



Can the Future be Predicted? Deliberations on a war we cannot afford

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Abstract

The war on Ukraine is a wake-up call. Not because not all wars are atrocities that steal lives and future. It is a wake-up call, because it so bluntly reveals the violent perpetuation of a dominance model that has held human evolution captive for 6000 years. The article looks at the underlying pattern that creates, keeps and recreates structures that give rise to mad men and psychopaths who then think appropriating a country (or a woman, or people, or natural resources, or else) is a legitimate act. It explores the still so widespread power narratives that we need to urgently overcome and suggests that investing into the pro-active building of a new power narrative is what needs to underscore all of our efforts towards sustainability transformations. It concludes that, for the paradigm shift to be successful, we must build—throughout the world—resilient partnership approaches anchored in a female reference system of care and consensus building.

For many of the people that I know, the 24th of February 2022 was a date when the frightening feeling arose, somebody is stealing our future. Many people are stealing our future and that of future generations every day, many are complicit with the constant act of endangering our life support system, but the day when the war in Ukraine began, was a different kind of wake-up call. It all culminated in the feeling that a mad man, a psychopath, trying to re-write history, is determining our future—like so many mad men before. It felt as if this would not fit into the modernity of the 21st century, into our efforts and ambitions to save this planet, mitigate climate change, revive our societies and regenerate our ecosystems. We cannot afford this war was the inner cry, and we know that we cannot afford any war. Those who still hold the dream of peaceful egalitarian societies, were confronted with a reality they could not believe, as if they had been transported into a movie, of which they knew neither script nor director, and failed to understand their role. Those of us who are feminists and convinced that changing power structures between genders is a prerequisite for peaceful and life-supporting egalitarian societies, were hit hardest. It is as if an old normality re-emerged, one that most of us were convinced we had overcome. We know patriarchal rebounds were on the rise with the resurgence of right-wing movements, strong dominant men and more violence against women. But the bluntness of this invasion, even using misogynist terminology as if Ukraine were a woman, made us gasp. And seemingly silent.

What followed is known: a global outcry, hundreds of statements as well as deliberate absence of statements, politically motivated silence of some, calls to action of many others,

bundles of sanctions, a huge rise in production and delivery of weapons, a massive military rearmament, a rise of the complaints that this war gets more attention than others—all accompanied by the sight or the knowledge of people being forced to leave their homes, people being killed, people being tortured, women being raped. War as war is and always has been, no matter when and where in this world. This is the way humankind has seen war for about 6000 years. As inhuman as always, today it is slightly more sophisticated in tactics and technology than a few hundred years ago, and vastly more dangerous than ever before. The threat of the usage of nuclear weapons was built into communication.

“Since we need both power in the sense of responsibility and power in the sense of impact for a vital and sustainable future in which everyone envisions a future that is worth living, it is important to understand what the phenomenon of power has to do with how we recognize power pathologies and how we can avoid them if possible.”

1. Could this war have been predicted? The answer is a clear yes.

The following deliberations will not look at the Kreml’s strategy and communication or an analysis of failed European and US politics. It will not look at whether diplomacy had failed and developments had been misinterpreted. Instead, it will look at the underlying pattern that creates, keeps and recreates structures that give rise to mad men and psychopaths who then think appropriating a country (or a woman, or people, or natural resources, or else) is a legitimate act. The economist Mariana Mazzucato, who is chairing an all women council of the WHO on *Economics of Health for All*, reminded us in an article on 8th May 2022 that during the first year of the pandemic, the global GDP grew by \$2.2 trillion as a result of military rearmament*. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the military expenditure continued to grow, particularly in Asia, and also in Russia and the US, and reached another record level in the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. It has been on the rise for 7 consecutive years and has reached an all-time high†. With the war in Ukraine leading to further rearmament, this figure is likely to increase. Hence, we have literally been sleeping on a bomb. It exploded in Ukraine.

