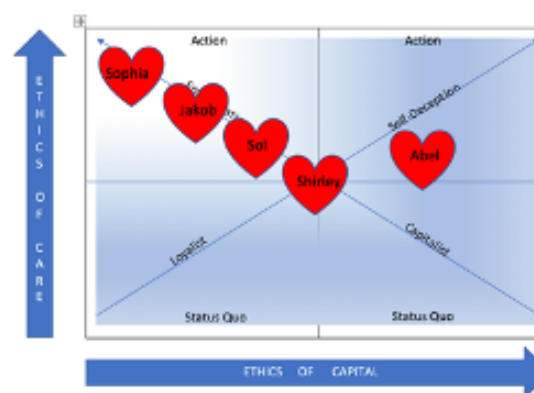
Shirley's Squeeze



Sophia's Super Loop



Collective Map of Participants



The participants in this study, likely represent the top 25 % of earners in the United States. This means that their household probably earns \$150,000 or more annually (Kochar, 2018), given their professions and executive roles. This is an important factor when discussing agency. If money equals power then the participants in this study, comparatively, are some of the most powerful people in American society. “How can I dialogue, if I am afraid of being displaced, the mere possibility causing me torment and weakness?” asked Freire (1970, p. 90). This fear of displacement adds to the increased need to mitigate risk that was observed throughout this study.

Collectively, all the participants cycled their problem-solving through *capitalist* frameworks. This exemplifies how the status quo has effectively limited their agency in designing solutions. Ideally, moving towards an ethics of care would find more activities (yellow arrows) operating within the upper quadrants, which was only accomplished by one participant. The axis of arrows that section the quadrants into eight areas serve as fault lines. Sol’s map offers insights into his areas of dissonance, which occur as he makes sense of his Equity Look Book solution. While spurring action in its development, his agency in its effectiveness remains reliant on the status quo and his struggle to see alternative methods of scale. For Jakob and Shirley, their patterns were more linear and less convoluted by any ideas of *capitalism* being the bounded framework for action. They both experienced a resolute use of *capitalism* and a sense of agency that was different than the others. Capitalism exists, and they operate in its framework, but they will not be confined to it in thinking nor in action.

I do not intend to simplify the complex nature of each participant’s belief system or sense-making in this study. Rather, I am seeking to differentiate the subtleties inherent between the self-efficacy of individuals to develop and execute ideas versus their perceived sense of

power (agency) to change the status quo. Shirley and Jakob projected a sense of power throughout this study. Their rationale for action did not require any substantial use of self-deception related to the status quo or *capitalism*. The other participants, Sol, Abel, and Sophia, experienced a shared conformity that merited, on their part, some belief in the merits of capitalism as a means to an end. The differences in agency and action between Shirley and Jakob stemmed from Jakob's belonging to the in-group of the White, male hegemony. Jakob's one-track mind is a product of his privilege as there is less risk in his actions. Shirley, as a woman of color, has no such privilege and while she was not one for self-deception, she was still constrained by her out-group status. I opened this section on agency and action with a quote from Freire about belief in oneself as a precursor to liberation. This study provided context for that quote as the participants, through their willingness to be engaged in this process, exhibited how necessary agency is to emancipation.

Epilogue—Returning to Conscientização

The case studies presented earlier focused on the profiles of participants and their relationship with capital and *capitalism*. Conscientização requires on-going reflection and dialogical action. I engaged each participant in a second follow-up discussion specifically around their Emancipatory Action Maps, which they had not previously seen. The responses and reactions were powerful. Through the shared reflection of their map, each person was able to deeply reflect on their own consciousness. The map acted like a key, unlocking participants' vulnerabilities and aspects of themselves that they had not fully grasped or named prior to our conversation. The part of the map that especially sparked these insights were the areas of self-deception and *capitalism*.

The Emancipatory Action Map is divided into four quadrants and within those quadrants are further sliced by what I refer to as *lines of dissonance*. These lines of dissonance and what happens as they are encountered, is how I contextualized each of the case studies. I am not a psychologist and this is not a study of how human beings respond to dissonance. I am an activist and a scholar and this is a study about how to influence capitalist attitudes, specifically to advance social good and social justice. To that end, each participant's acknowledgement of their unwilling role in perpetuating the harms of *capitalism* as a *capitalist*, was sobering. Abel is an unflappable individual. Of all the participants, he was the one who I perceived to spend the most time in the area of self-deception. Our discussion about this yielded a significant discovery for the two of us. Self-deception, at its most basic biological level, is a tool for self-preservation (Trivers, 2011). Abel defaults to this tool regularly as he spends an enormous amount of time interacting with people who might otherwise be hostile to a man with immigrant roots and darker skin.

The risk of losing a hard-won place at the *capitalist* table is so off-putting, that three of the five participants rely on self-deception as a means of self-preservation. Sophia was the most vulnerable in this regard, confronted with the harsh reality of having no control over the harms of *capitalism*, yet deeply embedded in its machinations. Her tears expressed the harm that she daily experiences because of *capitalism*. Self-deception is a coping mechanism in the face of unconscionable, sustained oppression. That coping mechanism has allowed them to survive and thrive in an otherwise hostile environment. Sol takes his self-development seriously. He viewed the map as yet another tool in his quest for true agency over his life and more so, the future agency of his son. This constructive disorientation (Wergin, 2020) and the self-efficacy in reconciling it, is not self-efficacy alone, but is predicated on rationalizations manifested through

self-deception. An example of this was given by Abel. He had a call from a business prospect. The prospect commented on a number of people in Abel's team with Latinx surnames. Abel, staying true to his well-maintained art of self-preservation, acknowledged the comment and encouraged the prospect to further research those individuals, as they were all extremely accomplished professionals. Even as Abel explained this encounter to me, he never used the words "racist" or "xenophobic," nor did he express being offended in any way—completely unflappable.

Jakob and Shirley did not default to self-deception regularly as a coping mechanism for *capitalism*. Among the study participants, Jakob and Shirley could be seen as two outliers or extremes, White male and Black female. The other participants were Latinx. This study was not about how *capitalists* of different cultural backgrounds in the United States respond to *capitalism*, but the findings certainly provided the basis for future research in that area. As a White male, Jakob agreed with me that his ability to take risks and feel less threatened are evident. Shirley acknowledged her lack of filters in general and that she was able to hold space for both her role as a *capitalist* and her belief in the harms of *capitalism*. Shirley does not experience the same kind of dissonance Sol, Abel, and Sophia experience as people of color. Perhaps, Black women have less need for self-deception because as Black capitalists, they are still so far from the in-group and cannot even pretend to rationalize any sense of belonging. Latinx, on the other hand, are arguably nearer to Whiteness, and have a different lived experience.

Influencing *capitalist* attitudes away from an ethics of capital towards an ethics of care requires conscientização. This awakening of critical conscience creates the space for further dialogue and further action towards the desired state. This epilogue of dialogue with the

participants felt like a supernova event, a catalytic moment occurring within an expansive universe, with impacts yet unseen.

