

Chapter 1

Lessons from the Pandemic: A Window of Opportunity?



Abstract In this conversation, which took place in December 2021, we attempted to take stock of what the pandemic represented. The reader will recall that across the world, including both Italy and in Norway, we were still in the midst of the pandemic: it was unclear and impossible to predict how we might continue with our daily lives. This conversation tries to find the leitmotif of an experience that united the whole world. From both authors' point of view, we wanted to try and make people see an opportunity within a crisis (following one of the principles of the overheating approach).

A Shared Shock

Thomas: I think we all have something to learn from the Covid pandemic. It has changed our general outlook. It will have a lasting influence because we have been through an unexpected shock. It can be seen, from the lofty vantage-point of social science, as a global experiment. I think we need to discuss this in our first discussion since the pandemic has been on virtually everybody's mind for more than a year and a half now. It is also an indubitable fact that we as social scientists are directly affected by events in the outside world. I mean, after the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States, everybody started to become interested in Islam, and geopolitics, and multiculturalism. Then and now, there has been a lot of general pessimism about diversity. I have seen in the last few years - maybe in the last 10 years, but certainly in the last five - that the environment and the climate are becoming *the* big topic in many intellectual discussions, and it has become almost trivial to speak of the destructive side-effects of capitalism.

What we saw in March 2020 was that everything in the physical world started to slow down. We are still feeling the effects on the economy and probably will for years because the logistically streamlined just-in-time economy ceased to function. Things simply did not arrive in time. The super-efficient economy has showed weaknesses and vulnerabilities. There has been a general slowdown, and it will last. There are queues of container ships waiting outside port cities, and so on. But while the physical world slowed down, the digital world just continued to accelerate,

to speed up. You have this curious sort of disconnect: in the physical world, you could go for slow walks and it was quiet outside, you couldn't travel anywhere, and you weren't even allowed to go to a restaurant since they were closed during the lockdowns; but when you went home and turned on the computer there were three things happening at the same time. You sent your messages while you were simultaneously meeting on Zoom and preparing a lecture, and activities became even more condensed than before. For me, this period has been very condensed, making it difficult to concentrate and almost impossible to work seriously because of the disruptions and interruptions. This compact digital life can be very detrimental to intellectual creativity. I will soon be going to Germany just to sit and work there for a week or so. But on a normal day, we now risk a double burden – physical and digital – because now society is opening up again. I was in Turin recently, but I also had to go to my room during the conference to give a Zoom lecture at home. So at the same time as we are continuing to have these online Zoom meetings, lectures, talks and conferences, lots of things are happening now in the physical world as well.

Risks of Accelerated Smart Working

Martina: I totally agree with you. But I don't know how to explain or get into the question ... what do we find in the middle? What you are saying is also about our profession. It's a sort of accelerated smart working, and in your writing I found perspectives on temporal regimes in which there are sort of two ideal types, meaning slow and fast time. But in the middle ground ... are we creating hybrid identities that live in mixed time regimes? What do you think about that?

Thomas: Yes, I'm sure, and maybe this is the source of a lot of stress - that there is a lack of consistency, this lack of convergence between these slow and fast, analogue and digital worlds of experience. It's hard to find a balance. And it seems that whatever you do, it's not quite what you wanted. And another thing we need to talk about – which has also come into the world in a big way – is social media, not least the way they are dealt with by young people. Their lives are increasingly filtered through the social media – some of which are not particularly social, by the way – that is the internet, to a much greater extent than before, and this also accelerated during the pandemic. The way in which the online world and the phenomenon of FOMO (fear of missing out) leads to life becoming staccato and full of sudden interruptions. It is very hard to lead a slow, cumulative life with constant interruptions. I'm sure you see this in your students as well, that it's almost impossible now to ask them to sit down and read a book for 3 h. Reading long texts has become hard work. So concentration is becoming a scarce resource, and that's a fairly damning indictment on our civilization when we consider the way in which we produce knowledge, since it can only be done slowly. The miracle of the Renaissance which took place right where you are now, in northern Italy, which in some ways created the modern world, presupposed the ability to perform one kind of task, really getting deeply into it and staying there for a long time. All of this had to be done

slowly without many interruptions. I wonder what's happening to knowledge production in the kind of temporal regime we have now, where you have the fast and the slow competing for your attention, and where the fast tends to win most of the duels.