Humankind’s history has shown that rising military expenditure never led to peace. Yet peace is the number one turnaround we need in the world to master all other turnarounds that are required: sustainable food, renewable energy, economic justice, recovering ecosystems and overcoming poverty. The economic structure behind rearmament is obvious: war, as we can see now from the effect of the war in Ukraine, will damage not only those directly hit

* <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/valuing-health-for-all-new-metrics-for-economic-policy-and-progress-by-mariana-mazzucato-2022-03?barrier=accesspaylog>

† <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2022/world-military-expenditure-passes-2-trillion-first-time>

by war atrocities, but over time through our global interdependency all of us, and those less economically endowed more and more. Others, particularly the weapons industry, will make a fortune without paying those that suffer from wars a dividend.

“If we think our planetary crises can be solved without abolishing the so deeply ingrained and pervasive pathological power structures globally, we are naïve. It will not work.”

2. Have we, while combating (notice the term!) the COVID-19 pandemic, been blind to diseases that are even more dangerous?

The simple summary is: we live in a world where a combined pathology is at work—the pathology of dominance, legitimizing abuse of power and warfare combined with the pathology of an economy that extracts life from people and the planet. As humankind, we have been walking in this pathology for thousands of years, knowingly or unknowingly.

Could the war in Ukraine have been predicted? The systems scientist Riane Eisler, author of the world bestseller *The Chalice and the Blade*¹ as well as the visionary book on economics (*The Real Wealth of Nations*), would say: from the patterns emerging over time—yes. Why?

There is a hidden connection that we need to reveal, remember, and bring to the surface again and again. The increase in military spending combined during the pandemic is combined with an increase in violence against women.* The rise in violence in communication, literature, movies, games, topped with the popularity of strong men is a pattern that shows a resurgence and reinforcement of androcratic societal dominance structures. These structures are accompanied by institutionalized male toxicity, disdain for women who want to be free and often enough culminating in male leaders of totalitarian regimes. Highly pathological, these totalitarian regimes celebrate heroic maleness, thrive on fear and install all possible institutionalization of oppression. They create enemies that need to be destroyed by all means. They create reasons for a war and implement it without mercy and with the cold-blooded logic that helps to perpetuate their dominance. We need to become aware that on the route to androcratic totalitarian regimes is the millennia-old mental model of declaring war against egalitarian societal relationships. Hence, there are many steps of androcratic dominance towards its pinnacle—the totalitarian state. Not only today with social media and cyber wars, has the production of myths been part and parcel of the building of totalitarian regimes. What history books do not show and teachers do not teach, is that *the men behind violent oppressive dominance are not simply narcissists or psychopaths—they are a product of sanctioned societal and mental structures that rank women as secondary objects, the life of people not important enough to not kill them, and nature a place to conquer*. Power, in this androcratic mental structure, is always a power over something or someone. However, this is not the true meaning of power—it is a power pathology. Here and now, in the 21st century

* <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/womens-month-break-the-bias-by-ellen-j-sirleaf-and-lilian-best-2022-05>

that many of us believed would be a gateway to a regenerative human future, we live in the mud of a pervasive power pathology that needs treatment.

3. How do we get out of these power myths that increase military spending at the expense of all of our future? How can we predict and above all, create egalitarian societies that are peaceful, fair and sustainable?

The dazzling connotations of the phenomenon of power run through the entire history of mankind and we usually associate nothing good with it. More precisely: when we think of power, we first think of power pathologies, i.e. of all the phenomena in which power was either really misused or at least not used for the benefit of all. We know from history and the present that pathologies of power in the political sphere can reach dramatic proportions, lead to war or oppression and bring suffering and grief to millions of people. But in business, too, we know the pattern of power pathologies when executives enrich themselves, act unethically or unfairly eliminate competition. In the overwhelming majority, although not exclusively, these appear to be phenomena manifested by men. It would therefore be fair to ask whether power pathologies and our notions of heroic masculinity are intrinsically linked, or whether our societal structures draw men more easily into power pathologies, or at least make them vulnerable. Since we need both power in the sense of responsibility and power in the sense of impact for a vital and sustainable future in which everyone envisions a future that is worth living, it is important to understand what the phenomenon of power has to do with how we recognize power pathologies and how we can avoid them if possible.