Unfolding the Future—Recommendations for Activist Scholarship

This study allowed me to refine my praxis as a practitioner-researcher. What I learned from this approach to EAR was the relevance of affecting change upstream. The idea of emancipating *capitalists* from the ideology of *capitalism* gained merit as a result of this study. Resisting the status quo through bolder actions of protests, boycotts, and civil unrest should not be abandoned, but neither should the opportunity for dialogue. I would encourage activists and scholars to create safe, yet dynamic spaces for conversations that expand critical consciousness in ivory towers. This study provides an example of how to engage a cross-sector group of individuals around a common issue, like economic resilience, as a means to opening the door for deeper understanding and learning.

The *Value²* theory of action is a useful tool in facilitating dialogues that correlate well with the theoretical elements of EAR and GST. Listening, appreciating and valuing another person's experience of the world builds the trust needed to cross those fault-lines of dissonance and catalyze new thinking. As of this writing, Kendi's (2019) book, *How to Be an Antiracist* (2019), is currently sold out on Amazon's marketplace. This is exciting and relates to the relevance and urgency of this study and recommendations for further critical participatory action work. There is further work that I, as a practitioner-researcher will continue to advance. I am invigorated by the opportunity to continue building on the new knowledge experienced and created with participants in this study.

The knowledge created occurred in deeply personal ways and contributes to activist scholarship by representing the necessity and power of dialogical action in advancing social

change. This study focused on emancipating capitalists, an atypical approach, which is in short supply and exemplified in the demand for Kendi's (2019) work in this historical moment.

Although four of the five participants were women and/or people of color, this study addressed their identities as *capitalists*. Participating in this research challenged them to think more critically about their role in *capitalism*, how that role relates to their other beliefs about our social contracts, and of the problems of income inequality and systemic isms that problematize (and I would say define) *capitalism*. As I conclude this study, I want to share how each participant may build on the new knowledge they experienced as well as recommend how activist scholars and others may advance this work.

Dialogical Action and Experiencing New Knowledge

There were two ways in which participants experienced new knowledge during this study process: the first was through their own volition and the second was through one another. Sophia and Jakob created solutions that both are actively advancing, with Sophia being actively engaged in her own and Jakob's work. Sophia's model of social enterprise still relies heavily on capitalism and my role will be to continue to move her solution, activities, and beliefs, steadily towards an ethics of care, where *capitalism* is not a necessary evil. During our post-interview dialogue Sophia realized how much time she and others spend on trying to figure out how to advance social good, given all the constraints, "I wonder what the White people talk about!" It was an insight, an opening for future critical reflection. Jakob, in his realization of how little time White men, in ivory towers, spend talking about such matters, overflowed with constant awakenings of how isms are openly and discreetly experienced by those different from him. His new knowledge informed his solution of bringing that knowledge to the C-suite as a means for advancing equity.

Sol's Equity Look Book is a passion project, like many of his passion projects as an artist, leveraging capitalism to finance his pursuits. This time is different. He still believes that capitalism is the best course of action in scaling his educational tool for Latinas and other beneficiaries but he is open to different ideas and is actively looking for alternative strategies as he continues to add new episodes to his solution. Shirley learned that she might work across sectors to affect change, leveraging policy, philanthropy and correlating strategies to shed light on the specific barriers faced by fund managers of color and women. She also learned that social enterprising and social impact in finance might be newly defined and deployed meaningfully, despite its current lackluster attraction to *capitalists* and *capitalism*. She met herself at the intersection of being an unwelcome guest at the capitalist table and a woman of color with a belief in advancing social good. Our work together is on-going, as she is newly engaged in expanding efforts, conceptually and otherwise in overturning Proposition 209 and raising capital to fund women and people of color through a designated fund.

Abel was the lesser-known addition to this study. He was the only one who had not attended the September 2019 convening of the Coalition on Economic Resiliency. Yet, the dialogues and his presentation challenged his capitalist sensibilities. He wrestled with the discomfort of presenting inclusion and diversity as an advantage and a value in his business model. The new knowledge for Abel was that he could do this openly. His actions of presenting his start-up in this way was a critical step towards realizing his own agency. I have made a point to stay in contact with Abel, and hope to engage him (however limited that may be) in further opportunities to confidently reframe his work in private equity, so that he might fully realize his agency in affecting change. Sophia and Abel were in a dialogue group between presentations during the Fast Pitch session and challenged one another on their respective views of *capitalism*,

further influencing their attitudes. I will continue to apply the *Value²* theory of action to hold safe spaces for individual and collective dialogues and actions to catalyze critical consciousness or conscientização (Freire, 1970).

Usefulness of the Methodology

Activist scholars might build on the usefulness of my *Value²* theory of action, emancipatory action maps and the theoretical elements highlighted in Figure 3.6 to create similar safe spaces for emancipating capitalists from *capitalism* and from a narrow ethics of capital. The unwillingness of participants to completely embrace the status quo is an excellent point of entry for continued activism and action research. Introducing elements of GST in the form of equifinality activated self-deception was a fault line of dissonance in this EAR study, which allowed for appreciative inquiry and scrutiny of agency. EAR is a practice in instilling agency through critical problem-posing education. *Value²* offers a simple application of fostering this education through dialogical action. Activist scholars might also listen to the voices in this study and their resistance to expressing their vulnerabilities. Kegan and Lahey (2009) provide excellent tools for uncovering these deeply held fears that sustain our negative behaviors and drive practices of self-deception in their immunity to change work. Emancipation comes with agency. Agency is not given, it is developed innately or stolen away through systemic oppression. Resistance to vulnerability is a fault line to activate towards building agency. Just as injustice has been complexly delivered, taught and sustained through intricate norms and policies, justice and the advancement of social good must also be complexly delivered. Scholars must become activists, so one is indistinguishable from the other. Freire and Bertalanffy intended this in their theories and efforts. Influencing *capitalist* attitudes is a specific area of transformational work towards shifting capital, in all its forms, towards social good. Designing and deploying effective

tools and strategies that emancipate capitalists is challenging. Advocating for antiracism is a much easier sell, which speaks to the need for increased activist scholarship around influencing capitalists attitudes. Pastor et al. (2018) point to changing our language from the economy to our economy, thus moving away from a belief system of the invisible hand of market capitalism towards a new agency that allows changing the status quo. Even then, they do not call for an end to capitalism. I do. I call for an end to the capitalism defined in this study as a form of oppression that is contributing to a newly developed ethics of capital. Ethics of capital justifies the prioritization of the accumulation of wealth over any meaningful social contracts that seek to secure health, housing and other forms of social good for the general population. If there were a spectrum of activist scholarship, this approach would likely be at the extreme end and possibly categorized by some as Marxist, Socialist, Communist or militant. This is due to a lack of imagination or perhaps even agency. My recommendation to activist scholars is to continue challenging our own fault lines of self-deception and strive to model the agency and action we seek to teach others.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Original Draft White Paper—“Preparing for the Next Recession”