Managing Contradictions and Hybrid Identities

Martina: Yes, that's clear but I have one more question... What you mean by a slow and a fast regime is clearer to me now. But the other question is about when you write, and people are talking to you, you always have an eye on the future, on the future perspective. So my question is also about where we are going in the middle of Covid-19: there are many mental health problems, for example, and it has an impact on our identity, or on the economic crisis. How do you think we can handle all these contradictions, interruptions through hybrid identities, and so on?

Thomas: Yes, it's a big question, isn't it? Do you remember, a few months ago, Facebook suddenly was unavailable owing to a technical glitch somewhere.¹ For 5 h, the platform was not working, but that was sufficient for the shutdown to have huge consequences. I read about it; I wasn't affected because I wasn't using Facebook on that day. To some, the enforced break may have been a relief. For my part, I started daydreaming that perhaps it would just vanish completely, forever. Another source of disruption and interruption would be gone. Obviously, that wasn't going to happen. But in other parts of the world, the shutdown of Facebook had serious consequences because many use the platform to perform their economic transactions. Millions of people, mostly operating in the informal sector, lost money and opportunities during those 5 h. This suggests that the social media platforms are truly global, but also that they are used for a variety of purposes. The Covid-19 pandemic was doubtless the most global event in human history, but the temporary collapse of Facebook comes close! We have had world wars, we have had the Spanish flu, but none of these large-scale events come even close to the pandemic or Facebook in global reach. Even the Black Death in the mid fourteenth century was mainly a Eurasian phenomenon. They didn't have it in the Americas. But Facebook is totally global (with some important exceptions, notably China, where 1.3 billion people have to use WeChat instead), with a reach from the Andes to the Philippines. And the same applies to the way in which the world is now becoming saturated with digital communication. You know, when Facebook went down for 5 h, people began to realize how dependent they were, how we have somehow sleepwalked into a kind of dependency that nobody really wanted, right? And all of a sudden you are like an opium addict, realizing that you cannot manage without it. By the way, this goes for smartphone apps in general. Here at my university, you can no longer park your car

¹On October 4, 2021, at 15:39 UTC, the social network Facebook and its subsidiaries, Messenger, Instagram, WhatsApp, Mapillary, and Oculus, became globally unavailable for a period of 6–7 h (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021_Facebook_outage).

if you don't have a smartphone because you need an app. And among the effects of the very temporary shutdown of Facebook let me mention that in African countries like Zambia, people who were running market stalls and selling vegetables got problems with their suppliers because they couldn't get in touch with them. They had become accustomed to using services that were suddenly not available. So this extreme vulnerability as a result of the digital revolution somehow reflects, or mirrors, the same kinds of vulnerabilities that the Covid pandemic has made us aware of, and it is entirely global. So how does it affect us globally and locally? I think it is fair to say that the world economy is addicted to speed and efficiency everywhere; in countries with low productivity, there is a yearning for more of it, and in the affluent countries, the affluent classes complain that there is too much of it. Speed, meaning acceleration, is absolutely essential for global capitalism to grow since it intensifies productivity and consumption. You know, you can lie on the sofa and spend hundreds of thousands of euros on sports equipment that you're never going to use, or clothes, or holidays. It's become so easy to spend money, and to be able to be a consumer. So that's why I still think being in favor of slowness is one of the most radical political positions you can take because it goes against not only technology or Big Tech and the platforms, but also the logic of the economic system. And that's one of the dangers of the Covid pandemic. Maybe we can delve into this theme eventually, when we talk about the future in our last conversation. But maybe that's the kind of lesson that the powers that be don't want us to learn from the pandemic, namely that you can have a fairly good life without frantic activity, and life can even be better if you do less. I think maybe we can. We can think about that.

Digital Detox: Towards a Digital Slowing Down?

Martina: So, you see us as people who are addicted, stuck in a bubble that makes thousands of bubbles...