The concept of power has been and is described, analyzed and interpreted by many philosophers, anthropologists and sociologists. Most of them have been male scientists. Few but very interesting and well-known exceptions are **Hanna Ahrend, Riane Eisler and Mary Beard**—three women whose understanding of the phenomenon of power differ significantly from that of their peers, and who provide us with key elements for an understanding of power that is future-proof and useful for transformative leadership.

It is not surprising that power as a concept has always been interpreted and analyzed against the background of the visible phenomenon of actions between people. The attempt to understand power is thus based on its perceivable effects. As with all sociological and psychological concepts, the understanding of the concept of power is embedded in the *zeitgeist*, in social values and thought structures. The concept of power is interpreted as visible behavior with visible effects, i.e. as a phenomenon, so to speak, above the water surface. However, how the phenomenon of power is interpreted, but also lived, depends to a large extent on all the invisible layers of the iceberg below the water surface: on mental models, thought structures, unquestioned social agreements. Therefore, no definition of power will be simply valid, but understanding the phenomenon broadly can help us to rearrange our own relationship with power and use power in terms of effect for transformation in a justifiable way.

A very common definition of power that is often quoted and therefore probably firmly anchored in the thinking of many people in the world who claim power, is that of Max

Weber.² For him, power is always a form of enforcing one's own will (or that of a group) against the will of others. A number of scientists who deal intensively with planetary crises would welcome politicians acquiring this assertiveness and implementing future-oriented measures even against the will of others. But the history of mankind has shown that there are great differences between the power of persuasion and manipulation, as well as between the assertion of interests and the processes of negotiation. The boundary point that separates power as a transformative effect from power as abuse, hence power pathologies, is often blurred. Yet, unless we know this boundary point and its underlying mental and institutional structures, we perpetuate the pathology we live in. This is not what we need for a sustainable and regenerative future.

The transformations we need to bring forward for a lovable and livable future need to be centred on systems aliveness, societal and ecosystems vitality, leadership of many and dynamic self-organization. This is not a naïve dream, but the only way to go. I am repeating this: this is the only pathway into a sustainable future. If we think our planetary crises can be solved without abolishing the so deeply ingrained and pervasive pathological power structures globally, we are naïve. It will not work. All reputable systems scientists would agree on this—including the late Donella Meadows, the lead author of the famous report to the Club of Rome, *Limits to Growth*, that predicted the collapse of the world as a result of a pathological growth addiction, which is part and parcel of the androcratic power pathology.³ Systems scientists have known for about more than a century what most indigenous communities have kept as old and often female knowledge: the sweet spot of resilience lies in the dynamic equilibrium at the edge of chaos. It is love and the urge for aliveness that bind our planet together and keeps our societies thriving. Care, as Mariana Mazzucato* and Jayati Ghosh† emphasize, lies at the core of our pathways into the future. Agile, innovative, participatory, egalitarian societies with equality between genders and strong governments, and trustfully legitimated power, are the evolutionary advantage we ought to understand, notice, and work towards. If we allow the dominance model to continue—in our heads, in our relationships, in our organizations, our societies, in our global organizations and in our military spending, we are heading for suicide. The dominance model will, rather sooner than later, drive us from the edge into total chaos. For the transformative leadership we need, we get no further with enforcing measures and manipulating behavior, even if the boundaries between persuasion, influencing and manipulation are indeed very fluid.

In the age of the Anthropocene, which is beginning to turn into the age of digitalization, algorithms read our most secret desires, cyber-attacks are increasing and election results are influenced by manipulation. Power is often something that is not directly perceptible: it can work in the background, influence our thoughts and actions or act subtly as a so-called silent power.⁴ This opens doors to reinforcing power pathologies. But as the integral investor Mariana Bozesan‡ says, “We know what to do. Now, we must do what we know.” With a new paradigm of power, digitalization can support our future by supporting life.