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT RECESSION

I. BACKGROUND

Although the economy has been on a consistent healthy trajectory, the economic policies of the current administration in addition to the most recent historical federal shutdown and the ongoing trade war, it is now common discourse among economist that a recession is inevitable in the next couple of years¹. According to Bloomberg News, about 10 percent of business economists see the next contraction starting in 2019, 56 percent say 2020 and 33 percent said 2021 or later, according to the Aug.-Sept. 2018 poll² of 51 forecasters issued by the National Association for Business Economics. Additionally, forty-one percent said the biggest downside risk was trade policy, followed by 18 percent of respondents citing higher interest rates and the same share saying it would be a substantial stock-market decline or volatility. However, the main difference of how the public and private markets are seeing their financial forecast at this time can be explained in this finding: 33 percent of respondents said the biggest potential driver of a stronger economic performance is corporate tax reform, 27 percent cited stronger wage gains and 10 percent said stronger global growth. Unfortunately, nonprofits and low-income communities did not benefit from these economic policies.

With the memory of the severity of the 2007-2009 Great Recession still fresh in the minds of many nonprofit leaders, community clinics, and low to middle-income residents, preparing for an economic downturn seems to be a sound strategy. This concept paper offers perspective on the opportunities and challenges that organization and residents may face in being active participants in a prevention strategy. The last downturn had severe consequences for many community organizations that serve a critical role in supporting the health and well-being of the most vulnerable and are commonly the lifeline for many living in under-resourced communities; hence, having prevention strategy in place makes good business sense because it positions organizations to be able to protect themselves as the recessionary clouds loom on the horizon.

Firstly, it is critical that we separate the impact and subsequent strategies for a recession vs. recovery by first defining financial crises as episodes during which there is widespread disruption to financial institutions and the functioning of financial markets (Siegel, 1994 and Wynne and Balke, 1993). Recessions are associated with financial crises and tend to be unusually severe and recoveries from such recessions are typically slow. Even our newly elected Governor, Gavin Newsom, is clearly thinking about being prepared for an economic downturn as he has branded his 2019-20 budget the “Budget for All” in order to emphasize his commitment to an inclusive economy, which includes significant investments to strengthen the resiliency of the state budget against a future economic downturn. The Governor states that, “even in a time of economic growth and record employment, too many Californians are experiencing the squeeze of stagnant wages and the rising price of building block necessities such as housing costs, health care premiums, higher education and child care.”

During a recovery phase, the weakness in private demand tends to persist in upswings that follow recessions associated with financial crises. Private consumption typically grows slower and private investments decline after the recession, in particular, residential investment may take about two years to stop declining, output growth is sluggish, and the unemployment rate rises by more than usual; credit

¹ By Room40 Group, November 29, 2018. Revenue Strategy: *Is your nonprofit recession ready?*

² NABE is a quarterly survey that tracks macroeconomic variables and surveys members regularly for their analysis of and opinions about the U.S. and global economies; the results provide key insights into economic conditions.

Squeezed between rising demands and falling resources, nonprofits become unusually vulnerable to two major classes of surprising, unexpected events: 1) threats of unanticipated losses, either from accidents (such as fires, floods, lawsuits, staff injuries or resignations and adverse publicity) or from unfavorable economic or regulatory events (such as the public's rejection of a nonprofit's new publicity campaign, tightened regulations, or the launching of a new regional or national nonprofit that invades the client, donor and territorial bases of many smaller nonprofits); and 2) unexpected opportunities for gain, which bring new uncertainties into a nonprofit's future, but a nonprofit must be prepared to grasp these opportunities whenever they arise, whether from sudden changes in the nonprofit's outside world or from innovations that originate within the nonprofit.

Low-Income Communities

If a drop in GDP is one of the first changes brought about by a recession the homeless population is one of the last groups to see a change after the onset since the full impact of a recession takes many years to completely unfold and a recession's impact on households and communities is neither straightforward nor immediate (Falyo, 2010). Yet homelessness is linked to economic growth. Research on the Great Depression (Duaque Pijakuskas, Garfinkel) showed that children in families that were affected by the recession had poorer outcomes as adults. Additionally, because many low-income families have limited access to formal credit markets and have low levels of savings, they may be more likely to draw upon their assets in poor economic times to help smooth consumption than higher income families who may draw upon other assets (such as stocks or bonds). Thus, these families may be most vulnerable to losing the few assets they have and have the highest propensity to becoming homeless. In fact, according to a 2010 report from the Brookings Institute analyzing the impact of the recession on homelessness, it shows a 49% increase in homeless children due largely from unemployment, which fueled the foreclosure crisis and led to the highest loss of “wealth” in low-income communities.

In some of the nation's more desirable major cities, housing is rapidly appreciating to a point where it is out of reach for lower earners. Median hourly wages in the US have barely budged for decades, from \$16.74 in 1973 to \$17.86 in 2016, according to the Economic Policy Institute. But in Los Angeles, for instance, the hourly wage required to comfortably rent a one-bedroom is \$22.98. For poor families, the possession of assets—savings accounts, homes, and the like—has the potential not only to relieve some of the stress of living in poverty but also to make a better future seem like a real possibility. If children in families that own certain assets fare better than children in families without them, then helping poor families build those assets would be an effective strategy for two-generation programs. Indeed, plenty of evidence shows that assets are connected to positive outcomes for poor children (Gristein-Weiss M, Shanks TR, Beverly SG).

Philanthropy

And, Giridharadas, author of *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*, examines the contradictions in corporate philanthropy, specifically when it comes to considering the role of large banks in helping bring on the Great Recession alongside their major efforts as founders of charitable ventures. For instance, in 2007, Goldman Sachs launched Goldman Sachs Gives (GS Gives) to demonstrate the bank's “ongoing commitment to philanthropy” as we now know, was fueled by a housing bubble and mortgage practices that exacerbated it; the Great Recession cost millions their jobs, homes, and savings. Since Goldman Sachs was kept from failing, its top executives have prospered and therefore can continue to contribute to GS Gives and other charities. Its customers unfortunately were not all so fortunate.

Wells Fargo also says it donated \$286.5 million to more than 14,500 nonprofits in 2017. Bank of America supports “organizations creating pathways to stable housing or homeownership through financial stability efforts such as homebuyer education, budgeting, savings, credit and credit repair including foreclosure prevention and loss mitigation.” JPMorgan Chase...gives back to the problem it helped to cause, through

growth falters; and asset prices are generally weaker which could cause a prolonged decline in housing prices.

Secondly, expenditures with long planning prospects—notably real estate and capital investment—suffer particularly from the after-effects of a financial crisis. Households and community organizations may have overleveraged their resources or may be constrained to do so by sharp reductions in credit supply. The nature of these financial crises and the lack of credit growth during recovery indicate that this is a supply issue. Further, community organizations that rely heavily on foundation and private grants tend to recover much more slowly after these recessions because these types of supports are generally bound my market opportunities, such as the stock market and financial behaviors of major banking institutions.