Thomas: Yeah, I think so. And what's frightening about this, if you look at the personal level, that is to say overheating of the individual, is that we have stumbled zombie-like into situations that nobody really wanted, and that we are increasingly seeing people complain about. There is a research project about 'digital detox' around here, and my wife is part of it. She worked in publishing for many years and then quit her job to do something else. Eventually, she accepted a PhD fellowship. So now (2023) she is writing about reading as a way of slowing down, as a form of 'digital detox'. At least that's an important part of the project. She is exploring the transformations in the publishing industry. Today, people don't seem to read books the way they used to, but they increasingly listen to audiobooks. In Scandinavia, audiobooks have really taken off in the last few years. It makes sense because they enable you to be more efficient through multitasking. You can listen to a book while cooking or gardening or exercising. You can drive to work or kayak with the book. It makes you a more efficient consumer.

The actual effects of the digital revolution depend very much on where you are. But it's still striking that many of the same rules have been imposed throughout the world. So we could say that, in many ways, this is the most global event ever regarding humanity. We've had world wars, we've had pandemics, we've had large and terrible famines and so on before, but nothing like this, where everyone on the planet is affected. I mean, almost eight billion people are affected by the pandemic. And, as everyone could point out, yes, they are affected in different ways. And I think we will talk more about that later, how the pandemic has been a magnifying glass on inequality. I do not think in particular about the way it has strengthened inequalities, but it is also striking that many of the same practices have been adopted in different countries. No matter where you are, rules concerning face masks, social distancing, restrictions on handshakes, hugging and physical contact in general have been very similar. And this, probably for many people, has been experienced as very restrictive, since there were so many things we used to take for granted, like going to a cafe with a friend or shaking hands and having a chat with a colleague, or just going to the post office and, you know, being in the middle of an anonymous crowd, which I think is good for people, even biologically, though I don't often think along these lines. But in this case, I make an exception by stating that the situation we've been in is quite unnatural. It's not natural for people, and it is striking how fast the new norms were established. From 1 day to the next, suddenly you were a dubious character if you weren't wearing a face mask, or if you did not respect social distancing. And this was the case in many parts of the world. I mean, there is resistance to this to varying degrees. The number of anti-vaxxers has been on the rise. And when face masks were introduced, there were many, not least in countries like the United States, who opposed this because they saw it as a violation of their personal freedom, identifying these restrictions with left-wing Democrats and the nanny state. If you were loyal to the president, you did not wear one. But apart from strange anomalies like the United States, it strikes me that the entire world has been synchronized around the pandemic and attempts to deal with it. So that's one aspect of it. And when we think about everyday rituals of interacting with each other, many of the rituals to which we were accustomed were suddenly no longer viable. You could no longer do the things you used to do. It had not occurred to us that it would suddenly, from 1 day to the next, be impossible to sit close together. We didn't think that would happen. And when it did, it had effects that many had not anticipated. One thing is the political polarization in the US, Brazil and some other countries, but it is far more significant how the restrictions created an awareness of the ways in which we need each other as something different from flat images on a screen. Loneliness and depression seemed to have become more widespread, and we now have some research indicating that this has in fact been the case. This tells us that you can be intensely lonely even if you can perfectly well communicate with the outside world, that physical co-presence, with body language, smell, gestures and so on is absolutely essential to human well-being.

Things to Be Learned from an Overheating Perspective

Martina: Well, we could come back about an to an invisible problem. My point is just to get to know your view on our world. Will we have lost our world, or will we have to reconstruct our world? I don't know....

Thomas: In some ways, from an overheating perspective, what happened in March 2020 worldwide is quite highly significant because, for 40 years, our business leaders, our politicians and so on told us that we should do as much as possible and be efficient, productive and mobile. We should travel, consume, produce and be active. The rationale was that this frantic activity benefited economic growth, although the message was presented to us as one increasing our freedom of choice. Then suddenly, from 1 day to another, we were told to do as little as possible. What our leaders said was basically that if you really have to, you can go out and take the bus, but please try not to. Don't bother to go shopping, since most shops are closed anyway and you can buy your essentials, your medicines, your food, but not much else. And don't even try to go out for a pizza or a glass of prosecco, since the cafes are going to be closed. In this way, the neoliberal dogma was turned on its head. And the question is, will we ever return to the situation the way it was before? I don't think so. There will be permanent changes following the pandemic. There is anxiety around the prospect of contamination still, and there will probably be throughout next year and maybe for a long time to come. Also, anxiety around travel, around physical contact. Then there are other things that we could also think about in terms of what kind of world we want to live in, what the lessons are that we hope to have learned. It just so happens that, as we speak now, there is a big climate summit meeting in Glasgow at COP26.² And many countries, most countries have committed to certain targets, but they're nowhere near achieving them. Now what happened with the pandemic, as we've seen, is that the world economy went into a recession, which is bad news for people who make profits, but it's good news for the environment. And the question is, is there something important to be learned here? Could we do things more slowly? Could we use this as a pretext to slow down and live a bit differently? There is a real possibility that the post-pandemic world will be scaled down, slowed down and cooled down. Interestingly, what people in many countries report that they have missed the most, according to surveys, is the informal social contact and physical proximity; not going out shopping or that sort of thing. It's being with other people (see e.g. CAMH 2022). This insight might also tell us that if we're going to make society more sustainable and more humane this doesn't need to entail the continued destruction of the ecological system. We can do it differently. And that is the thing that I think could be an optimistic lesson from this crisis that, in fact, we could use it to do things slightly differently in the future. So I don't think we will go back and we shouldn't. Now we should take this as a lesson. You know, the word crisis comes from Greek.