* <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/valuing-health-for-all-new-metrics-for-economic-policy-and-progress-by-mariana-mazzucato-2022-03?barrier=accesspaylog>

† <https://socialeurope.eu/the-feminist-building-blocks-of-a-just-sustainable-economy>

‡ <https://www.cadmusjournal.org/article/volume-4/issue-5/essay3-integral-approach-social-transformation>

Hence, we are getting no further with the traditional definitions of power, which are mostly power pathologies, but we still have to deal with the phenomenon of power. Because the future emerges collectively on the continuum between power, effect and influence. Basically, the most common power definitions, in particular Max Weber's understanding of asserting one's own will against the resistance of others, are by no means definitions of the concept of power, but already the description of power pathologies that justify mad men's behavior and their attractiveness to many other mad men (and to many women). This is a viral disease. Simplified, such definitions of power are based on a misinterpretation of Darwinian theory, which, falsified as social Darwinism, assumes the right of the strongest: in power pathologies whoever is stronger has power. Darwin was more concerned with the fact that the best future prospects are those species that are best adapted to a specific context, i.e. that are also flexible. If we want to make use of an evolutionary advantage, we will have to go back and pick up our history from 6000 years ago. Thanks to the work of the well-known archaeologist Marija Gimbutas* about Old Europe and the Mediterranean Culture, we know that egalitarian societies existed (probably globally), which put a high value on the feminine, organized a distributive economy, had thriving arts and culture and invented most of the technologies we have since then developed further and had thriving arts and culture. Power, in this original historical paradigm, is a connecting element that has an effect on future-making—connecting the individual potentiality with the collective potentiality, the individual interest with the collective interest. It is, as the historian Mary Beard⁵ emphasizes, the process of empowerment, a skill anchored in a female reference system that humankind has known forever. We would not be able to raise children, care for the sick and elderly, educate people or invent and improve democracies. This is what we need to strengthen by all means. Power needs a new narrative.

With the outdated conventional interpretations of power, we do not get any further for transforming the world towards thriving in a safe operating space. On the contrary, power and influence lived according to the dominance paradigm, of which the military is the strongest manifestation, leads to the nature-destroying and people-degrading systems of superiority and subordination that have led to the massive sustainability challenges of our time. So, we have to look for other explanatory patterns on the subject of power.

As a Jew, the political scientist Hannah Arendt experienced pronounced power pathologies, more precisely the unleashed terror of the Nazi regime, and these experiences have shaped her work. That is why she very clearly worked out the difference between power and violence in her works and made it clear that power needs resonance and relationality in order to have an effect, i.e. an agreement between people about its effect.⁶ Violence, on the other hand, begins exactly where this no longer exists and where an attempt is made to maintain power as an end in itself. This is the starting point for domination and terror, and thus for the many manifestations of institutionalized violence based on the spread of fear. From this, basically from power pathologies, totalitarian rule arises—the enforcement of a will, an ideology,

* For an easy introduction into her phenomenal work about Old Europe, this video is worth watching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-k34hXty4iw>. For the scientific reader, her research is collected, among other books, in *The Civilization of the Goddess*. Harper, San Francisco 1991.

a world view and a future-making, either manipulatively or with brute force. In Hannah Arendt's understanding, however, power does not necessarily have to degenerate into the pathological domain. On the contrary, Arendt sees violence as a symptom of increasing powerlessness that has to resort to brutal means in order to maintain or manifest a certain influence, a structure or the implementation of a certain goal. Then, power becomes terror. Hence it is the fear of powerlessness, the fear of the diminishing androcratic dominance structure in the world that accelerates narcissistic power pathologies. In too many cases this has and is developing into totalitarian rule and ruthless wars. This takes us back to the war against Ukraine. It is the fear of diminishing power and the pathological clinging to a past anchored in the androcratic domination model, coupled with a global male playground of competition for hegemonic mental and physical territory, hence pathological power that lies at the source of this war. It lies at the source of so many other wars, and at the source of a destructive economic system that displays a deep disdain for life.

“Marija Gimbutas, the well-known archaeologist, shows how 6000 years ago, warlike organized societies asserted themselves with weapons, overrunning peaceful societies. This happened in several waves over 2000 to 3000 years and began in the eastern part of today's Europe, which can be roughly located in today's Ukraine and Moldova. The invasions transformed entire cultures into hierarchical, androcentric societies, established power as the right of the strongest, and subjugated women.”