Lastly, monetary policy seems to have played an important role in ending recessions and strengthening recoveries. However, given the mounting US debt and the most recent Trump administration's corporate tax incentives, the ability to once again offer a middle class stimulus package appears to not be an option in this next recession. Stimulus is associated with stronger recoveries; however, the impact of fiscal policy on the strength of the recovery is found to be smaller for economies that have higher levels of public debt. The economic boost from the corporate tax cuts is already starting to fade, and government, businesses and consumers' debt are at nosebleed levels. The Fed and other central banks were, until recently, hiking short-term rates, the Chinese economy is showing signs of stress, and growth is faltering in most developing nations. Although this is not happening yet, a typical sign that a recession is skulking is when the yield on 10-year Treasury bonds is lower than the yield on three-month Treasury bills. Nonetheless, today's interest rate trends may be signaling slower growth ahead.

II. IMPACT

Federally Qualified Health Centers

In many communities access to primary care is absent, unaffordable, or otherwise inaccessible despite ever increasing demand. Since 1965, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) have acted as principal providers of primary care for those living in communities lacking adequate access. FQHCs received substantial financial support through the American Relief and Recovery Act of 2009 (ARRA), and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA). However, this has also meant that FQHCs have dealt with the challenges of adapting to new organizational structures and payment systems. Over the last 10 years the proportion of the Majdi-Cal budget funded by the state's general fund declined, from a high of 39% in FY 2007–08 to 18% in FY 2017–18 (Center for Health Decisions — Center for Healthcare Policy and Research, UC Davis).

The ability of FQHCs to provide primary care services in a changing healthcare environment while preparing for a recession...

Nonprofit Organizations

As economic downturns reduce household incomes and lower investors' and consumers' confidence in the economy, nonprofits face especially troubling times. On one hand, most nonprofits' incomes fall during these recessionary times; private contributions decline as individual, corporate, and foundation donors are less inclined to give; governmental funding declines or disappears; and earnings from endowments shrink along with their capital market values. In addition, economic downturns put added demands on nonprofits' already dwindling resources: more clients ask for increased help; and budgets for many routine activities — such as public outreach and maintenance of buildings and vehicles — are cut so that every possible dollar can be channeled more directly into client services.

a \$125 million charitable project “to support locally driven solutions for revitalizing neighborhoods.”

This is the contradiction; nonprofit beneficiaries around the world have received needed financial support but they are often cleaning up after the problems that the donors helped cause in the first place. From Gubinskas perspective, philanthropy continues to be a way for donors to ward off the true costs of responsibility:

“This is the shape our recovery has taken: some bailouts, some fines, some giving, and a net transfer of wealth from the many to the few...The stark fact about the financial crisis ten years on is that, in retrospect, it was a good deal for many of the people who caused it. Imagine what might have been: a recovery in which homeowners and indebted students had won relief from their loans, in which banks had agreed to pay a fairer share of taxes in exchange for the bailout help, in which they had been required to pump more of their capital into the real economy instead of swilling it around Wall Street. But none of that was to be, because... a little bit of generosity could be put forward as a plausible substitute for justice. Giving in millions has a way of erasing harm done in billions.”

III. CONCLUSION

Much of the literature on how to approach the pending recession is limited to recommendations for corporations in the private sector, which are driven by different business models and therefore, entirely different markets than community organizations. However, in a Winter 2010 article in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, they outlined seven best practices, based on over 100 interviews with executive leaders that could support the survival of a nonprofit during a recession, if they prepare in advance. In summary: When making cost cutting decisions, nonprofits should prioritize their core activities and focus on employees that are central to getting those activities/duties accomplished; and nonprofit leaders should engage funding supporters, their board, and stakeholders through communication and planning to begin building support in advance. According to the authors, “Nonprofit leaders' intent will make all the difference in whether—and in what shape—their organizations cross the starting line into the post-recession future.”

Despite the differences between the private and public sector there are some similarities on how to prepare for the next recession. In an article from Corporate Compliance Insights, the author states that a principal element for corporations to consider is, “... firms should position themselves to both weather the storm and benefit from a market recovery through a lean infrastructure and improved market share by creating a plan in a thoughtful and deliberate manner. In a well-prepared contingency plan, action steps are sequenced, prioritized and grouped by corporate function and operating units so that ownership and authorities are clear. Each action step is accompanied by targeted cost savings in the current and subsequent projection year(s).”

The depth of the Great Recession and the slow recovery, as it has been stated had little positive impact on low-income households. Meanwhile, state balanced-budget requirements present a serious obstacle to recovery efforts. Because recessions drain state revenues as people and businesses become less prosperous and pay fewer taxes, states must cut spending, raise taxes, or do both to avoid deficits, which puts a further drag on the economy. For decades, policymakers have enacted temporary countercyclical

measures during recessions to supplement the automatic stabilizers³. These measures have Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program that policymakers have enacted during or after every major recession since the late 1950s and which was in effect most recently from mid-2008 through 2013. Policymakers also have cut taxes temporarily, provided temporary SNAP benefit increases, and allocated temporary fiscal relief for states. These additional measures have reduced the depth and length of downturns and further alleviated the suffering associated with joblessness and income losses, especially for people with limited savings or access to credit.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in anticipation of further recessions, a stronger set of automatic stabilizers should be in place and policymakers will still need to enact discretionary stimulus. They recommend that policymakers:

- Make UI's EB program more responsive to economic conditions by having it take effect more quickly and remain in effect until hardship and labor market weakness are alleviated sufficiently, encourage "worksharing" among employees by creating incentives for it through UI, strengthen basic UI benefits, and bolster UI's financing system;
- Have temporarily higher SNAP benefits (and perhaps higher SNAP administrative funds for states) take effect automatically when a trigger, possibly tied to state unemployment rates, reaches certain thresholds;
- Make state fiscal relief, in the form of higher federal payments to help states cover their Medicaid costs, take effect automatically, possibly via the same mechanism that is used to trigger a temporary increase in SNAP benefits; and
- Prepare for additional discretionary steps during downturns by establishing a dedicated fund for subsidized jobs and job creation programs and considering one-time housing vouchers that can help struggling families keep their homes, pay their rents, and avoid homelessness.

³ Automatic stabilizers offset fluctuations in economic activity without direct intervention by policymakers. When incomes are high, tax liabilities rise and eligibility for government benefits falls, without any change in the tax code or other legislation. Conversely, when incomes slip, tax liabilities drop and more families become eligible for government transfer programs, such as food stamps and unemployment insurance, that help buttress their income.