²Officially the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, it took place from 31 October to 13 November.

In ancient Greece *krisis* usually referred to a high fever. There were only two possible outcomes, either you died or you recovered, since they didn't have antibiotics and vaccines. But if you did recover, and if you were a sensible Greek, then you would have learned something. When you wiped off the dust and sweat, came out of your secluded chamber and looked at the olive grove, peered at the sun and met people you knew, you realized that your life would never be quite the same again because you had been through a situation where you'd been hanging in the balance between life and death, and you had emerged on the right side. You were still alive, and you were wiser. You were more humble and maybe more grateful, and you found it easier to appreciate the small things in life. So perhaps one thing that we are going to appreciate more is the chance of being with other people.

Martina: This is another point that I want to ask you. For me, you have a very strong and positive, optimistic view of human beings. For me, maybe because I'm in Italy, OK, maybe because I'm Italian, so I live in a continuous crisis and we don't learn from our mistakes. We don't learn from our past. So, yes, overeating is a good way to observe our world. But now we are reflecting on a new world with all the concepts, so it is impossible to manage this entire process. . .

Thomas: Yeah, well I don't know. I mean, one view – which is not that unlikely – is that the world will only change as a result of cataclysmic change, when we really are forced to do something, when we simply have to do something, and when you feel that your life and your security are at stake. This also tells us that when you are in a critical situation, security seems to be more important than freedom. You know, you really are willing to give up quite a few of your freedoms. But now that it seems like we are heading in the right direction after the pandemic. I mean, the common view is that things will go back to what they were before really quickly. And there is so much pent-up energy that people need to expend travelling and consuming, and so on. And we have already seen hints of that. But maybe after a year or two, or three, many of us will look back and think that things weren't so bad during the enforced slowing down. Everybody agrees that it was dreadful not to be able to spend time with other people. But the fact that lots of events were cancelled, there was less travel, there was less stress, life became less frenzied, is the positive side of all these cancellations and postponements. And perhaps there's a lesson to be learned there, that we could take with us, but will not happen automatically. I'm not saying that this is easy. We have to conjure up a different and better future, some people have to make it visible. And this is how social change takes place, via the political imagination. There are promising signs. Obviously, there's a lot of negative signs, but there are also promising signs. Many think differently about the economy, and it has become easier to speak of basic minimum income without being seen as a clown or hippie. More people think seriously about a degrowth economy, which has suddenly now become less marginal than it was. And ways of organizing society, which are not destructive, not alienating, can now be imagined more easily.

And, again, what have we learned? I think what we've learned is that human beings need to be with other human beings, and we don't need to be so incredibly productive and, you know, stressed out, and so on. The things that matter the most to us are usually climate neutral and free.