However, power in and of itself is inherently neutral. For Hannah Arendt, power is something that a person or a group does not simply possess, it is more situational, i.e. it arises from perception and action in the relationship between people—it is a potentiality. Power in this sense is based on relationship—relationality—and requires communication processes. It has to create resonance in people in order to be effective. If it does not do that, it loses its potential. It dissolves or, as described above, mutates into tyranny. The fear of losing power is therefore an important building block in the pathologization of power into violence and domination. In Arendt's view, asymmetrical relationships do not necessarily belong to power; on the contrary, power as a potential effect requires a high degree of agreement among equals. From these insights, three aspects are essential for our ambition to transform the world with a new narrative of power.

One aspect is the understanding that power arises communicatively, i.e. it is attributed to people or groups of people who are able to build *resonance*. These can be visions, pictures of the future, hopes, thinking about possibilities, etc., i.e. power arises through an attribution of power, which in egalitarian relationships can also be mutual. Of course, pathologies can also

arise here, such as communicative manipulation, many of which we have known for a long time, not just since digitalization and social media. The limits to manipulation are fluid, it is important to perceive them and make them transparent, on a small and large scale. This is important for transformative leadership, because even commitment to a sustainable future is not immune to pathological striving for power. So, it needs both people and mechanisms that promote transparency and demand it again and again. The second aspect is the realization that power arises through collective agreement, i.e. it is a result of cooperation between people. To a large extent, power is the result of a negotiation process that establishes the *legitimacy* of power. This is the only way that modern constitutional states and democracies can function. This means that people grant other people power in the sense of a potential impact, but can also withdraw legitimacy. Structures and control mechanisms must be in place for this. This brings us to the third aspect, an essential point of the concept of power. In order to prevent or minimize the danger of power pathologies, what is often called *checks and balances* is needed, known in the political and certainly also in the corporate sphere as the separation of powers. Power as an ability to create future requires mechanisms that quickly uncover pathologies and prevent them from establishing and spreading. This is important at the societal level e.g. through democratic and dialogical procedures, at the level of companies and organizations through governance and management systems, and at the individual level through structured reflection. Knowing the difference between human tendencies towards the omnipotence of power pathologies and a meaningful individual or collective effectiveness is not always easy. This knowledge should be taught at schools and universities with history as a guide book, including the knowledge about the functioning of egalitarian societies more than 6000 years ago.

In the psychological sense, power is both something factually structural, i.e. the degree of possibility of influencing the future, and something emotional—the kick, maybe even the drug that we feel when we can influence the future. And we are all susceptible to that to a certain extent. Because the feeling of power gives energy, because it so enormously increases one's perception of vitality, it is a drug whose mechanism of action we need to know if we want to create a sustainable future. In reasonable doses, power as a sense of efficacy is medicine, and it is helpful when there are internal and external controls over its ingestion. If we surrender to it, as protagonists of power or as those who ascribe power, we become addicted. Ultimately, this always has negative consequences, for us, for others and for the world. So, in addition to our own vitality and the vitality of the system we are responsible for, we have to understand the connection between systems' vitality and power. Because power can enhance individual and societal vitality and it can destroy both. If power increases one's own vitality or that of one's own system at the expense of other systems, then we are on the wrong track.

With the global trend towards sustainability, which has taken a long time to establish itself throughout all layers of society, and which is certainly not yet as firmly anchored as it should be, we have at least made important steps in the direction of guard rails for navigating power as new narrative. We must retain their importance of effectiveness and maneuver the new narrative out of the many traps of pathological trajectories. It is worth taking up Riane