Note: This paper was created by participants. It is used with permission per the consent form

Appendix B: Edited White Paper—“Finding Levers”

“Finding Levers – Advancing Strategies for Resilience, A Cross-Sector Approach to Preparing for the Next Recession”

FINDING LEVERS – ADVANCING STRATEGIES FOR RESILIENCE A CROSS-SECTOR APPROACH TO PREPARING FOR THE NEXT RECESSION

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this document is to provide context for the need to mobilize a cross-sector group of leaders to prepare for the next recession. A narrative discussion around the current and past events that require this call to action will be outlined along with already identified levers for activation in preparation for the next inevitable recession. Whether the next recession occurs within the next two years, as some economists have predicted, or in the next ten, the need for preparation is still urgent and necessary, as recessions do not discriminate and all are impacted by its disruptive nature. With the memory of the severity of the 2007-2009 Great Recession still fresh in the minds of many, preparing for an economic downturn is a timely strategy. This document promotes the need for engaging businesses, cities, counties, community-based organizations and residents in a preparation strategy. The last downturn had severe consequences across sectors, each serving a critical role in supporting the health and well-being of communities. The last recession found many families accessing services – community health centers, homeless shelters, food pantries – for the first time in their lives, only to learn that those services were overburdened and under-resourced. Recessions do not discriminate and although the most vulnerable are impacted the worst, having a strategy in place is critical across sectors.

ACKNOWLEDGING SYSTEMS

“Evolving a complex set of systems, like white supremacy and capitalism, and long-standing institutions like governments, banks and foundations, requires bridge builders who can envision opportunities for change and lead with compassion” (Villanueva, 2018). This document focuses on the institutions most critical to preparing for the next recession. Those institutions are compromised by the complex set of systems that Villanueva describes. Their pervasiveness cannot be ignored nor solved easily. The goal of this paper is to focus on finding levers to activate solutions and in doing so, directly and indirectly impact these systems, contributing to positive systems-change.

INDICATORS OF THE NEXT RECESSION

Due to the economic policies of the current administration in addition to the most recent historical federal shutdown and the ongoing trade war, it is now common discourse among economists that a recession is inevitable in the next couple of years¹. According to Bloomberg News, about 10 percent of business economists see the next contraction starting in 2019, 56 percent say 2020 and 33 percent said 2021 or later, according to the Aug.-Sept., 2018 poll² of 51 forecasters issued by the National Association for Business Economics. Additionally, forty-one percent said the biggest downside risk was trade policy, followed by 18 percent of respondents citing higher interest rates and the same share saying it would be a substantial stock-market decline or volatility. However, the main difference of how the public and private markets are seeing their financial forecast at this time can be explained in this finding: 33 percent of respondents said the biggest potential driver of a stronger economic performance is corporate tax reform, 27 percent cited stronger wage gains and 10 percent said stronger global growth. Unfortunately, nonprofits and under-resourced communities did not benefit from these economic policies.

MOVING FROM RECESSION & RECOVERY TO RESILIENCE

It is critical that we separate the impact and subsequent strategies for a recession vs. recovery by first defining financial crises as episodes during which there is widespread disruption to financial institutions

¹ By Room40 Group, November 29, 2018. Revenue Strategy: Is your nonprofit recession ready?

² NABE is a quarterly survey that tracks macroeconomic variables and surveys members regularly for their analysis of and opinions about the U.S. and global economies; the results provide key insights into economic conditions.

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Thus, these families are most vulnerable to losing the few assets they have and have the highest propensity to becoming homeless. In fact, according to a 2010 report from the Brookings Institute analyzing the impact of the recession on homelessness, it shows a 49% increase in homeless children due largely from unemployment, which fueled the foreclosure crisis and led to the highest loss of “wealth” in many communities.

In some of the nation’s more desirable major cities, housing is rapidly appreciating to a point where it is out of reach for lower earners. Median hourly wages in the US have barely budged for decades, from \$16.74 in 1973 to \$17.86 in 2016, according to the Economic Policy Institute. But in Los Angeles, for instance, the hourly wage required to comfortably rent a one-bedroom is \$22.98. For families, the possession of assets—savings accounts, homes, and the like—has the potential not only to relieve some of the stress of living in under-resourced areas but also position future generations for economic stability. If children in families that own certain assets fare better than children in families without them, then helping families build those assets is an effective strategy for two-generation programs. Indeed, plenty of evidence shows that assets are connected to positive outcomes for children (Grinstein-Weiss M, Shanks TR, Beverly SG).

POLICY LEVERS TO STRENGTHEN THE SAFETY-NET

The depth of the Great Recession and the slow recovery, as it has been stated, had little positive impact on under-resourced households. Meanwhile, state balanced-budget requirements present a serious obstacle to recovery efforts. Because recessions drain state revenues as people and businesses become less prosperous and pay fewer taxes, states must cut spending, raise taxes, or do both to avoid deficits, which puts a further drag on the economy. For decades, policymakers have enacted temporary countercyclical measures during recessions to supplement the automatic stabilizers³. These measures include an Unemployment Compensation program that policymakers have enacted during or after every major recession since the late 1950s and which was in effect most recently from mid-2008 through 2013. Policymakers also have cut taxes temporarily, provided temporary SNAP benefit increases, and allocated temporary fiscal relief for states. These additional measures have reduced the depth and length of downturns and further alleviated the suffering associated with joblessness and income losses, especially for people with limited savings or access to credit.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in anticipation of further recessions, a stronger set of automatic stabilizers should be in place for policymakers to enact discretionary stimulus. They recommend that policymakers:

- Make Unemployment Insurance’s (UI) Extended Benefits (EB) program more responsive to economic conditions by having it take effect more quickly and remain in effect until hardship and labor market weaknesses are alleviated sufficiently, encourage “worksharing” among employees by creating incentives for it through UI, strengthen basic UI benefits, and bolster UI’s financing system;
- Have temporarily higher SNAP benefits (and perhaps higher SNAP administrative funds for states) take effect automatically when a trigger, possibly tied to state unemployment rates, reaches certain thresholds;

³ Automatic stabilizers offset fluctuations in economic activity without direct intervention by policymakers. When incomes are high, tax liabilities rise and eligibility for government benefits falls, without any change in the tax code or other legislation. Conversely, when incomes slip, tax liabilities drop and more families become eligible for government transfer programs, such as food stamps and unemployment insurance, that help buttress their income.

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and the functioning of financial markets (Siegel, 1994 and Wynne and Balke, 1993). Recessions are associated with financial crises and tend to be unusually severe and recoveries from such recessions are typically slow. Even our newly elected Governor, Gavin Newsom, is clearly thinking about being prepared for an economic downturn as he has branded his 2019-20 budget the “Budget for All” in order to emphasize his commitment to an inclusive economy, which includes significant investments to strengthen the resiliency of the state budget against a future economic downturn. The Governor states that, “even in a time of economic growth and record employment, too many Californians are experiencing the squeeze of stagnant wages and the rising price of building block necessities such as housing costs, health care premiums, higher education and child care” (2019).