But there is one other aspect that I wonder if I can mention now about the pandemic, because I find it quite interesting, and quite important to realize. I mean, the pandemic itself, the spread of Covid-19 is clearly an overheating phenomenon, and it happened in such an overheated way. In the space of just a few days it was worldwide, which says something about the interconnectedness of the world. So that's obvious. But, paradoxically, what it led to was a cooling down because suddenly the wheels of the world economy started to turn around much more slowly. Factories closed down. Some factories had to send their workers home because they couldn't get the machine parts they needed. Tourism disappeared overnight. Ten per cent of the world economy disappeared from 1 day to the next, which is dramatic. This happened in the physical world, and we weren't allowed to move. You could go for a walk in your neighborhood in most countries, but not everywhere. You Italians suffered more than us Norwegians. Perhaps, if you were lucky, if you lived in a sprawling city, like I do, we could go for a walk in the woods nearby. But you couldn't do many of the usual things that you did, such as go to concerts or football games, or cafes, or just walk down the main street in the sun licking an ice cream. This happened in the physical world. At the same time, in the digital world, acceleration just continued. Overheating just continued, with a vengeance. And someone who said quite early on that this is something we should be aware of was Naomi Klein (2020), the Canadian cultural critic. She said that, for many years, the politicians have been promising us a Green New Deal, that we should shift towards a more sustainable way of organizing our economy, but it seems as if what we are getting instead is a *screen* new deal, which means that many of us, millions of us, will be basically chained to computers 24 h a day in the service of profit for the great corporations or whatever (Klein 2020). And we can see the warning signs that people are stuck at home, they've been stuck at home, but many sit in front of their screens and the boundary between your free time and your working time is being eroded completely. It has been fuzzy for a long time, but now it seems to be almost gone.

Martina: Yes, I understand everything you told me, but I think we're living a kind of collective trauma, a sort of collective control trauma. So I don't think it's that easy to return to our lives just before the pandemic.

Thomas: I don't think so. That's one thing. I mean, if you think about this, in a micro-sociological way, with a focus on the way we lead our daily lives. No, I don't think so. I mean, this anxiety disorder is partly caused by a concern about a third or fourth wave, or maybe a new kind of virus, a new pandemic that is even more deadly than what we have. There is more uncertainty and anxiety in the world than for a long time. This is something we are going to have to live with.

Martina: That is why I think we haven't learned anything from this crisis, this pandemic. It's not been an opportunity to become better human beings. I don't know. Maybe it's fine. I have a pessimistic anthropology, mind you.

Thomas: I understand, of course. And surely, if we do nothing, will be the default outcome. But let us keep in mind that we humans have the capacity and the opportunity to behave in different ways. I mean, we are complex beings with different contrasting and conflicting values. It depends very much on how you present your case, and who says what, and who sets an example. And things have

changed for the better in the past. Think about the end of slavery, the end of colonialism, women's voting rights. Just a hundred years ago, many men in European countries felt that women were not fit to vote because they were too irrational. And then, after about 10, 15 years, it was perfectly normal. So things have changed quite rapidly and often in positive ways. As the anthropologist Margaret Mead said that we never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has.

And when it comes to global inequality, and the environment and the climate, there has also been change, at least in the way we talk about it, in the last decade or so. I wouldn't entirely exclude the possibility that we could use this in a positive way. You know, I wrote a book many years ago with a biologist friend of mine on selfishness (Eriksen and Hessen 1999). And the question we raised at the beginning was: is it inherently human to be selfish, or is it not? We soon came to realize that the question was wrongly phrased. It's the wrong question to ask because there isn't a yes or no answer. It depends on the circumstances. It depends on what I call the semiotic scaffolding around us, the kind of input you get from your surroundings, what makes us all ecological beings occupying niches in a vast system of communication and exchange. That, to me, is a beautiful thought.

Does This Overheated World Make People Happier?

Thomas: Yes, we were talking about possibilities, but I think you know that this is really speculation, and therefore we cannot really give an answer to what I asked because there is no answer to that. Just as I said the question of selfishness was wrongly expressed because it depends on the circumstances. Similarly, when people say that after the pandemic things will be such and such, you know, we can't take them seriously, since there's no way we can predict something as complex as the future. But I guess I don't share your pessimism about the way that, for there to be profound changes, people have to feel that something really important is at stake. And, as Emile Durkheim told us over a century ago, it is easy to give us new rights and privileges making life easier and in many ways better. But it's much harder to take those rights away from us afterwards. So the question then is – and maybe we can return to it later – does this overheated world with its economic growth, with its phenomenal material affluence and abundance, does it make people happier? What is to be lost and what can we gain from a different life which is not based on consumption, competition, the hamster wheel and destroying the world? Increased consumption is not a recipe for happiness. Or could we think differently about the good life? I think that, since we have had this breathing space since March last year, we could think seriously about what it is that creates a good and just society.