Eisler's insights on this. The US-based systems scientist was born in Austria in 1931. Similar to Hannah Arendt, Riane Eisler experienced terror first-hand when she and her mother had to flee Vienna from the Nazi regime as a child. Growing up in the slums of Havana, she began early to draw a connection between the structures that produce poverty and those that produce terror. In her case, too, the attempt to understand how such structures arise and reproduce themselves again and again led to an interdisciplinary research that produced a holistic and, above all, historical approach. In her cultural transformation theory, she distinguishes between two fundamentally different narratives of power that shape societies and become the basic model of their organization. For the *dominance narrative*, she chose the blade as a symbol because it is associated with armed violence from the very beginning of known history. It

thrives on enforcement, superiority and subordination, as described in conventional power theories. Asymmetric relationships are taken as given. Destruction of life and living things—in the form of nature as well as people—is sanctioned as normal in this narrative. For the *partnership narrative* she has chosen the chalice as a symbol, because a life-giving force is at the forefront. It thrives on consensus, cooperation, commitment and diversity. Preservation of life and liveliness is the focus here. Symmetrical relationships are the norm. However, Riane Eisler not only supports the thesis that the global spread of social partnership models must be our future if mankind wants to survive in the long term, but that it was also our past. In her detailed scientific work, she takes us on a journey to prehistoric societies, which provide archaeological evidence, at least for the old European region, that for thousands of years there have been cultures, comparatively high developed, which were not perfect, but by and large lived peacefully. Marija Gimbutas,⁷ the well-known archaeologist, shows how 6000 years ago, warlike organized societies asserted themselves with weapons, overrunning peaceful societies. This happened in several waves over 2000 to 3000 years and began in the eastern part of today's Europe, which can be roughly located in today's Ukraine and Moldova. The invasions transformed entire cultures into hierarchical, androcentric societies, established power as the right of the strongest, and subjugated women. What followed were societal structures based on the dominance narrative. Superiority and subordination were initially established primarily between the sexes. While the partnership-based prehistoric societies were more egalitarian with a special reverence for the female as a life-giving force, worshipped as a goddess, the prevailing narrative of dominance subordinated women to men—with effects that we have not yet overcome. Unlike in the millennia before, women increasingly assumed a subordinate position. The cult of the goddess was gradually replaced by the worship of male gods and finally one male god. This historical perspective on power as the enforcement of a societal model of dominance is important because it also frees us from the assumption that humans are intrinsically warlike and dominating. Looking back at the social development that took place 6000 years ago, the roots of the planetary crises we deal with today go very far back.

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It tells us that we have to fundamentally change the narrative of how we co-create the future, i.e. shifting the power narrative towards one that is life-enhancing.* Many far-reaching positive things have emerged in the last few thousands of years, but one could argue that this happened mainly because the origins of the partnership narrative have asserted themselves time and again. They have balanced warlike and oppressive social developments and despite numerous manifestations of power pathologies, the pendulum kept swinging back in the direction of consensus and cooperation. The work that people have done and which has cost many of them their lives should not be underestimated. For there has always been active resistance to the dominance narrative. All modern movements for social justice, equality, peace, women's rights, environmental protection, climate protection and sustainability, which have not only existed since the last century but have intensified since then, have gradually prepared the ground for a fundamental change in the narrative of power. Riane Eisler rightly claims that, given the planetary emergence we are driving towards, it is no longer enough for the partnership narrative to keep the dominance narrative in check. The partnership narrative, strongly anchored in a female reference system that honors life, needs to become mainstream. This is only possible with global networks dedicated to the partnership approach. More than ever, humanity has no time for the escapades of pathological narratives of dominance. Riane Eisler therefore calls the return to the partnership narrative as a survival strategy for humanity.

The partnership approach is therefore central to transformative leadership, which needs a new narrative of power to focus on system vitality. Power in a new narrative is above all communal, something that in cooperation and communication brings about a future devoted to the many practical aspects of a systems vitality—from the individual to the planetary system. The English historian Mary Beard challenges us to rethink power, to reconceive it as something communal, something that values people who advance the future in mutual support. Power, she reminds us, comes from empowerment and is thus the description of a process of action, a movement and not at all a static possession. It is the ability to operate in the world together, in cooperation and complementarity. That does not mean that everyone has to be the same, equally strong, equally knowledgeable, or equally visionary. It does mean, however, that power as a manifestation of leadership builds communicative resonance and must be mandated and legitimized, must face checks and balances and be committed to a partnership narrative. In this understanding, with such a new narrative, power and effectiveness belong to collective leadership. If we are serious about a sustainable future, it is time to leave power pathologies behind us and ensure that a new narrative of power, based on a system of thought and action based on partnership, becomes resilient.