During a recovery phase, the weakness in private demand tends to persist in upswings that follow recessions associated with financial crises. Private consumption typically grows slower and private investments decline after the recession, in particular, residential investment may take about two years to stop declining, output growth is sluggish, and the unemployment rate rises by more than usual; credit growth falters; and asset prices are generally weaker which could cause a prolonged decline in housing prices.

Secondly, expenditures with long planning prospects—notably real estate and capital investment—suffer particularly from the after-effects of a financial crisis. Households and community organizations may have overleveraged their resources or may be constrained to do so by sharp reductions in credit supply. The nature of these financial crises and the lack of credit growth during recovery indicate that this is a supply issue. Further, community organizations that rely heavily on foundation and private grants tend to recover much more slowly after these recessions because these types of supports are generally bound by market opportunities, such as the stock market and financial behaviors of major banking institutions.

Lastly, monetary policy seems to have played an important role in ending recessions and strengthening recoveries. However, given the mounting US debt and the most recent Trump administration’s corporate tax incentives, the ability to once again offer a middle-class stimulus package will not be an option in this next recession. Stimulus is associated with stronger recoveries; however, the impact of fiscal policy on the strength of the recovery is found to be smaller for economies that have higher levels of public debt. The economic boost from the corporate tax cuts is already starting to fade, and government, businesses and consumers’ debt are at nosebleed levels. The Fed and other central banks were, until recently, hiking short-term rates, the Chinese economy is showing signs of stress, and growth is faltering in most developing nations. Although this is not happening yet, a typical sign that a recession is skulking is when the yield on 10-year Treasury bonds is lower than the yield on three-month Treasury bills. Nonetheless, today’s interest rate trends may be signaling slower growth ahead.

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR GENERATIONAL WEALTH

The impact of a recession on families is especially dire. With rising inequality, the loss of incomes and increased homelessness will ravage under-resourced communities. Middle and upper income families will find themselves added to the ranks of the under-resourced as well. If a drop in GDP is one of the first changes brought about by a recession the homeless population is one of the last groups to see a change after the onset since the full impact of a recession takes many years to completely unfold and a recession’s impact on households and communities is neither straightforward nor immediate (Fajoy, 2010). Yet homelessness is linked to economic growth. Research on the Great Depression (Duque Palkauskas, Garfinkel) showed that children in families that were affected by the recession had poorer outcomes as adults. Additionally, because many families have limited access to formal credit markets and have low levels of savings, they are more likely to draw upon their assets in poor economic times to help smooth consumption than higher income families who may draw upon other assets (such as stocks or bonds).

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- Make state fiscal relief, in the form of higher federal payments to help states cover their Medicaid costs, take effect automatically, possibly via the same mechanism that is used to trigger a temporary increase in SNAP benefits; and
- Prepare for additional discretionary steps during downturns by establishing a dedicated fund for subsidized jobs and job creation programs and considering one-time housing vouchers that can help struggling families keep their homes, pay their rents, and avoid homelessness.

LEVERS FOR SOCIAL GOOD - PHILANTHROPY & IMPACT INVESTING

In 2008, as a result of the recession, foundation endowments dropped by 28%. Annually, foundations are only required to grant out 5% of their net assets, while the other 95% remains in their investment portfolios. Nationally, there are efforts to encourage foundations to make shifts in how they invest, how much they grant and how they create impact in the communities they support. [Anand Giridharadas](#), author of *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*, examines the contradictions in corporate philanthropy, specifically when it comes to considering the role of large banks in helping bring on the Great Recession alongside their major efforts as founders of charitable ventures. For instance, in 2007, Goldman Sachs launched Goldman Sachs Gives (GS Gives) to demonstrate the bank’s “ongoing commitment to philanthropy.” We now know, that GS Gives was fueled by a housing bubble and mortgage practices that exacerbated it; the Great Recession cost millions their jobs, homes, and savings. Since Goldman Sachs was kept from failing, its top executives have prospered and therefore will continue to contribute to GS Gives and other charities. Its customers unfortunately were not all so fortunate.

Wells Fargo also says it donated \$286.5 million to more than 14,500 nonprofits in 2017. Bank of America supports “organizations creating pathways to stable housing or homeownership through financial stability efforts such as homebuyer education, budgeting, savings, credit and credit repair including foreclosure prevention and loss mitigation.” JPMorgan Chase gives back to the problem it helped to cause, through a \$125 million charitable project “to support locally driven solutions for revitalizing neighborhoods.”

This is the contradiction; nonprofit beneficiaries around the world have received needed financial support but they are often cleaning up after the problems that the donors helped cause in the first place.

The philanthropic sector is like a backwards supply chain, where the rise in demand is linked to a decrease in supply. A conundrum that has yet to be solved, but hope is on the horizon. Creative levers are being developed through opportunities like program related investments (PRI’s). Jeff Skoll and the Skoll foundation were pioneers in this space beginning in 1999, with a focus on investing in social entrepreneurs globally to solve real world problems. The Gates Foundation did not make headlines around PRI’s until 2015 (Field), when they made a large investment in a biopharmaceutical company seeking to accelerate vaccination processes worldwide. Since then, grant making organizations are slowly building their own PRI departments and entities but progress is incremental as the PRI model is very different from traditional grant making.

The intersection of venture capital and social impact is fairly new. In 2007, impact investing emerged, preceded by “socially responsible investing (SRI); sustainable investing; environmental, social, and governance (ESG) integration; community finance; and microfinance” (Clark, 2014, p. 2). In the last decade, the trajectory of impact investing has spurred other movements, such as conscious capitalism and the rise of B Corps. MBA programs nationally in the last two decades have increased emphasis on the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) found a home in the C-suite of many corporations, evidencing, at minimum, a demand for accountability from businesses for their role in making the world a better place. Despite these quite popular trends, the income inequality gap continues to rise globally in many first world nations. Although, poverty around the world has seen a decline (World Bank, 2018) income inequality has not. These contradictions are being analyzed

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economically and attacked socially but there are still vast opportunities at the intersections of venture capital, philanthropy and social good.

POSITIONING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

As economic downturns reduce household incomes and lower investors' and consumers' confidence in the economy, nonprofits face especially troubling times. On one hand, most nonprofits' incomes fall during these recessionary times: private contributions decline as individual, corporate, and foundation donors are less inclined to give; governmental funding declines or disappears; and earnings from endowments shrink along with their capital market values. In addition, economic downturns put added demands on nonprofits' already dwindling resources: more clients ask for increased help; and budgets for many routine activities — such as public outreach and maintenance of buildings and vehicles — are cut so that every possible dollar can be channeled more directly into client services.

Squeezed between rising demands and falling resources, nonprofits become unusually vulnerable to two major classes of disruptions: 1) unwelcome disruptions — such as threats of unanticipated losses, either from accidents (such as fires, floods, lawsuits, staff injuries or resignations and adverse publicity) or from unfavorable economic or regulatory events (such as tightened regulations or changes in tax laws that are unfavorable to nonprofits); and 2) welcome disruptions — such as unexpected opportunities for gain, which bring new uncertainties into a nonprofit's future, requiring organizations to have the capacity to pivot quickly whenever these sudden disruptive opportunities are presented. A collective approach to creating and accessing a rainy-day fund using an evergreen strategy is only one of many options that philanthropy may explore to better position community-based organizations to weather a recession. Another scenario includes fostering the growth of social enterprises among nonprofits as mechanisms for diversifying portfolios too reliant on foundation or government funding.

CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION - ACTIVATING THE LEVERS

Despite the differences between the private and public sectors there are similarities on how to prepare for the next recession. As outlined, there are important levers that may be activated to create and deploy solutions to prepare for the next recession:

Moving from recession and recovery to resilience – The new Governor's Budget for All approach and the opportunities presented in these inclusive economic ideas offer room for policy creation and implementation

Building foundations for generation wealth – Securing pathways to the accumulation of assets for families will move the dial on closing the income inequality gap and boost economic resiliency

Policy levers to strengthen the safety-net – Activating policy makers capacity to improve and enact automatic stabilizers in real time as recession impact is incurred

Levers for social good, philanthropy and impact investing – Shifts in investing practices, increases in grant allocations made from net assets as well as expanded approaches to using venture capital as a tool for fueling solutions and strengthening the safety-net

Positioning community-based organizations - A collective approach to creating and accessing a rainy-day fund and fostering the growth of social enterprises among nonprofits as mechanisms for diversifying portfolios and growing their reserves

NEXT STEPS

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Form a cross-sector Coalition on Recession Resilience (CoRR)– This group will activate the identified levers, reviewing, refining and adding as necessary; as well as identify and secure the resources needed to implement plans

Data driven and informed – In advance of the inaugural convening of the coalition, an assessment and report will be produced to inform the convening around measures/policies/strategies.


Inaugural convening of CoRR - In collaboration with the Federal Reserve bring together key decision makers in a curated space sponsored by the Federal Reserve and possibly other partners, to review data, proposed levers for activation and establish actionable measures and action plans for implementation

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Appendix C: Promotional Flier, “Finding Levers”

Flier for Inaugural Convening for Coalition on Economic Resiliency



**SEPTEMBER
10, 2019**
9AM – 2PM
Los Angeles Federal
Reserve Building
950 S Grand Ave,
Los Angeles, CA 90015






FINDING  **ADVANCING
STRATEGIES
FOR RESILIENCE**

LEVERS

Inaugural convening
of the Coalition on
Economic Resilience
(CoER)

- Moving from recession and recovery to resilience
- Building foundations for generational wealth
- Creating Policies to strengthen the safety-net
- Maximizing for social good, via philanthropy and impact investing
- Positioning community-based organizations

**A CROSS-SECTOR
APPROACH
TO PREPARING
FOR THE NEXT
RECESSION**

CoER  **INDUSTRY NEXT**  **first 5 la**  **LA Care**  **CHC**  Community Health Councils

Invitation Only Event

Please contact mburton@chc-inc.org for more information

Appendix D: Action Steps Collected from Coalition on Economic Resiliency by Topic

Table Topic	How Might We	Solution	Action Steps
What Happened to Corporate Charity?	build the capacity of nonprofit and corporate leaders to build relationships through meaningful dialogue and find alignment that translates into sustainability and investment?	bringing corporate and nonprofit leaders together to identify shared opportunities	<p>identify who is the convener or group of conveners</p> <p>identify who should participate</p> <p>craft an agenda with a defined purpose and outcome goals</p> <p>create a briefing booklet on both parties</p> <p>work with nonprofit participants to ensure the represent a sector not just themselves</p>
	build the capacity of nonprofit and corporate leaders?	build nonprofit capacity to evaluate outcomes and demonstrate impact	<p>integrate impact evaluation in general operating support grants</p> <p>develop collective work with other nonprofits to share data, results and share resources collaboratively</p>
Building an IP Pipeline: Innovation and the Inner Cities	build a machine for low to moderate income communities that solves poverty	local ownership of assets	<p>connecting folks to finance and funding</p> <p>increase financial literacy</p> <p>investment pooling with legal oversight and community governance</p>
		reduce debt to wealth ratio, create balances for prosperity	<p>education - financial literacy and wealth management</p> <p>develop software for government program recipients with incentives</p> <p>innovative ideas, i.e., marijuana 'weed box' that residents grow and receive compensation as part of a co-op or larger grow operation</p>
Disaster & Trauma Informed Community Planning - Strength in Resilience	incentivize government agencies to empower employees and other entities to take risks and to share mistakes?	<p>bonuses for tackling hard issues in racism and oppression</p> <p>built-in resources and time for community driven and centered practices such as giving stipends and financial support to people with lived experiences involved in planning</p> <p>innovation teams- cross sectional groups to come up with ideas</p> <p>attach requirement to contracts and procurements to require contractors to engage in anti-racist processes and practices</p>	<p>prepare community needs assessment to participate in community processes</p> <p>create culture of learning - take 30% (1 1/2 days) a week to allow for creativity</p> <p>evaluate existing programs and policies for racist, classist, oppressive leanings</p> <p>recoding mindsets - using data to understand what story are we telling and for whom</p> <p>create cross-sectional innovative teams with come up with ideas</p> <p>get buy-in from employees - how their own work affects potential solutions for community</p> <p>create a pilot group with measurable outcome and story, narrative/case study on successes, failures and learnings (keep replication in mind as pilot progresses)</p> <p>data and information sharing management</p> <p>discover innovation funders in community development</p>

Future of Work: Closing the Income Inequality Gap	organize to demand power and more equitable distribution of resources based on our shared community needs	high tech early childhood development place-based strategies	teach tech earlier in elementary and middle school collect regional job and career needs, connecto community needs and articulate a vision calculate necessary government investment and organize to demand it
	workforce and higher education	cross disciplinary partnerships to address workforce development	connect the ???/culture advocacy community in this conversation build/participate in a coalition to drive agenda priority integrate leadership rep from this work into this effort
	update and improve the state of higher education; master plan for K-12 education and deliver improved education	learn from community college innovation and apply to master plan revisioning innovation to serve and enhance the capacity and potential of lower income students with overwhelming needs to achieve their full potential	look at best practices and lessons learned from a variety of innovative community college programs examine how these lessons/programs align with higher education goals and practices of CSU/UC systems ask basic questionss - are students being served? Are the able to become wage earners and grow into their dreams? what are the barriers to making changes in all 3 systems, UC, CSU and CC to be better steward of their resources and reduce income inequality via their education program and responsibilities?
Philanthropic Investment Portfolios - Solving the Social Impact Conundrum	create inclusive capital markets that create equitable acces to wealth creation	create funds that target underserved populations and create incentives for investment funds that target underserved populations and communities	set aside the tax increment derived from real estate development in opportunity zones specifically for low to moderate income communities provide government funded capital for business formation through the SBA create government funded match for individual retirement accounts based on income/tiered low income more with 10 year vesting of government portion
		require financial services education in K-12 including awareness of systemic barriers in access to capital and safe and sound financial services; diverse positive role models in achieving wealth, via start-ups; payment of these educational programs from profits of banks and investment companies	approach banks and other financial services/investment companies for grants to develop new K-12 education programs that motivate diverse youth to want to earn and manage money, whether through employment or entrepreneurial activities create motivational K-12 financial education lobby school districts to require more financial education in K-12 schools
		update bank and other financial services regualtion to require and encourage measurable social impact	raise awareness of problem to build capacity for organizing draft proposed regulation terms lobby legislators