Martina: .. the pandemic has shown us all these issues, but there is another thing I just want to ask you about the overheating approach, and the fact that you are an ecological thinker. I see that there is a sort of stronger coherence between that ecological comprehension and the methodological instruments ... how are you

able to maintain this strong coherence from the comprehension on the epistemological level and the methodological level?

Thomas: Good question. Epistemologically, my view is and has always been that the smallest entity we study in the social sciences is not the individual, but a relationship between two. When we talk about ethnicity, it is always relational. Ethnic identity is always defined in relation to something which it is not. So in this sense, you could say that the only thing that exists in the world are differences. I mean, otherwise, nothing would have existed. You would have total entropy, to use the language of thermodynamics. Everything would have been the same. So the only phenomena that exist are distinctions, differences and relationships, and what these relationships set into motion. What you get is a process, a situation perhaps, where you negotiate things. We were just talking about the handshake. Should I shake his hand or shouldn't I? I met a lot of people – some I know, and some people I don't know – at the University of Copenhagen recently, and I noticed that all of us were a little bit wary. Should I shake hands because we're allowed to? Maybe it's risky. Hugs were out of the question before we'd had a couple of glasses of wine. And about half of us did shake hands, and the other half didn't. So we're socially uncertain now. This reminds us that there's very little of us that is absolute in itself. It has to be released through some kind of interaction. When you have a relationship and you have a process, then you get this sort of dynamic system of varying degrees of complexity. And how do we study this methodologically? Well, I think, for me the ideal way of going about it is to be with people in natural situations. That's the classic anthropological methodology of ethnography. But at the same time, we have to do interviews, and we have to have conversations. But when we have these conversations, we try to map out the sort of relationships that people have with the outside world. What is it that matters to you? Who are the most important people in your life? Can you tell me something about your childhood? Whatever. So we try to get to know people. And when you get to know people, you realize that they are all about their relationships with others. So the individualist fiction that we are somehow autonomous creatures that end at our skin, I could never take that view seriously because it's not the way I function. It's not the way anybody functions, really.

Metaphysics of Absence

Martina: Coming back to the pandemic, and to close our conversation on the issue, 1 day I read something on what you call the "metaphysics of absence", through which you become aware of the importance of just being in the same room with other people you don't even know. Meetings have become much more efficient, but much less pleasant, and probably less rewarding in all kinds of ways because we don't get to know people. And online meetings are fine, but we don't have memories of them.

Thomas: No, that is correct, simply because you get your memories with your entire body. A few months ago I was at a conference in Lisbon. Of course, I didn't go. I mean, I was at home. I gave my talk, and there was a discussion, and then I

turned off the computer and went downstairs to cook dinner. You know, had I been in Lisbon, it would have taken a long time. It would have been expensive. It would have been bad for the environment. But still we continue to do this because we know how important it is to sit and drink coffee with people, go for a walk afterwards, smell the atmosphere, eat food, marvel at the beauty of a city like Lisbon and the *bacalhau* (cod) you get with your *vinho verde* – all these things matter because we learn and remember with our bodies. We have probably all become more aware of the need to be in place physically. In this way, the pandemic has been a magnifying glass, and one of the things it has made visible is something that the sociologist Anthony Giddens spoke about many years ago as “presence-availability”, which I think is a good term – you know, being available for others physically. We came to realize that it was becoming a scarce resource. But the other thing that I wanted to emphasize about the pandemic is that it’s not just a magnifying glass. It’s also a catalyst, because it has accelerated tendencies that were already there, especially in the realm of digitalization. I think Netflix did reasonably well in 2020, to put it that way, compared to United Airlines. I think this is something we could hopefully learn from this accelerated digitalization when we look back, that we need friction, resistance and scarcity. I have scarcity of information in mind, but also a scarcity of works of art or entertainment such as films and music. In the past there was a slower rhythm, and you had to wait for the goodies, whether it was a new recording or a new movie, and you often had to order a book – I got mine from a bookshop in Cambridge – and it took a while before it arrived. With other people, you sent a letter and maybe you got a response after 3 weeks.

Martina: Digital platforms are now part of our everyday life, but at the same time a clear and shared definition of them is complicated. In fact, they appear as complex black boxes, where inputs and outputs are visible, but processes are inscrutable. Certainly, what you highlight is that the acceleration in the platformization of our life can be an opportunity to live (reasonably) in a better way and we’ll talk about it in a next conversation.

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