Truly egalitarian societies with gender equity, accompanied by cultural equity and economic equity are the evolutionary advantage that will take us out of the dark ages that we have been struggling for millennia with and which we are still struggling with today. So many steps have been already taken in the right direction. It is time we became clear that these are not struggles in isolation, not anymore islands of partnering dreams in the sea of dominance, but

* The scientific reasoning can be found in Kuenkel, P & Waddock, S. (2019): Stewarding Life in Troubled Earth System. Vol. 4, Issue 1. Cadmus Journal <http://www.cadmusjournal.org/article/volume-4/issue-1/stewarding-aliveness-troubled-earth-system>. What this means for the transformation of our economic system is described here: Kuenkel, P. (2021): Repurposing Economies Towards Life. Vol. 4, Issue 5. Cadmus Journal, <http://www.cadmusjournal.org/article/volume-4/issue-5/repurposing-economies>.

the emergence of a more mature humanity that has fully embraced a female reference system for ways to organize societies. Egalitarian societies with legitimate governments, people taking care of each other and the natural and social life support system—this is our future. Helping Ukraine to defend itself, as many people say is a war for freedom and democracy. The historic realization that exactly in this area the brutality of power pathologies started, is a frightening insight. It is a call to action: we need to make the partnership narrative and all its different forms of societal systems more resilient—everywhere in the world, at every level. This is our future. If we take this seriously—our sustainable future can be predicted. It will be sustainable.

“Societal and economic action needs to be clearly driven by a new purpose: revitalizing, enhancing and sustaining life. This is an essential female quality and as all female qualities, has been sidelined and silenced for millennia.”

4. Will partnership systems work without gender equity and economic equity in egalitarian societies? Will they work without economic systems change? No.

Even democracies will fall back into the old trap of dominating exclusionary societies unless the basis of subordination of the female sex is not abolished. The last 10 years have given evidence to many examples of a resurgence of the dominance narrative, delivered by male psychopaths. Hence the war in Ukraine is indeed a wake-up call, and should be—not only for feminists who need to get together in a collective practice and form a global transformation network, but for all of us. This war could have been predicted and it could have been prevented, if we had attended to the many features of the misogynist dominance narrative much earlier. Empowering women everywhere and making partnership systems resilient globally, is the call to action that we need to heed. It is not something that is outwardly nice to have, an add on, something that can wait, a luxury—but an essential step that will take us into a different future. All our efforts in sustainability transformations need to reflect this: bringing women into power, making their lives safe, educating them, removing barriers to their political and economic participation and listening to the way they act and co-create the future differently. No, we do not just want to integrate women into a pathological system, we want them to change the system. This is something we cannot afford not to do. Societal and economic action needs to be clearly driven by a : revitalizing, enhancing and sustaining life. This is an essential female quality and as all female qualities, has been sidelined and silenced for millennia. This is what we ought to do: strengthen the female. The basis for partnership systems is gender equity. In all areas. This is not just a number, but women in power positions, in decision-making roles. Women who create the future based on a strong female reference system inspired by care and life-enhancement. Men can join in. This is not

naïve, but humanity's chance to become collectively intelligent. It is the future. We have no other option.

5. So, can the future be predicted? Yes, if we understand and expose underlying destructive or life-enhancing patterns.

We need the latter—life-enhancing patterns of action and organization. If we change the underlying patterns, the mental structures, the purpose of our actions or what Donella Meadows calls the paradigm, it can be done. Individually and collectively, every day, everywhere. We have no time to waste, if we want to maintain and revitalize the planetary life-support system. Let us remember that we are not creating something entirely new, we are revitalizing a human quality that has existed for most of human history. The androcratic dominance model has only occupied human evolution for a historically short period albeit with disastrous consequences. A different future can be created.

If we want to end the war in Ukraine, end the other wars active and lingering around the world, we need to heed the call: empowering women and making partnership systems resilient all around the world. No step in this direction is too small. No ambition is too big. They will add up to the transformations we want to see.

We then may have a chance to predict the future we want to see.

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Notes

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