<p>Global Perspectives: Exploring Intersectionality and Resiliency between South Johannesburg and South Los Angeles</p>	<p>address unequal distribution of resources through an equity lens to help residents of South Los Angeles and South Johaannesburg so that they develop self sufficiency that lead to community resilience?</p>	<p>integrate best practices across the two communities which have shared histories and commonalities in a cultural context</p>	<p>increase public spending for infrastructure development with intentionality (equity) develop CRA (community reinvestment act) and philanthropy sector develop land trust, community benefits for community control of land and resources support advocacy in passing schools and communities legislation in California support jail and prison reform in LA County</p>
<p>Employee Ownership: Expanding Economic Resiliency</p>	<p>employee access to credit and capital</p>	<p>loan guarantee funds</p>	<p>identify and describe the problem develop a plan identify foundations and financial institutions pilot a program</p>
<p>Debt Alleviation and Wealth Building</p>	<p>education</p>	<p>teach entrepreneurship</p>	<p>bridge the relationship between 1) tech companies 2) school districts 3) business innovation to solve social issues 4) business incubators identify best practices, gaps and challenges leverage community college and alternative organizations leverage existing small business owners to teach classes engage NPO's tech internships small impact grants</p>
		<p>use new technology</p>	<p>using virtual reality to increase educational achievement bring technology to urban communities to test products while learning and increasing access identify best practices, gaps and challenges partner with tech community to test new models leverage practitioners highlight existing tech to teach create community computer labs</p>

Appendix E: Promotional Flier – Fast Pitch for Solutions

FAST PITCH



FOR SOLUTIONS

A Passion Over Profit Event

This one-of-a-kind pitch fest is designed to create a space for established leaders, executives, influencers and founders to present soup-to-nuts solutions for building economically resilient communities.

At it's inaugural convening in September 2019, CoER participants lifted up a call to build bridges with corporate, finance and technology sectors to collectively impact and systemically change education, philanthropy and public policy as a means to creating economic resiliency. This Fast Pitch for Solutions is a proving ground for leaders that participated in the inaugural convening to take further action in realizing the solutions they put forth that day.

APRIL 16, 2020

2:00 PM - 4:00PM

**The Federal Reserve Bank
of San Francisco,
Los Angeles Branch**

950 S Grand Avenue,
L.A. CA 90015

“Goods seem to have become more important, and are treated better than people. What would a world look like if that emphasis were reversed?” *Paul Hawken, Author of Blessed Unrest*

DEADLINE TO ENTER

March 16th, 2020

Fast Pitchers have until February 16th to submit their intent to participate with Michelle Burton at mburton@chc-inc.org

FAST PITCH PASSION PANEL

Don't miss your chance to have your ideas heard by some of the coolest peeps in VC and philanthropy! Our Passion Panel will consist of members from VC and philanthropy! They will provide Fast Pitchers with thoughtful feedback and award the most passionate presenter with our Fast Pitch trophy!!



Appendix F: List of Participants in on September 20, 2019

Coalition on Economic Resiliency Attendees' Titles and Affiliation

Title	Affiliation
Chief Transformation Officer	Nonprofit
President & CEO	Nonprofit
CEO	Nonprofit
President & CEO	Faith-based
Medical Director	Healthcare
Director of Strategic Partnerships	Technology
Partner	Entertainment
Director of Community Engagement	Healthcare
President & CEO	Sports
Managing Partner	Finance
Founder	Social enterprise
Executive Director	Nonprofit
Founder and Managing Director	Finance
VP	Finance
CFO	Nonprofit
Principal	Finance
Executive Vice President	LA County
Director, Policy & Research	Nonprofit
VP, Investor Relations	Finance
Senior Director Community Development	Nonprofit
Director of Evaluation and Monitoring	Research
Senior Advisor to the City Manager on Homelessness	City of Santa Monica
Deputy Executive Director	Nonprofit
VP, Community Relations Officer	Finance
Managing Partner	Finance
Board Member	Philanthropy
CFO	Nonprofit
Founder	Research
CEO and President	Business development
Analyst	Finance
President & CEO	Healthcare
VP	Finance
VP	Communications

Title	Affiliation
Director & Co Founder	Strategy planning
Executive Director	Nonprofit
District Manager – Field Group I Community Development	Finance
County Systems Strategist	LA County
Culture Design Strategist	Strategy planning
CEO	LA County
CEO	Nonprofit
Senior Community Affairs Specialist	Finance
Vice President Diverse Markets & Business Development	Finance
Deputy Sustainability Officer	City of Santa Monica
Co-Director	Nonprofit
Principal data scientist	Research
Executive Director	Finance
Partner	Technology
CEO	Healthcare
Founder	Finance
Director	UCLA Center, Transformation of Schools
Principal Consultant	Kanayama Consulting
Senior Director of Business Development and Strategy	Primary Care Development Corporation
Associate Director	Milken Institute
Senior Member of Design Team	XPRIZE
Executive Director	Arts for LA
Founder	The Fountain, and Eve Branson Foundation Social Enterprise
President and CEO	Social Sector Partners
CEO	CDF
CEO	Vertical Networks
Program Manager	The California Endowment
Managing Partner	Avivar Capital
Partner	Concerned Capital
Assistant Vice President Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) Program Manager	East West Bank
Co Founder and Chief Innovation Officer	Vive Concierge Inc
Partner	MiLA
CEO	GoWare
CEO	TLM Partners Inc.
CEO	Hispanic Chamber of eCommerce
CEO	ITV Alliance
Founder	Ozomatli

Title	Affiliation
Dorothy E. Everett Chair in Global Information and Social Entrepreneurship	UC Santa Cruz
Community Benefits Director	LA Care Health Plan
Principal & Founder	Global Connections Business
Director, Policy	City of Los Angeles
Pastor	McCarty Memorial Church
Director of Innovation and Strategic Partnership	LA Dept. of Water and Power
Co Founder and CEO	Sabio - Engineering & Security Professionals
Vice President of Community Relations	Wells Fargo, West Region
Principal Consultant	Sandra McNeill Consulting
General Manager	Concerned Capital
President	Concerned Capital
Executive Director	Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) LA
Senior Adviser / Founder & Board Chairman	Zero Gravity Management / The Shower of Hope
President and CEO	Partnering for Change
Vice President, Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)	Banc of California
SVP, Fair & Responsible Banking Officer	Luther Burbank Savings